

SOUND control

COST Action CA17110

**COST Action: Standardizing output-based surveillance
to control non-regulated diseases of cattle in the EU**

Third Call For Short Term Scientific Missions

June 2020 – March 2021

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Short Term Scientific Missions (STSMs) in brief



Travel grants for visiting a foreign research institution.

Who?



Researchers (including PhD students and teachers) from countries participating in SOUND control COST Action.



Conduct short scientific research under expert supervision. You can choose between 7 specified topics or submit your own proposal.

Call for STSMs

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 welcome.

There are up to multiple STSMs to be awarded and conducted until March 2021. We invite you to apply for one of the proposed topics related to specific Working Group objectives/expectations or propose your 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 full success.

The deadline for applications is 30th July 2020.

What are STSMs?

STSMs 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.



Topics for the STSMs

1. Development of a framework to standardise country narratives on the characteristics of control programmes for EU non-regulated diseases of cattle4
2. Existence and quality of data about control programmes for cattle diseases5
3. Development of questionnaire on user needs for output based surveillance6
4. Analysis of questionnaire on user needs for output based surveillance7
5. Collate gaps related to output-based surveillance from other projects (STOC-free, Hotline project, RiskSur)8
6. Review on the use of decision-tree models for animal health surveillance purposes .9
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WG1 | STSM3 **Development of a framework to standardise country narratives on the characteristics of control programmes for EU non-regulated diseases of cattle**

Host Institution: Scotland's Rural College (SRUC), Scotland
Supervisors: George Gunn, Sam Strain and Jörn Gethmann
Timeframe: 3-4 weeks between October and December 2020

Aim:

Develop a framework to allow participating countries to provide standardised narratives describing endemic disease control programmes in each of their respective countries or regions with the aim of publishing them as a research topic in *Frontiers in Veterinary Science*.

Tasks:

- 1) To develop a standardised framework to allow authors to write narratives on control programmes in each of their respective countries or regions.
- 2) To assist with the writing of up to 3 country or regional narratives for publication and which can be used as examples for other authors to use.

Requirement:

The grantee must have a good understanding of the major endemic diseases within the EU and an interest in disease surveillance.

Expected outcome:

The grantee will develop a standardised narrative framework and assist with the writing of up to 3 narratives for refereed publication which can be used by other authors as templates to help write narratives for their countries or regions.

Expected deliverables:

- Framework for publishing regional or country narratives on disease control programmes.
- Co-authoring and submission of up to 3 papers to *Frontiers in Veterinary Science*.

WG2 | STSM4 **Existence and quality of data about control programmes for cattle diseases**

Host Institution: Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU), Uppsala, Sweden

Timeframe: At least 2 weeks, preferably before November 2020

Aim:

Provide an overview of existing data about control programmes (CPs) that could be used to estimate disease freedom (e.g., cattle demographics, disease risk factors, testing strategy) from different CPs for a range of infectious cattle diseases in the different partner countries of SOUND control. The quality of the existing data will be also described.

Short description:

The applicant will spend time with Dr Lena-Mari Tamminen in the Veterinary Epidemiology group of SLU to analyse the data previously collected via an online questionnaire that was developed in STSM3 of WG2 (i.e., March 2020) by Egle Rapaliute during her STSM with Céline Faverjon at Ausvet in Lyon, France. Based on the results of the questionnaire we can deduce which data is existing and what the quality of that data is for estimating the probability of freedom for different CPs for a range of infectious cattle diseases (e.g. BVDV, BHV1, Paratuberculosis).

Expected outcome:

The applicant will write a report on the findings of the STSM. The results will be presented during the face-to-face meetings of the SOUND control WG2 on November 9th 2020 in Copenhagen, Denmark.

WG4 | STSM3 Development of questionnaire on user needs for output based surveillance

Host Institution: Animal Health Ireland, Ireland

Supervisors: Maria Guelbenzu, Carla Gomes and Natasha Meunier

Timeframe: 2-3 weeks between October and December 2020

Aim:

Develop and implement a questionnaire to assess user-needs of a potential output-based surveillance tool.

Tasks:

- 1) The grantee will develop an online-based questionnaire to assess user needs for output-based surveillance. The questionnaire will be informed by inputs from the SOUND control WG4 group and information available from the literature.
- 2) The grantee will search and select relevant targets to the questionnaire and will disseminate the survey.

Requirement:

The grantee must have an interest in epidemiology, surveillance and questionnaire design.

Expected outcome:

The grantee will develop and implement the questionnaire. We expect the grantee to report the process used – this will be used as a basis for a future scientific publication reporting the results of the study.

Expected deliverables:

- Design and implementation of the questionnaire.
- Report describing the process of design and implementation of the questionnaire.

WG4 | STSM4 Analysis of questionnaire on user needs for output based surveillance

Host Institution: VPHI, Vetsuisse, University of Bern, Switzerland

Supervisors: John Berezowski and Luís Pedro Carmo

Timeframe: 2 weeks between January and March 2021

Aim:

Summarise the information collected by a questionnaire sent to potential users of an output-based surveillance tool.

Tasks:

- 1) The grantee will work with the responses from the questionnaire about user needs for output-based surveillance. The grantee will conduct the data analysis (including cleaning and management of the data).
- 2) The grantee will review the literature on the topic and interpret the results obtained in the light of the existing literature.

Requirement:

The grantee must have an interest in epidemiology and surveillance. Basic data analytical skills are a requirement.

Expected outcome:

The grantee will analyse the data obtained from the questionnaire. It is also expected that the grantee will interpret the results taking into consideration the available literature on the topic. The outcome of this STSM will be the basis for a scientific publication.

Expected deliverables:

- Report with the results and interpretation of the questionnaire on user needs for output-based surveillance.

WG4 | STSM5 **Collate gaps related to output-based surveillance from other projects (STOC-free, Hotline project, RiskSur)**

Host Institution: Friedrich Loeffler Institute (FLI), Germany - TENTATIVE

Supervisors: Carola Sauter-Louis - TENTATIVE

Timeframe: Minimum of 2 weeks between October 2020 and March 2021

Tasks:

- 1) The grantee will conduct interviews with group leaders of previous and ongoing international projects investigating the application of output-based surveillance.
- 2) Based on the data collected during the interviews, the grantee will elaborate and organize a list and description of gaps (methodological, information, social, other) related to output-based surveillance.

Requirement:

The grantee must have an interest in epidemiology and surveillance. Basic data analytical skills are required. The grantee must have a good level of English in order to be able to conduct the interviews.

Expected outcome:

The grantee will conduct the interviews and collect the data. These will focus on the gaps identified in other international projects related to output-based surveillance.

The results of this STSM should inform WG4 about gaps that should be taken into consideration when preparing a research agenda for output-based surveillance.

Expected deliverables:

- Report with the results and interpretation of the interviews;
- List and description of gaps related to output-based surveillance.

WG4 | STSM6 Review on the use of decision-tree models for animal health surveillance purposes

Host Institution: Norwegian Veterinary Institute, Norway - TENTATIVE
Supervisors: Petter Hopp - TENTATIVE
Timeframe: Minimum of 2 weeks between January and March 2021

Aim:

Prepare a literature review of the use of decision-tree models in the veterinary field for surveillance purposes.

Tasks:

- 1) The grantee will conduct the first steps of a systematic literature review.
- 2) The grantee will create a search string, conduct the database search and prepare the tools for abstract and full-text screening, risk of bias assessment and data extraction.

Requirement:

The grantee must have a strong interest in epidemiology, surveillance, evidence-based medicine and literature reviews.

Expected outcome:

The grantee will conduct the first steps of a systematic literature review. The grantee will conduct the literature search and prepare the tools that will be used by the WG4 members to do the abstract and full-text screening, risk of bias assessment and data extraction.

The results of this STSM will serve as a basis for a scientific publication.

Expected deliverables:

- List of papers to be screened on the scope of the systematic review;
- Tools for: a) abstract screening; b) full-text screening; c) risk of bias assessment; d) data extraction.

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 (June 2020 - March 2021)

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.

How to apply for an 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 before 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.

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 the 30th of July 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).

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.

- 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 €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.

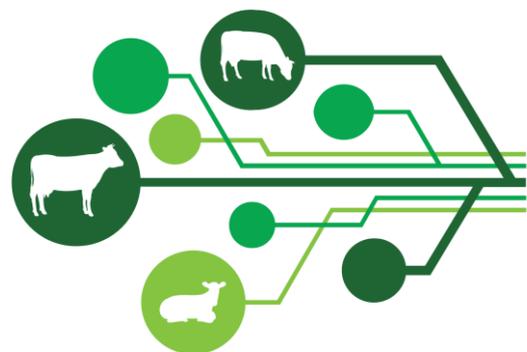
For more general information on STSMs
please contact the STSM coordinator
Jacinto Gomes - jacinto.gomes@iniav.pt.

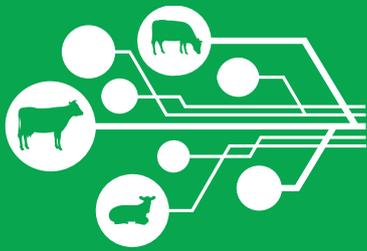
About SOUND control

Background & 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.





SOUND control

COST Action CA17110

THE PROJECT

SOUND control brings together researchers that work in animal health surveillance, applied epidemiology, economics and sociology, stakeholders and policy makers from many different countries to discuss the requirements and demands for an output-based framework that enables objective and standardized comparison of disease control programmes.

SOUND control

Start date: 29/10/2018

End date: 28/10/2022

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www.sound-control.eu



SCIENTIFIC WORK PLAN

The work is carried out in five working groups with the following tasks:

WG1 - CHARACTERISTICS OF EXISTING CONTROL PROGRAMMES

Task: description of the current control programmes for non-regulated cattle diseases across member states.

Leader: Prof George Gunn/Dr Carla Gomes
SRUC, Inverness, United Kingdom

WG2 - DATA REQUIREMENTS AND AVAILABILITY

Task: determination of data needs for an output-based framework and assessment of the available data.

Leader: Prof Gerdien van Schaik
Utrecht University, Utrecht, Netherlands

WG3 - EVALUATION OF EXISTING METHODS

Task: assessment of the available mathematical and statistical methods for objective and standardized comparison of control measures.

Leader: Dr Aurélien Madouasse
INRA & Oniris, BIOEPAR, Nantes, France

WG4 - ADDRESSING THE KNOWLEDGE GAPS

Task: establishment of a joint research agenda focused on the development of methodologies for objective comparison of outputs from different input-based control programmes.

Leader: Dr John Berezowski
University of Bern, Bern, Switzerland

WG5 - DISSEMINATION AND COMMUNICATION

Task: dissemination, communication and exploitation of the results of this project.

Leader: Ms Tanja Knific
University of Ljubljana, Ljubljana, Slovenia