COST
European Cooperation in Science and Technology

SENESCENCE2030
Targeting Cell Senescence to Prevent Age-Related Diseases

1st Call for Short Term Scientific Missions (STSMs)
GP3 2026-2027

Background

The challenge to extend the human healthspan lies in preventing or alleviating age-associated diseases collectively, rather than individually. Current knowledge of cellular and molecular mechanisms identified as "hallmarks of aging" allows for experimental strategies to prevent premature aging and extend the healthspan. Evidence indicates that cell senescence is a targetable hallmark of aging, typically associated with metabolic disorders, cardiovascular diseases, neurodegeneration, and cancer.

The European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST.EU) funds research networks called COST Actions. These interdisciplinary networks bring researchers and innovators together to investigate a chosen topic for four years.

The COST Action SENESCENCE2030 (CA23119) aims to establish within Europe the concept of targeting cell senescence to prevent age-related disorders. By engaging with international partners, SENESCENCE2030 creates an interdisciplinary and intersectoral network of experts in geroscience and senescence. This facilitates the acquisition of new skills and knowledge among young researchers, medical personnel, and innovators from Inclusiveness Target Countries.

SENESCENCE2030 will highlight the socio-economic impact of therapeutic approaches and the cost-effectiveness of timely interventions. This will help define innovative processes, measures, and products impactful to industries, funders, and policymakers addressing healthcare and socioeconomic challenges related to aging.

Overall, SENESCENCE2030 will empower the transition from a disease-centered therapeutic approach to a balanced, preventive, and personalized treatment strategy. This shift aims to avoid premature aging and promote individual healthspan extension for the next decade.

With this first call, SENESCENCE2030 is offering grants of up to €3,000 each for Short Term Scientific Missions (STSMs) to be completed by 15 April 2027. The STSMs can range from 5 calendar days to 70 days and are aimed at providing learning opportunities, preferably but not solely, to Young Researchers (under 40 years old) through research exchange outside their home country. The grant will be paid on successful completion of the STSM, but an advance payment of up to 50% can be paid to researchers from an Inclusiveness Target Country (ITC).

COST STSM Relevant Documents

COST Short Term Scientific Missions (STSMs) are institutional visits by researchers or scholars aimed at fostering cooperation and collaboration in the context of a COST Action. The host institution must be in a different country than the applicant's affiliation.

For this call, the visits should contribute to the scientific objectives of SENESCENCE2030 (CA23119): “Targeting Cell Senescence to Prevent Age-Related Diseases (hereafter “SENESCENCE2030” or ‘the Action’). The Action's scientific objectives are detailed in its Memorandum of Understanding and Technical Annex.

Eligibility provisions, specifics, conditions, and further information regarding COST STSMs are detailed in the COST Annotated Rules (Annexe 1 and 2, specifically) and in the COST Grant Awarding User guide. Please read these documents carefully before applying.

Templates:

- STSM Grant Application
- STSM Grant Report

Important Dates

Call opens: 1 November 2026, 00:00 Brussels time.

Applications should be submitted at least one month before the planned starting date of the STSM.

Notification: Grant decisions will normally be communicated within 15 days of the application date. Mission Period: 1 December 2026 – 15 April 2027.

Duration: 5–70 calendar days (subject to availability of funds).

STSM Report Deadline: Within 15 days of completion of the STSM.

Financial Support

An STSM Grant covers travel, accommodation, and meal expenses. The grant is paid after the STSM is completed according to STSM conditions

For this call, the Action's Management Committee allocated a total budget of EUR 24,000.

Each successful applicant can receive a maximum of EUR 3,000. An approximate budget justifying the requested grant must be annexed to the application.

The applicable daily allowance is determined by the host country, in accordance with the COST Annotated Rules. Applicants should consult the current COST daily allowance rates. The exact amount awarded for each STSM will be determined during the evaluation. The Action Management Committee (MC) may approve a grant lower than the amount requested.

The COST Association and the Grant Holder of the Action cannot be considered the grantee's employer. Grantees must make their own arrangements for all provisions related to personal security, health, taxation, social security and pension matters.

Eligibility

In order to apply for an STSM grant:

1. The applicant must be based within a research institution in a legal entity in a COST Full/Cooperating Member, Near Neighbour Country (NNC) or European RTD, see the COST Country and Organization Table.
2. The applicant must be engaged in an official research programme as a PhD Student or postdoctoral fellow or can be employed by, or affiliated to, an institution, organisation or legal entity which has within its remit a clear association with performing research
3. The applicant must have set up an e-COST profile by logging into the e-COST platform

[1] COST Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITC) are Countries or Outermost Regions of the COST Full Members defined under 'widening participation and spreading excellence' strand of the Widening Participation and Strengthening ERA' part of Horizon Europe and associated countries as defined by the EC based on an indicator and published in the Horizon Europe Work Programme. For a current list of COST ITCs, see the COST Country and Organization Table

4. The STSM must take place in a different country to the applicant's institution.
5. Applications can be submitted starting from 1 November 2026.
6. The STSM must have a minimum duration of 5 calendar days. STSMs of longer duration are encouraged.
7. The STSM must be completed in its entirety by 15 April 2027.

Specific Provisions

1. Failure to submit the scientific report and supporting documents within 15 days after the end date of the STSM may result in cancellation of the grant.
2. The COST Association and the Action's Grant holder may request additional information to substantiate the documents submitted by STSM applicants.
3. The grant is payable up to 30 days after the grantee submits the report and the Action Chair (or Vice-Chair) approves the supporting documents.

Application Procedure

To apply, please follow the steps below:

1. Register for an e-COST profile at https://e-services.cost.eu/ and add your bank details (if you are a returning applicant or have a COST profile, proceed to step 2).
2. Go to the COST website and select COST Actions and then "Grant applications" from the menu on the left. This will take you to https://e-services.cost.eu/activity/grants/add
3. Select Short-Term Scientific Missions, then the COST Action CA23119.
4. Complete the application form and upload the following:
    a) Letter of invitation from the Host Institution, under the supervision of a senior researcher affiliated with that institution (optional: recommendation letters).
    b) Full CV (max. 3 pages), including a list of publications if applicable (font: 12pt. Times New Roman).
    c) Completed online "Short-Term Scientific Mission Grant APPLICATION FORM"
    d) A detailed estimated budget to justify the required grant.
5. Submit and download your application.

Evaluation and Awarding

The evaluation of STSM applications and selection of STSM Grantees is performed by the Action's Grant Awarding Coordinator and Grant Evaluation Committee, on behalf of the Management Committee (MC) of the SENESCENCE2030 COST Action.

The selection of applicants is based on the scientific scope of the STSM application, which must clearly fit the Action's scientific objectives. For GP3, particular consideration will be given to proposals that strengthen scientific integration, promote the transfer or harmonisation of methods and expertise, foster cross-Working Group collaboration, or contribute to concrete collaborative outputs and future research initiatives.

The selection also takes into account COST policies on promoting gender balance, enabling Young Researchers (under 40 years old), broadening geographical inclusiveness, and the suitability of the proposed budget. Applications from researchers who have not previously received a SENESCENCE2030 STSM are particularly encouraged, while previous beneficiaries remain eligible.

In some cases, the Committee may request additional information or ask the applicant to resubmit the application with further information or a revised budget.

Evaluation criteria

Proposals will be assessed according to the following award criteria:

A. Relevance to SENESCENCE2030 aims and objectives (max 20 points).
B. Scientific quality of the project (max 20 points).
C. Scientific quality of the applicant (max 15 points).
D. Suitability of the research environment at the host institution (max 15 points).
E. Suitability of the budget requested (max 15 points).
F. COST policies (max 15 points).

Proposals must achieve a minimum score of 60 points to be considered for funding.

Post-STSM Outputs

After completing the STSM, each awardee must provide:

- An STSM report on the aims, objectives, achieved results, and dissemination plan of the work/activities performed.
- As an additional SENESCENCE2030 communication output, a short video (maximum 3 minutes) summarising the STSM is requested, highlighting how the mission contributed to the grantee's scientific and career development and to the objectives of the Action.

Contacts

For queries about STSM scientific objectives, contact Grant Awarding Coordinator Prof. Francesco Beguinot: beguino@unina.it

For administrative questions or in case of special needs, please email: info@biostella.it