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|  | 2nd call of Short-Term Scientific Missions  (STSMs) |
| 1. PRESTO and STSM  This is the 2nd Call for applications for Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSMs) funded by the COST Action CA21130 “P2X receptors as therapeutic targets (PRESTO)”.  STSMs allow scientists to conduct short research and study visits to a research institution or laboratory in another COST Country to strengthen the existing networks and to foster collaboration, learn a new technique or use equipment, data and/or methods not available in their own institution and contribute to the scientific objectives of the Action.  PRESTO is organized into 5 Working Groups (WPs). STSMs are considered as a great opportunity for participants to focus their work on research topics that have been highlighted by WGs or introduce new ideas addressing the PRESTO objectives.  Details on the content and goals of WGs is available in the Action’s Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).  2. Guidelines for applicants  STSMs benefit to:  • STSM grantees, who receive funding for implementing a project with an international team and gain knowledge or access to equipment or techniques not available in the home institution.  • STSM hosts, who receive an international partner in their institution and can develop long lasting collaboration.  In the framework of this 2nd Call, PRESTO offers approximately 5 STSM positions, supporting financially travel grants to individuals. Grantees need to make their own arrangements for traveling, accommodation, etc.  The minimum visit should last for one week (including traveling), and the maximum duration of the visit is 1 month. STSMs have to be accomplished within the second Grant Period of the Action, i.e. end of September 2024.  The maximum amount of STSM grants for this period is awarded to 2.000,00€. Details about the maximum daily allowance that can be claimed for accommodation and meal expenses per country can be found in COST Daily Allowance Rates. Applicants are also requested to consult the Annotated Rules for COST Actions.  The call for Applicants will be open from the 1th of March until the 9th of August and applications will be evaluated on a monthly basis as long as allocated funds are still available.  Who is eligible to apply for an STSM?  STSM travel grants are available for researchers and innovators affiliated to a legal entity in COST  A proposal can reach a maximum score of 100. The proposals will be ranked and those 4 with the highest scores will be granted.  Areas of Expertise Relevant for the Action:  Working group 1: eATP and P2XR in inflammatory and infectious diseases  *Main aim:* Validate an increased eATP level as a marker of the inflammatory microenvironment. Identify paradigmatic inflammatory and infectious diseases characterized by a key P2XR involvement. Identify the mechanistic link between inflammation eATP increase, P2XR activation, the release of proinflammatory mediators.  *Main objectives:* 1) develop and validate novel in vivo probes for the measurement of eATP. 2) Collect, review, and analyze data on inflammatory conditions involving eATP and P2XRs. 2) Summarise current data on P2XR involvement in bacterial sepsis and infections caused by intracellular pathogens, focusing on emerging viral infections. 3) Development of P2XR-based diagnostic and drugs. 4) Training of Young researchers and Innovators in in vivo eATP measurement and P2XRs function in immune cells.  Working group 2: P2XRs in neurodegenerative diseases and depression  *Main aim:* To strengthen the existing knowledge on P2XRs role in neurodegeneration and depression pathophysiology, thus contributing to training a new generation of translational experts in this field and ultimately facilitating the passage of P2XR-based research to the clinics.  *Main Objectives:* 1) To review established and develop novel protocols for the in vivo administration of  P2XR agonists and antagonists in selected neurodegenerative diseases and mood disorders (e.g.,  depression). 2) To promote the interaction between PRESTO and industrial and academic members to accelerate development testing of blood-brain barrier permeant P2XR-targeting drugs. | Full/Cooperative Member. PhD students, young researchers and innovators (<40 years old) from ITC Countries are strongly encouraged to participate and will receive extra points in the evaluation process.  **3. Application instructions**  Applications for STSMs are managed through the e-COST management tool. All applicants must have an e-COST profile.  The applicant must use the e-COST management tool to register the STSM application request. In addition to the information entered at the website, the applicants should also upload the following documents in a single PDF file:  • Short CV with recent publications.  • STSM proposal.  • Motivation letter.  • Requested budget in €.  • Confirmation letter from the Host Institution.  For additional information on the submission via the e-COST system, applicants may visit the Grant Awarding User Guide.  Once the STSM has ended, the grantee must submit a short report on the outcomes of the visit. The report needs to be submitted within 30 days after the end date of the STSM or 15 days after the end of the Grant Period (whichever date comes first). It is noted that if the applicant does not submit the required report on time, the grant is cancelled. The grant payment is expected to be deposited within 30 days after the approval of the report.  **4. Evaluation of applications**  Each proposal will be assessed independently by the STSM committee of the Action, and an evaluation score will be given considering (i) the clarity of the proposal, (ii) the degree to which the proposed STSM complements or contributes to the Action strategic priorities and objectives as defined in the MoU, (iii) planned work plan feasibility and outputs, and (iv) the ability of the STSM applicant to successfully complete the proposed STSM and disseminate relevant outputs. The proposal should show clear evidence of how the proposed STSM will benefit the applicant and the Action. The proposal will be assigned to one of the following categories:  **- Very poor:** proposal unsound and incomprehensive. Not clearly linked to any of the WGs (0-10 points).  - Poor: proposal with limited understanding, planning and unclear objectives. Weakly linked to at least one WG (11-35 points)  **- Fair:** proposal with some understanding, planning and objectives. Moderate linked to at least one WG (36-60 points).  **- Good**: good proposal but needs input to develop feasible STSM. Well linked to at least one WG (61-80 points).  **- Excellent:** proposal well designed in terms of planning, feasibility and expected outcomes. Strongly related to at least one WG (80-100 points).  **Working group 3**: Role of P2XRs in cancer and tissue regeneration  ***Main aim:*** To address the homeostatic/regenerative versus the cancer-promoting role of P2XRs. Special focus will be placed on the role of P2XRs in tumor/host interaction and metastatic spreading and the pathophysiological meaning of the high extracellular eATP levels typical of the tumor microenvironment.  ***Main Objectives:*** 1) Reach a consensus a) on the role of P2XRs in cancer and tissue regeneration based  on the critical analysis of the literature and the results from the Action members' laboratories, and b) on the efficacy of P2XR agonists versus antagonists to promote tumor regression or support regeneration of healthy tissues. 2) Identify human tumors amenable to be tackled by P2XR-targeting with academic laboratories and industrial partners' joint effort. 3) Train Young Researchers and Innovators to investigate purinergic signaling in tumor models.  **Working group 4**: Data integration and translation to the market and the clinics  ***Main aim:*** To facilitate clinical and industrial exploitation of knowledge emerging from the Action  ***Main objectives:*** 1) Design of new research and diagnostic tools. 2) Moving selected P2XRs targeting  drugs to clinical trials. 3) Promote technology transfer while protecting IP rights.  **Working group 5:** dissemination and outreach  Main aim: To manage and oversee the dissemination initiatives and guarantee the outreach with  stakeholders and policymakers outside of the Action.  Main objectives: 1) Increase P2XRs' awareness via the web, social media, and personal contacts. 2) Increase the outreach of the Action to members from industry and other stakeholders. |
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