

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 until September 2026

Call 2

Rolling applications accepted until 31/07/2026

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:

Develop and assess advanced theoretical and computational methods for modeling electrified solid–liquid interfaces, including solvent, electrolyte, and potential-dependent effects.

1. Generate high-quality, reproducible experimental data on well-defined model systems suitable for rigorous comparison with simulations.
2. Establish shared benchmarking protocols and promote open data sharing to enhance reproducibility and comparability across studies.
3. Facilitate knowledge transfer and interdisciplinary collaboration between theory and experiment.

4. 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 is a rolling call: **applications may be submitted at any time until 31 July 2026**, provided that the proposed STSM can be completed by 30 September 2026 and that funds remain available. There is no common submission deadline: complete applications will be processed in the order in which they are received.

Applications meeting the funding threshold defined in Section 8 will be considered for award as soon as their review is completed. Funding decisions will be made on a first-come, first-served basis until the available budget is exhausted.

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 within the active Grant Period, provided that the STSM is completed by 30 September 2026.

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 2,500 per grant**. The number of grants funded under this call is not fixed and will depend on the available Grant Period budget, the number of applications approved, and the final amounts awarded.

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 requested budget, and the funds available at the time of approval. The request of the applicant should reflect the duration and location of the STSM.

6. The grant awarding process

Applications are screened and reviewed as they are received. Each eligible application is reviewed by a pool of at least two reviewers named by the Grant Awarding Coordinator among the Action members and validated by the Core Group on behalf of the Management Committee, where required.

The Grant Awarding Coordinator advises the Action Chair after completion of each review. **Applications with a total score of at least 20/24 may be awarded in order of receipt, subject to eligibility and budget availability**. Once the available budget is exhausted, additional eligible applications cannot be funded unless further funds become available. An STSM ends when the payment is recorded. Missions must be complete by 30 September 2026.

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 30 September 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 screened upon receipt 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 immediately 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 group.

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.

Only proposals achieving a total score of at least 20/24 are eligible for funding. Proposals scoring below 20/24 will not be funded, even if budget remains available. Proposals scoring at least 20/24 will be funded on a first-come, first-served basis, provided that all other eligibility and financial 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 as soon as possible and no later than one month after 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?

Total score threshold	>= 20/24	Required for funding
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)."