



7th Call for Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSMs) or Virtual Mobility Activities (VMs)

05 February 2024

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NEXUSNET - STSMs & VMs

This is the 7th Call for applications for Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSMs) and Virtual Mobilities (VMs) funded by the COST Action CA20138 "[Network on water-energy-food nexus for a low-carbon economy in Europe and beyond – NEXUSNET](#)".

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 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.

VMs allow scientists to conduct short research in a virtual setting among researchers or innovators within the COST Action, to exchange knowledge, learn new techniques, and contribute to the scientific objectives of the Action.

NEXUSNET is organized into 6 Working Groups (WGs). STSMs and VMs are considered a great opportunity for participants to focus their work on research topics that have been highlighted by WGs or introduce new ideas addressing the NEXUSNET objectives.

Details on the content and goals of WGs are available in the [Action's Memorandum of Understanding \(MoU\)](#).

NEXUSNET aims to empower collaborations between EU and international researchers and stakeholders, synthesize the existing empirical Nexus research and produce an intellectual toolkit, demonstrating a clear link to improved resource management and governance outcomes that underlie the value of Nexus.

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.

VMs benefit to:

- **COST Action**, which uses a flexible tool to implement virtual activities inside the network, achieve the MoU objectives and significantly increase their impact and reach. Contributes to European leadership in knowledge creation and increasing its innovation potential.
- **VM grantees**, who develop capacity in virtual collaboration and networking in a pan-European framework.

In the framework of this 7th Call, NEXUSNET offers **4 STSM positions** financially supporting travel grants to individuals, **and 2 VM positions**. Grantees need to make their own arrangements for travel, accommodation, etc.



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Regarding the STSM, the minimum visit should last for **15 days** (including travelling), without any limit to the maximum duration. In the case of VM, it is suggested that it lasts **at least 15 days**. However, the STSM and the VM must be accomplished from **March 2024 to June 2024**.

Applications should be submitted by **26 February 2024**. Decisions will be announced by **05 March 2024**.

The maximum amount of the STSM grant for this period is awarded to **2,500€ and the maximum amount for the VM grant is 1,500€**. Regarding STSMs, details about the maximum daily allowance that can be claimed for accommodation and meal expenses per country can be found in the [COST Daily Allowance Rates](#). Applicants are also requested to consult the [Annotated Rules for COST Actions](#).

Who is eligible to apply for an STSM or VM?

STSM travel grants or VM grants are available for researchers and innovators affiliated to a legal entity in COST Full/Cooperative Member, Near Neighbor Country, or European RTD. Young researchers and innovators (<40 years old) are strongly encouraged to participate.

Application instructions

Applications for STSMs or VMs 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 or VM 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](#) or [VM proposal](#).
- 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](#), or <https://nexusnet-cost.com/index.php/how-to-apply/>.

Once the STSM or VM has ended, the grantee must submit a [short report on the outcomes of the STSM visit or VM](#). The report needs to be submitted within 30 days after the end date of the STSM/VM 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.

Additionally, after the completion of the STSM/VM activities the grantee is encouraged to participate in dissemination activities related to the work developed during the period of the grant, such as testimonies, blogs or/and reports about the activities described.

Evaluation of applications

Each proposal will be assessed independently by the STSM/VM 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/VM complements or contributes to the Action strategic priorities and objectives as defined in the MoU, (iii) the compliance of the proposed STSM/VM work plan with the timing of the deliverables of the Action according to the MoU, (iv) planned work plan feasibility and outputs, (v) the ability of the STSM/VM applicant to successfully complete the proposed STSM/VM and disseminate relevant outputs and (vi) the added value to the ongoing work in the WGs.

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).



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- **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/VM. 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).

A proposal can reach a maximum score of 100. The proposals will be ranked and those with the highest scores will be granted.

STSMs and VMs opportunities

STSM Topic 1: Mapping key stakeholders across scales and supporting the organization of the second Regional Nexus Policy Forum

Description: This STSM is linked with MoU – WG6 on Stakeholder Coordination and WG3 on Policy Measures. The STSM will support the efforts to map and involve stakeholders through the organization of the second Regional Nexus Policy Forum, to create and support direct links and regular dialogue exchanges with key actors within the European Nexus policy landscape. In this line, the STSM will support the team in reviewing the opportunities for the NEXUSNET team to participate and host jointly within other international events.

During the STSM, the grantee will support the organization of the second planned Regional Nexus Forums. The outcomes and the key points will be shared with the European Commission in the policy brief format.

Host Institution & contact person: Energy Water Agency (Malta) – Manuel Sapiano, email: manuel.sapiano@gov.mt

STSM Topic 2: STSM on Metanalysis of Monitoring and Modelling in the WEFE Nexus

Description: The STSM aims to contribute to the ongoing efforts of Working Group 1 (WG1) within the NexusNet project by conducting a comprehensive metanalysis on the monitoring and modelling techniques applied to the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems (WEFE) Nexus. Hosted by Dr. Maria Vracholi at the Technical University of Munich, the mission seeks to enhance the understanding of Nexus interactions and promote the development of a standardized analytical framework.

Tasks and Responsibilities will include: Literature Review, Data Compilation, Methodological Assessment, Interactions and Interdependencies, Synthesis and Recommendations, Reporting and Dissemination

Expected Outcomes: The STSM is anticipated to contribute valuable insights to WG1's objectives within the NexusNet project. The metanalysis will serve as a foundational resource for refining monitoring and modelling approaches in the WEFE Nexus, fostering collaboration, and facilitating the development of a standardized Nexus analysis framework. This mission aligns with the NexusNet project's commitment to advancing interdisciplinary research and promoting sustainable practices within the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems Nexus.

Host Institution & contact person: Technical University of Munich (Germany) – Maria Vracholi, email: maria.vracholi@tum.de

VM Topic 1: Develop publishable proceedings of the Regional Nexus Stakeholder Forum to be held in Malta on May 13, 2024

Description: This topic seeks a researcher who will transcribe the content of the discussions that took place during the Regional Nexus Stakeholder Forum that will be organized in Malta on May 13, 2024, through recordings and will create the minutes of the Forum. The person will be responsible for circulating the material to all panelists and iterating with them until it is approved. Then, they will organize the information in coherent text and will put together the results in an easy-to-read document that will be published on a repository to obtain a DOI and will be shared with



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relevant stakeholders as the results and recommendations for Nexus practitioners and policy-makers.

Host Institution & contact person: Water Europe, Brussels, Belgium – Ms. Luisa Prista, email: luisaprista@gmail.com

VM Topic 2: A concerted research agenda in NEXUSNET

Description: The objective of NEXUSNET is to synthesize the existing empirical Nexus research, and to define a concerted research agenda that promotes an integrated approach and produces an intellectual toolkit, demonstrating a clear link to improved resource management and governance outcomes that underlie the value of Nexus.

This topic seeks a researcher with proven knowledge of the Nexus and an interest in shaping a concerted research agenda. Where NEXUSNET is now in year 3, this COST Action plans for a concerted research agenda to be released closer to the end of the project in October 2025. This research agenda will build on the main pillars of NEXUSNET:

- Networking between nexus communities in Europe and beyond to empower collaboration with nexus international organizations, with a focus on North America, the Mediterranean Region, and Africa.
- Showcase benefits of improved Resource Management and governance outcomes underlying the value of Nexus.
- Career development of the Nexus, providing the next generation of researchers with the skills and knowledge to promote the implementation of Nexus thinking in decision-making.

The person will review the outcomes of NEXUSNET against these pillars with a perspective on identifying emerging knowledge gaps and promising areas of future research. The person will be responsible for drafting a report and seeking feedback from the Core Group in NEXUSNET (including the Action Chair, the Vice Chair, the Grant Holder Manager, the Working Group Leaders, and the Working Group Co-leaders).

The research agenda is due for Year 4 in NEXUSNET, but the outcome of the VMG will serve as input into follow-up activities. The planning of the work will be agreed

upon, but submission of a deliverable is due on October 15, 2024.

Host Institution & contact person: United Nations University, Institute for Integrated Management of Material Fluxes and Resources (UNU-FLORES), Dresden, Germany – Dr. Floor Brouwer, email: floor.brouwer@unu.edu

VM Topic 3: Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Grant Awarding and Empowerment activities in NEXUSNET

Description: One of the objectives of NEXUSNET (in Working Group 5) is to create opportunities for the network by organizing collaborative research, educational and training opportunities, exchange of knowledge, technical experience, and mobility events that include STSMs, training schools, workshops, symposium, and conferences. Now, half way the action we have a great amount of knowledge and network from these opportunities and we would like to map this for monitoring and evaluation and to able to create a plan to embed the future opportunities better within the network and utilize the outcomes more effectively.

This topic seeks a researcher/innovator with an interest in diving into the archives and mapping the last two years to be able to monitor and evaluate outcomes. But also, with a proven knowledge in Nexus thinking to find the (hidden) treasures in the data and outcomes of the Grants/ Events/ Network opportunities to support NEXUSNET. The result would be a map of the opportunities so far, and the basis and outlines for monitoring and evaluation of the opportunities. And hopefully the finding of some (hidden) treasures and advise how to utilize these. The monitoring and evaluation will build on the main pillars of NEXUSNET:

- Networking between nexus communities in Europe and beyond to empower collaboration with nexus international organizations, with a focus on North America, the Mediterranean Region, and Africa.
- Showcase benefits of improved Resource Management and governance outcomes underlying the value of Nexus.



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- Career development of the Nexus, providing the next generation of researchers with the skills and knowledge to promote the implementation of Nexus thinking in decision-making.

The person will be responsible for drafting a report and seeking feedback from the Core Group in NEXUSNET (including the Action Chair, the Vice Chair, the Grant Holder Manager, the Working Group Leaders, and the Working Group Co-leaders).

The new monitoring and evaluation agenda should be done at the end of summer 2024. The outcome of the VMG will serve as input into follow-up activities of WG5. The planning of the work will be agreed upon, but submission of a deliverable is due on September 1, 2024.

Host Institution & contact person: H2O-People B.V., Eesergroen, The Netherlands – Ms. Naomi Timmer, email: ntimmer@h2o-people.eu

Questions/inquiries

Please contact:

- NEXUSNET Chair: Prof. Chrysi Laspidou (laspidou@uth.gr)
- NEXUSNET Grant Awarding Coordinator: Assist. Prof. Tamara Rađenović (tamara.radjenovic@znr fak.ni.ac.rs)
- NEXUSNET Grant Holder Manager: Assist. Prof. Giannis Adamos (adamos.giannis@gmail.com)