

COST Action CA24103

EUropean COllaborative Network on electroCatalysis for Efficient Renewable Technologies (EU-CONCERT)

Call for applications for short-term scientific missions (STSMs)

for implementation from March 2026 to October 2026

Call 1

Deadline 15/03/2026

1. About EU-CONCERT

EU-CONCERT (European Collaborative Network on electroCatalysis for Efficient Renewable Technologies) is a COST Action dedicated to advancing the fundamental understanding and modeling of electrocatalytic processes at electrified solid–liquid interfaces. Electrocatalysis underpins key technologies for the green energy transition, including water splitting, hydrogen production, and the electrochemical conversion of small molecules such as CO₂ and N₂. However, predictive descriptions of these processes remain limited due to the complexity of interfacial phenomena and the lack of systematic validation of theoretical models against well-controlled experimental data.

EU-CONCERT addresses this challenge by encouraging close collaboration between theoretical, computational, and experimental communities, with a strong focus on benchmarking, reproducibility, and data sharing. The Action aims to improve the accuracy and reliability of electrochemical modeling approaches while strengthening links between simulations and experiments through coordinated research and targeted mobility activities.

The objectives of EU-CONCERT are:

1. Develop and assess advanced theoretical and computational methods for modeling electrified solid–liquid interfaces, including solvent, electrolyte, and potential-dependent effects.
2. Generate high-quality, reproducible experimental data on well-defined model systems suitable for rigorous comparison with simulations.
3. Establish shared benchmarking protocols and promote open data sharing to enhance reproducibility and comparability across studies.
4. Facilitate knowledge transfer and interdisciplinary collaboration between theory and experiment.
5. Train and support early-career researchers and strengthen capacity building across the European electrocatalysis community.

To achieve these objectives, EU-CONCERT is organized into the following Working Groups (WGs):

- **WG1 – Advanced Theoretical and Computational Approaches in Electrocatalysis**
Focuses on the development and improvement of computational methods for electrochemical interfaces, including potential-dependent phenomena and reaction kinetics.
- **WG2 – Collection of Experimental Data on Model Systems and Comparison with Simulations**
Coordinates the design and execution of experimental studies on well-defined systems and ensures direct comparison with theoretical predictions.
- **WG3 – Benchmarking and Data Sharing**
Develops standardized protocols for benchmarking and promotes FAIR data sharing practices within and beyond the Action.
- **WG4 – Communication, Dissemination, and Capacity Building**
Oversees training activities, Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSMs), dissemination of results, and engagement with the broader scientific community.

2. What is a short-term scientific mission (STSM)

A Short-Term Scientific Mission (STSM) is a research visit carried out by a researcher or innovator at a host institution located in a different country, for a defined and limited period. The mission enables the applicant to perform a focused piece of work within an international environment, gaining access to expertise, methods, data, or research infrastructure that are not available at the home institution.

STSMs are a core instrument of COST Actions and serve multiple purposes. They promote international mobility and foster collaboration across countries and disciplines, with particular emphasis on supporting early-career researchers. STSMs facilitate the transfer of knowledge and research skills, including the use of specialized techniques and equipment, and contribute to the establishment of durable scientific networks that may lead to joint publications and long-term collaborations. By enabling

targeted research activities, STSMs strengthen ongoing projects within the Action and directly support the achievement of its scientific objectives. In line with COST policies, STSMs also contribute to excellence and inclusiveness by encouraging gender balance, widening geographical participation, and ensuring transparent and open selection procedures.

3. This open call

Applications are invited from scientists and innovators for STSMs that support the EU-CONCERT objectives and WGs as described in this document.

This call is for **six (6) STSM grants**, of which **three are intended for projects with a theoretical or computational focus (WG1) and three for projects with an experimental focus (WG2)**. At least two grants are reserved for Young Innovators and to ensure balance between ITC and non-ITC.

The deadline for submission of applications is **15 March 2026**. All applications will be evaluated collectively after the closure of the call. The funded STSMs are expected to be implemented between **March and October 2026**.

4. Eligibility

STSM grants are available to applicants employed by, or affiliated to, an institution, organization, or legal entity in a **COST full/cooperating member country** or a legal entity in a **near neighbour country (NNC)**.

The eligible countries are listed in [COST Documents & Guidelines](#), particularly, in the [Country and Organisations Table](#).

5. Financial support

Before applying, candidates should read [Annex 2 of the Annotated Rules for COST actions](#).

STSM grants provide a contribution for travel, accommodation and subsistence expenses, and for miscellaneous expenses (such as conference fees) arising from the implementation of the project and the delivery of the report to the COST Action Management Committee. There is no limit to the maximum duration up to October 2026.

The **total budget available** under this call for the six STSM grants is **EUR 14,500**. The requested budget for each STSM will be assessed during the evaluation process and may be adjusted if necessary; however, the financial contribution **shall not exceed EUR 4,000 per grant**.

Participants are reminded that cancellation insurance fees are an eligible expense and are advised to contract one.

Grants are paid by the Grant Holder after the completion of the activity and after approval of all required report/documentation.

The final amount of financial support is determined by the Action Chair/Grant Holder, based on the advice of the Grant Awarding Coordinator, in accordance with the outcome of the review process (see Section 8 below). The request of the applicant should reflect the duration and location of the STSM.

6. The grant awarding process

Each STSM must be carried out entirely within one Grant Period. Each Grant Period runs from the 1 November until the 31 October of the following year.

The grant awarding process for STSMs starts with a call under a strict (annual) budget. Each application is reviewed by a pool of reviewers named by the Grant Awarding Coordinator among the Action members and validated by the Core Group on behalf of the Management Committee.

The Grant Awarding Coordinator advises the Action Chair who acts on the advice if the budget allows. An STSM ends when the payment is recorded. Missions must be complete by 31 October.

STSM applicants should not book anything (e.g., transportation or accommodation) before receiving a confirmation through a Grant Letter.

7. Application procedure

Applicants must have an e-COST profile and applications must be submitted online in e-COST via <https://e-services.cost.eu/stsm>.

Applications comprise:

1. An online Grant Application (found at <https://e-services.cost.eu/stsm>) which includes:
 - a. A project title for the mission that communicates the content and purpose of the work.
 - b. Start and end date of the STSM (within the active grant period up to 31 October 2026, i.e., no overlap across two consecutive grant periods).
 - c. Grant requested.
 - d. Basic information about the host institution and contact person.
2. A completed Application Form ([Application template](#)) describing goals, description of the work to be carried out by the applicant, expected results (outcomes) and description of the contribution to the Action MoU objectives.

3. Confirmation from the host institution of its availability to receive the applicant ([Host acceptance template](#)).
4. A justification document setting out:
 - a. how the proposed STSM will contribute to the scientific and professional growth of the applicant (max. 250 words)
 - b. the financial plan (about 1 page) clearly indicating the expected costs (e.g., transport, accommodation, living costs) following COST rules and the amount of support already received from other sources.
5. Applicant's curriculum vitae.
6. In the case of students, a support letter from the home institution.

Any documents that cannot be uploaded via the e-COST interface should be sent directly to the Grant Awarding Coordinator (Michele Re Fiorentin michele.refiorentin@polito.it) and the Action Chair (Giancarlo Cicero giancarlo.cicero@polito.it).

8. Evaluation of applications

Applications will be evaluated for their quality and for their relevance to the objectives of EU-CONCERT and its Working Groups. Each application will be first screened by the Grant Awarding Coordinator to check that it is complete and that it is relevant to the Action. Incomplete applications are rejected with the possibility to resubmit. Irrelevant applications are also rejected and cannot be resubmitted.

Eligible applications are evaluated by a pool of at least two reviewers appointed by the Grant Awarding Coordinator from among the Action members, acting on behalf of the Management Committee. External expert advice may be sought where appropriate. The Grant Awarding Coordinator manages the process so that evaluators have no conflict of interest in the applications.

An evaluation score is given considering the **proposal clarity, relevance for the Action, feasibility, scientific planning, and expected outputs**. Evaluation criteria are summarized in Table 1.

Scores are from 1 to 6 as detailed below.

Scores:

1 (very poor): proposal is not logical and not understandable. Not clearly linked to any working

2 (poor): proposal with limited understanding, planning and no clear objectives. Weakly linked to any working group.

3 (fair): proposal with some understanding, planning and objectives. Moderate links to at least one WG.

4 (good): good proposal but would benefit from refinement. Well-linked to at least one WG.

5 (very good): clear and effective plan that is well-linked to at least one working group.

6 (excellent): the proposed work plan is well-designed and planned, is feasible with good projected outputs. Strongly linked to at least one WG.

Each reviewer scores each proposal independently. The Grant Awarding Coordinator collates the outcomes of the independent evaluations and, after verifying the fulfilment of all eligibility requirements, communicates the final score to the Action Chair and Vice-Chair. The total score is obtained by summing the scores assigned to the four numerical evaluation criteria, resulting in a score range of **4–24 points**.

Proposals achieving a high score (≥ 20 points) may be funded, provided that all other evaluation criteria are met and that sufficient budget is available. The awarded **financial contribution may be adjusted** by the Grant Awarding Coordinator in line with the reviewers' recommendations and approved by the Action Chair/Grant Holder. The evaluation outcome will be communicated to applicants by email within one month of submission. A summary of the results will be published on the COST Action website.

Table 1. Summary of the evaluation criteria

Category	Scoring	Notes
Requisites		
Support letter – home institution	Y/N	Required for students only
Support letter – host institution	Y/N	
Evaluation		
Motivation letter	Y/N	Convincing?
Work plan		
<i>Clarity and relevance</i>	1 - 6	Score?
<i>Feasibility</i>	1 - 6	Score?
<i>Planning</i>	1 - 6	Score?
<i>Expected outputs</i>	1 - 6	Score?
Grant request		
Travel	Y/N	Acceptable?
Accommodation	Y/N	Acceptable?
Subsistence	Y/N	Acceptable?
Miscellaneous	Y/N	Acceptable?

9. Submission of the STSM report and payment

Once the STSM has been completed, the applicant must submit a request for payment via the e-COST system. To this end, the grantee is required to upload the STSM report,

using the official STSM [report template](#), together with all required supporting documentation, within 15 working days of the end of the mission.

The STSM report includes a short description of the work, and main achievements of the visit and planned future follow-up activities.

In addition to providing the STSM report, the applicant must upload

- A **confirmation document from the host institution** certifying that the STSM was carried out as approved.
- An **additional scientific report** including:
 - The background and a detailed description of the work performed, together with the main scientific findings;
 - An assessment of the impact of the visit on the grantee's professional and scientific development, networking, and capacity building (e.g. establishment of collaborations);
 - Information on any foreseen publications or outputs resulting from the STSM, where applicable.

Any documents that cannot be uploaded via the e-COST interface should be sent directly to the Grant Awarding Coordinator (Michele Re Fiorentin michele.refiorentin@polito.it) and the Action Chair (Giancarlo Cicero giancarlo.cicero@polito.it).

Grants are paid by the Grant Holder after the completion of the activity and approval of all required report/documentation.

10. Acknowledgement and Visibility

Any publication, presentation, or dissemination activity resulting from an STSM funded under this call must acknowledge the support of the COST Action and, whenever possible, display the COST and EU-CONCERT logos (e.g. on slides, posters, or other dissemination materials).

The following acknowledgement text must be used:

“This publication is based on work supported by the COST Action CA24103: European Collaborative Network on electroCatalysis for Efficient Renewable Technologies (EU-CONCERT).”