

THIRD CALL FOR SHORT TERM SCIENTIFIC MISSIONS WITHIN THE SOUND CONTROL COST ACTION CA17110

January 2019– March 2020

The COST Action CA17110 'Standardizing output-based surveillance to control non-regulated diseases of cattle in the EU - SOUND-control ' encourages and supports exchange visits of researchers as travel grants, the so-called Short-Term Scientific Mission (STSM).

The STSMs are addressed to Early Career Investigators (i.e. researcher in the start phase of his/her career with up to 8 years of experience after finishing a PhD), PhD candidates but also more experienced researchers are welcomed.

There are up to multiple STSMs to be awarded and conducted till November, 2019. We invite you to apply for one of **proposed topics** related to specific Working Group objectives / expectations, or propose your own individual research theme which is related to the SOUND control COST Action. Please note that all STSMs must be in line with the general COST Action CA17110 goals and objectives.

Please remember, that the STSM has to take place abroad (in another COST country) and the candidate should get in touch with a proposed hosting institution individually. However, we can help in searching for hosting possibilities amongst CA17110 project partners, though we cannot guarantee a full success.

WG1, STSM3: **Develop a handbook or wiki page describing the characteristics of control programmes that are applied in the control of non-regulated cattle diseases in the EU**

Host Institution: SRUC (Scotland), Epidemiology Research unit

Timeframe: January to March 2020

Aim: Summarise the information collected by a questionnaire sent to all members and to develop a handbook describing all the control programmes in place.

Tasks:

1- Development of a handbook or wiki page describing the characteristics of CPs that are applied in the control of non-regulated cattle diseases in the EU. The strengths and weaknesses of the different programmes in terms of ability to prevent new infections, early detection, acceptance by the stakeholders and the different contexts in which these CPs are applied will be evaluated.

2- Define the required output that has to be provided by an eventual developed framework and reach a joint understanding on the minimum level of confidence that CPs have to provide.

Requirement:

The person in charge must have a background in epidemiology and data analysis. The person has to be sufficiently self-reliant to contact the representatives of the COST Action from different countries.

Expected outcome:

Handbook or wiki page describing the different CPs in place relative to the farming systems, including parameterisation, strengths and weaknesses in terms of ability to prevent new infections, ability for early detection of new cases, costs and acceptance by the stakeholders.

Expected deliverables:

- First draft of the handbook or wiki page describing the different CPs in place
- Updated contact list of all relevant stakeholders that are involved in the application (either practical or regulatory) of CPs of non-regulated cattle diseases in each of the MS
- Peer reviewed article reviewing the current state of endemic disease controls across Europe.

WG2, STSM3 Design a data collection matrix

Host Institution: Friedrich-Loeffler-Institut (Germany)

Supervisors: Jörn Gethmann, Carola Sauter-Louis, Céline Faverjon and Gerdien van Schaik

Timeframe:

At least two weeks in January/February/March 2020 with the results finalised at the end of March at the latest.

Aim of the STSM:

Design a data collection matrix for collecting information useful to estimate disease freedom from different control programs (CPs) for a range of infectious cattle diseases.

Short description:

The applicant will spend time in the group Dr Jörn Gerthman, and Dr Carola Sauter-Louis at the Friedrich-Loeffler-Institut (Germany) to learn about data collection tools and critical aspects of disease control programs to assure freedom from disease. The applicant will use the work conducted by two previous STSMs (i.e., March 2019 and Summer 2019) and the outputs of a workshop (November 2019) to design a data collection matrix that will be used to collect data useful for estimating the probability of freedom for different CPs for a range of infectious cattle diseases (e.g. BVD, IBR).

The expected results:

The applicant will write a report on the findings of the STSM. The results will be presented during one of the face-to-face meetings of the SOUND control WG2.

WG4. STSM2 - Identify information and other needs to facilitate trade, using output based surveillance methods for non-EU-regulated diseases.

Host Institution: Utrecht University, Netherlands.

Tasks:

1. Literature review focusing on surveillance information and other needs from output-based surveillance of non-EU-regulated diseases, that is are necessary to facilitate trade in healthy animals between European countries.
2. Participate in a facilitated workshop aimed at identifying information and other needs from output-based surveillance of non-EU-regulated diseases from surveillance practitioners and surveillance researchers (Warsaw Poland, Jan 23 2020).
3. Collate and organize the information from the review and the workshop

Requirement:

The person in charge must have a background in epidemiology and an interest in animal health surveillance. The person must be willing to spend at least two weeks at the host institution between January and mid-March 2020.

Expected outcome:

The researcher will produce a report with the findings of the STSM, a brief literature review on surveillance information needed to facilitate trade and the gaps in that information obtained from the workshop. The outcome of the STSM will be presented during a Working Group meeting in 2020.

General STSM topics: Proof disease freedom of CSF in North Macedonia

Host institution: Faculty of Veterinary Medicine – Skopje (FVMS) Macedonia

Timeframe: February 2020

Short description:

The aim of the STSM would be to create a scenario tree model containing all available and relevant data related to the prevention and control for Classical Swine Fever in Macedonia to estimate the sensitivity of the current surveillance programme to prove disease freedom. This would be a first step in the design of an appropriate surveillance program for proving the freedom from CSF in domestic pigs and wild boar population in Macedonia.

This program should take into consideration characteristics of the pig producing sector, as well as the characteristics of the wild boar population in Macedonia, to be tailored in such a way to allow demonstration of freedom from CSFV infection with an acceptable level of confidence.

Required skills:

Veterinary epidemiologist with experience in designing surveillance/monitoring programs for proving freedom of disease.

Expected outcome:

The expected outcome from this STSM would be the probability of freedom given all surveillance activities in place. This will indicate whether the current activities are sufficient or if additionally actions are needed to reach sufficient confidence of disease freedom for CSF.

Additionally, working with a veterinary epidemiologist from the SOUND control network would lead to strengthen the know-how capacity of the epidemiological department at the FVMS, for the design of future epidemiological studies and surveillance/monitoring programs for various diseases.

Call for general STSM topics related to the SOUND control COST Action

Host institution: to be chosen by the applicant (from the countries that are participating in this Action)

Timeframe: within the duration of the current grant period (May 2019-March 2020)

Short description:

We invite applicants that have ideas to conduct a STSM that is related to the SOUND-control aim to apply for the general STSM grant. The aim of SOUND control is to stimulate initiatives in support of the harmonization of the outputs of different surveillance, control or eradication programmes (CPs) for non-regulated cattle diseases in European countries.

Requirement:

There should be a clear connection to the SOUND control COST Action and this should clearly be stated in the application.

Expected outcome:

The applicant will write a report on the findings of the STSM including a section on how the activities conducted within the STSM are connected to the SOUND control Action and the results have to be presented at one of the COST meetings.

Background of SOUND control

COST Action CA17110 Objectives

SOUND-control aims to harmonise the outputs from different European Member States (MS) Control Programmes (CPs) for non-regulated cattle diseases, such as bovine viral diarrhoea (BVDV), paratuberculosis, *Mycoplasma bovis* and salmonellosis. Several European countries have already implemented national or regional surveillance, control, or eradication programmes for these infections. These programmes bring tangible benefits to participating farmers, and the industry because of increased health and welfare and reduced antibiotic use, and reduced direct losses (e.g. increasing production, and reducing morbidity and mortality rates) and indirect losses (e.g. trade constraints) associated with the specific disease. Therefore, development and participation in CPs are to be strongly supported. However, these programmes also create difficulties for intra-community trade, as trade has the potential to introduce infectious agents into regions where disease freedom has been achieved. The difficulties relate to differences in disease status between countries, and the lack of agreed methodologies to assess and compare confidence of freedom among cattle that are being moved between countries and regions. Although for non-regulated diseases no regulations exist at European level, an understanding of equivalence with respect to disease freedom or more correctly termed 'freedom from infection' is important when seeking to facilitate interstate animal movements, whilst also managing the risk of infection.

What are STSMs?

Short Term Scientific Missions (STSM) are aimed at supporting individual mobility and at strengthening the existing networks and fostering collaborations by allowing scientists to visit an institution in another participating COST country or an approved NNC or IPC institution.

STSMs in SOUND-control should specifically contribute to the scientific objectives of the COST Action, whilst at the same time allowing those participating in the missions to learn new methodologies, gain access to specific data and / or methods not available in their own institutions / organisations.

Who is eligible?

The STSM-committee will evaluate the applications and select grantees based on the following criteria:

- Excellence of the written proposal.
- Geographical and gender balance issues are taken into consideration and applications from ECIs will be privileged.
- Priority is given to applicants from inclusiveness countries, but others will be considered as well.
- The country of origin and the host country must be members of the SOUND-control network (not the host or origin institution).

The deadline for applications is 17th of January 2020. The application will then be assessed by the formally delegated persons in the STSM committee and the Core Group against the perceived contribution that the proposed visit will make against the scientific objectives outlined in the Action's Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

How to apply for a STSM

Interested Researchers can apply by following the directions provided below.

1. All applicants must carefully read the funding rules detailed in Section 7 of the COST H2020 Vademecum. This document is available at:
<http://www.cost.eu/participate/guidelines>
2. All applicants must register for an e-COST profile at <https://e-services.cost.eu/>.
3. All applicants must obtain a letter of invitation from the Host institution confirming that they can undertake the STSM on the given dates prior to submitting an application.
4. All applicants must complete, submit and download their STSM application online at:
<https://e-services.cost.eu/stsm>
5. All applicants must send their submitted STSM application form and the relevant supporting documents to the STSM Coordinators for evaluation before the application submission deadline expires.

The list of supporting documents to be submitted for the evaluation are:

- The submitted STSM application form including the budget (downloadable when the online application is submitted - see point 4 above);
- A 1-2 A4 page motivation letter including an overview of the proposed activities that will be performed which must contain a plan of work for the visit highlighting the proposed contribution to the scientific objectives of SOUND-control Action;
- C.V. including scientific degrees obtained (with dates), current position, previous work experience/positions, post-graduate courses and a list of academic publications – if applicable.
- Letter of invitation to the applicant from a senior Researcher affiliated to the Host institution (senior Researchers can be Associate Professor, Professor, Head of Department or equivalent);
- A letter of support from the Home Institution including any coverage of expenses not covered by the Grant during the planned STSM;

The applicant will be formally notified of the outcome of their STSM application by the STSM Coordinators no more than 4 weeks after the application deadline.

Financial support

Financial support is limited to cover travel, accommodation and meal expenses and is paid in the form of a grant. The financial support is a contribution to the costs and may not cover all costs. Specific Euro-FBP rules concerning financial support for STSMs

- The management committee (MC) has agreed to target at least 4-5 STSMs per year
- Financial support is limited to cover travel, accommodation and meal expenses and is paid in the form of a grant.
- The reimbursement rate per day to cover meals and accommodation is a maximum flat rate of 160€ per day (€120 hotel expenses and €20 for lunch and €20 for dinner). Expected travel expenses must be specified in the budget and be reasonable.
- A maximum EUR 2,500 in total can be afforded to the grantee within the SOUND control Action for the full STSM including travel expenses.

After the STSM

The grantee is required to submit a short scientific report to the host institution and to the STSM Coordinator no later than 30 days after the end date of the STSM for approval.

The report should not be less than 5 pages and include the following:

1. aims and objectives of the STSM
2. description of work undertaken
3. main results
4. future collaboration possibilities with the host institution
5. future plans, including potential future publications
6. Outputs produced (e.g. academic paper, funding application, new dataset etc.)

In addition the grantee should provide the following:

- Letter from the host institution which confirms that the applicant has successfully completed the stay.

Failure to submit the scientific report within 30 days will effectively cancel the grant. The STSM Coordinators Team is responsible for approving the scientific report and informing the Grant Holder that the STSM has been successfully accomplished. After receipt of the approval by email, the Grant Holder will execute the payment of the grant.

Please note that 50% of the requested reimbursement can be paid on the first day of the STSM. The final payment to the STSM grantee will be done after the mission is over and the final report is submitted by the STSM participant. Exceptions to this rule cannot be granted.

The final report will be uploaded to the SOUND-control webpage.

For more general information on STSMs, please contact STSM coordinator (Jacinto Gomes (jacinto.gomes@iniav.pt)).