– Call for Short Term Scientific Mission (STSM) –

**Third period of activity, call for STSM of
the COST Action IS1207**

"Local Public Sector Reforms:
An International Comparison (LocRef)"

(STSM Period: 01.06.2015 – 31.05.2016)

The COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) Action IS1207 "**Local Public Sector Reforms: An International Comparison ('LocRef')**' is a still expanding European research network, that brings together researchers and practitioners interested in reforms in the local public sector. To achieve the Actions' objectives, "LocRef" invites members' applications to the call for Short Term Scientific Missions (exchange visits).

Goals

The aim of a Short-Term Scientific Mission (STSM) shall be to contribute to the scientific objectives of the COST Action. These exchange visits are aimed at strengthening the existing networks by allowing scientists (members of the COST Action IS1207) to go to an institution or research center that is member of the COST Action IS1207 and is situated in another COST member state. The STSM should enable to foster collaboration, to learn a new method or use working instruments not available in the home institution, to conduct empirical research or to prepare joint publications. They are particularly intended for early stage researchers. An Action participant fits the definition of an "early-stage researcher" if the time that elapses between the date of the end of the PhD and the date of involvement in the COST Action is no longer than 8 years. PhD students are also eligible for STSMs.

We are inviting proposals for STSMs that contribute to the scientific objective of the "LocRef" Action, as indicated in the overarching research question:

Which approaches and effects of local public sector reform can be identified from an international comparative perspective; how can these be explained and what lessons can be drawn for policy making?

The output of the STSM is to be presented by the researcher as a research note or paper at a future COST conference.

Specific (selected) information on STSMs

• STSMs can have a duration of two weeks (10 working days) to three months (90 days).

• The financial support is a contribution to the costs of a STSM and may not necessarily cover all the costs.

• Financial support is limited to travel and subsistence and is based on a fixed grant based on the applicant's request. In every budget period, a call for STSM is published. For this call of the third period of activity (budget period 3), the Management Committee of the Action allocated a budget of € 16.500.- for up to 10 STSMs, which means that the amount granted will be divided among the grantees depending on their requests and according to the COST rules. Please note that STSM grant will be paid after the stay has ended and the scientific report and other requested documents are received and approved by STSM coordinator and Grant Holder. Therefore, you have to be able to pre-finance all your costs related to the STSM (travel, accommodation, meals). The contribution to a STSM consists of a reimbursement rate per day of € 160.- maximum, and up to € 500.- for the travel expenses. A maximum of € 2.500.- in total can be afforded to the grantee.

• After the STSM, the grantee has to submit a scientific report to the Host, the STSM coordinator and the Grant Holder. The grantee is required to submit a short **scientific report within 30 days after his or her stay**. The grantee is responsible to provide an acceptance letter of his/her scientific report from the Host (senior researcher of the Host institution), this acceptance has to be sent to the Grant Holder and the STSM coordinator by the Host (Email is sufficient). Please note that other administrative requirements may occur if the COST Office asks for it!

Early stage researchers like PhD students and postdoctoral fellows are strongly encouraged to apply for these STSMs. If you are interested to apply for a STSM, please follow the directions provided below and submit your application.

Application process

1. All candidates have to be a member of the COST Action IS1207, and shall carefully read and comply with instructions given in section 7 of the COST Vademecum – Short Term Scientific Mission pp 28. The document is available at http://www.cost.eu/participate/networking. To **become a member** of the COST

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Action IS1207, please contact the Grant Holder & Academic Project Coordinator (Christian Schwab, chschwab@uni-potsdam.de). Applicants do not have to be members of LocRef. By conducting a STSM, the applicant becomes automatically a member of LocRef and its PhD Platform at which an active participation is expected.

2. **Register the application online** at https://e-services.cost.eu/stsm. This is just to register the application.

3. **Send the supporting documents** to the STSM coordinator (Trui Steen, TSteen@fsw.leidenuniv.nl), the Grant Holder and to the host of the visit. The list of *supporting documents* is:

- *Motivation letter* including proposed plan of work.
- *Proposed contribution* to the scientific objectives of the COST Action IS1207
- *Support letter* from your home Institution (Email is sufficient)
- *Letter of invitation* of the host institution (Email is sufficient)
- *CV* (including list of publications)

4. The application will then be **assessed by the STSM assessment committee** (i.e. STSM coordinator (Dr. Trui Steen), Action chair (Prof. Dr. Sabine Kuhlmann) and Action vice-chair (Prof. Dr. Geert Bouckaert)). The assessment committee will perform the scientific and budgetary assessment of the applications considering the Actions' objectives and define an acceptable funding level. The criteria used for assessment of applications will be the relevance of the project to the objectives of the "LocRef" COST Action and the scientific quality of the application.

Applications from or to an institution taking actively part at the COST Action are mandatory. Please ask the Grant Holder if you have any concerns. The COST Action promotes gender balance and especially supports early stage researchers. Due to the limited number of fellowships, for each STSM period only a maximum of two persons per participating institution can receive a grant.

5. **Notification** of the assessment committees' decision will be sent to the Grant Holder who informs the applicant. Visits may not begin until at least 10 days after the Grant Holder has received notification of the application's approval.

6. Applicants will receive payment after completion of the visit, following receipt of the necessary documents by the Grant Holder.
The **scientific report** of the STSM contains (see Action homepage for examples):
- Purpose of the STSM;
- Description of the work carried out during the STSM;
- Description of the main results obtained;
- Indication that the output of the STSM is presented by the researcher as a research note or paper at a COST conference (travel & accommodation expenses will be reimbursed);
- Future collaboration with the host institution (if applicable);

• Foreseen publications/articles resulting from the STSM (if applicable);
• Other comments (if any).
Please make sure that the dates in the report match exactly with the dates in the (online) application (see step 2)!

Any candidate may, on a personal basis, suggest an STSM and apply for it, provided it complies with COST rules and agreements from home and host institutions are given. For all the other details and rules, please consider section 7 of the COST Vademecum on Short Term Scientific Mission, pp 28.

The applicant is responsible for obtaining the agreement of the host institution before submission of the application.

Deadlines and Contact

Deadline for applications: continuous
Period of STSMs: between 1 June 2015 and 31 May 2016

Contact persons:

Trui Steen, STSM Coordinator   &   Christian Schwab, Academic Project Coordinator
                                      and Grant Holder Secretary

t.p.s.steen@cdh.leidenuniv.nl   chschwab@uni-potsdam.de

General Contact:

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