



# 9<sup>th</sup> Call for Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSMs) or Virtual Mobility Activities (VMs)

14 July 2024

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*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.*

## NEXUSNET - STSMs & VMs

This is the 9<sup>th</sup> 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 \(MoU\)](#).

## 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 9<sup>th</sup> Call, NexusNet offers **3 STSM positions** financially supporting travel grants to individuals. Grantees need to make their own arrangements for travel, accommodation, etc.



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Regarding the STSM, the minimum visit should last for **5 days** (plus 2 days for traveling), without any limit to the maximum duration. In the case of VM, it is suggested that it lasts **at least 15 days**. In the framework of this Call, we offer **2 VM positions**. The STSMs and the VMs must be accomplished from **1 August 2024 to 15 October 2024**.

Applications should be submitted by **22 July 2024**. Decisions will be announced by **26 July 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:** Advanced integrated leadership development for integrated and innovative NEXUS collaborations

**Description:** One of the objectives of NexusNet (in Working Group 5) is to create opportunities and support empowerment 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. We support integrated approach which is needed for Nexus Thinking and Innovation. But what type of leadership, skills and innovations are needed? How will we need to work together in the future? What does it mean to have an intergenerational/ interdisciplinary approach and how could it help us to develop the capacity building programme of NexusNet further.

This topic seeks a researcher/innovator with an interest in the development of new ways of working/ leadership style and training to create a vision on support for the future of the NexusNet Community. A proven knowledge, voice, and understanding of the

interests in Nexus thinking to find the (hidden) treasures in a human-centric and social innovation to support NexusNet. The result would be an advice and a framework of capacity-building development, while experiencing one yourself as well.

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 join and experiment an advanced leadership track to support leadership and innovation processes Sept – Oct 2024 online and face-to-face in the Netherlands (first week of October). Experience the trainings and ad a question for a Sprint (<https://h2o-people.eu/programs/blue-innovation-track/>).

Be responsible for drafting an evaluation and a framework for the next steps in capacity building for NexusNet last year and how to create sustainability for the NexusNet Community at last.

The outcome of the VMG will serve as input into the follow-up activities of WG5. The submission of a deliverable is due directly after the STSM, half October.

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

**STSM Topic 2:** Policy coherence and the WEF nexus in Serbia

**Description:** Policy coherence analysis aims to investigate synergies, conflicts and trade-offs among policy goals and instruments and identify optimal policy mixes across the nexus sectors. The results of a policy coherence analysis can help to formulate recommendations about how policy-making processes can be integrated to mutual advantage and thereby improve the management of nexus resources.

This STSM will involve an analysis of policy coherence and the WEF nexus in Serbia, by (i) conducting a desk study of nexus-related policy goals and instruments, and (ii) using a screening matrix to assess the coherence among goals, and between goals and instruments, to reveal synergies, conflicts and trade-offs.



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The Serbian case study is one of a number of case studies on policy coherence that will be conducted in different regions in Europe. The grantee will have the opportunity to collaborate in the publications resulting from this work.

Since STSMs require transborder travel, applicants must be based at an institution outside of Serbia. In addition they must be fluent in either Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian or Montenegrin. The grantee will be hosted by the University of Niš during the first half of September 2024. The work must be completed by 15 October 2024.

**Host Institution & contact person:** University of Niš, Serbia – Assoc. Prof. Dejan Vasović, email: [dejan.vasovic@znrfak.ni.ac.rs](mailto:dejan.vasovic@znrfak.ni.ac.rs)

### Questions/inquiries

Please contact:

- NexusNet Chair: Prof. Chrysi Laspidou ([laspidou@uth.gr](mailto:laspidou@uth.gr))
- NexusNet Grant Awarding Coordinator: Assist. Prof. Tamara Rađenović ([tamara.radjenovic@znrfak.ni.ac.rs](mailto:tamara.radjenovic@znrfak.ni.ac.rs))
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