EUROPEAN COOPERATION
IN SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Short Term Scientific Mission (STSM)

User guide

July/2019

COST Association AISBL | Avenue Louise 149 | 1050 Brussels, Belgium
T +32 (0)2 533 3800 | F +32 (0)2 533 3890 | office@cost.eu | www.cost.eu

Funded by the Horizon 2020 Framework Programme
of the European Union

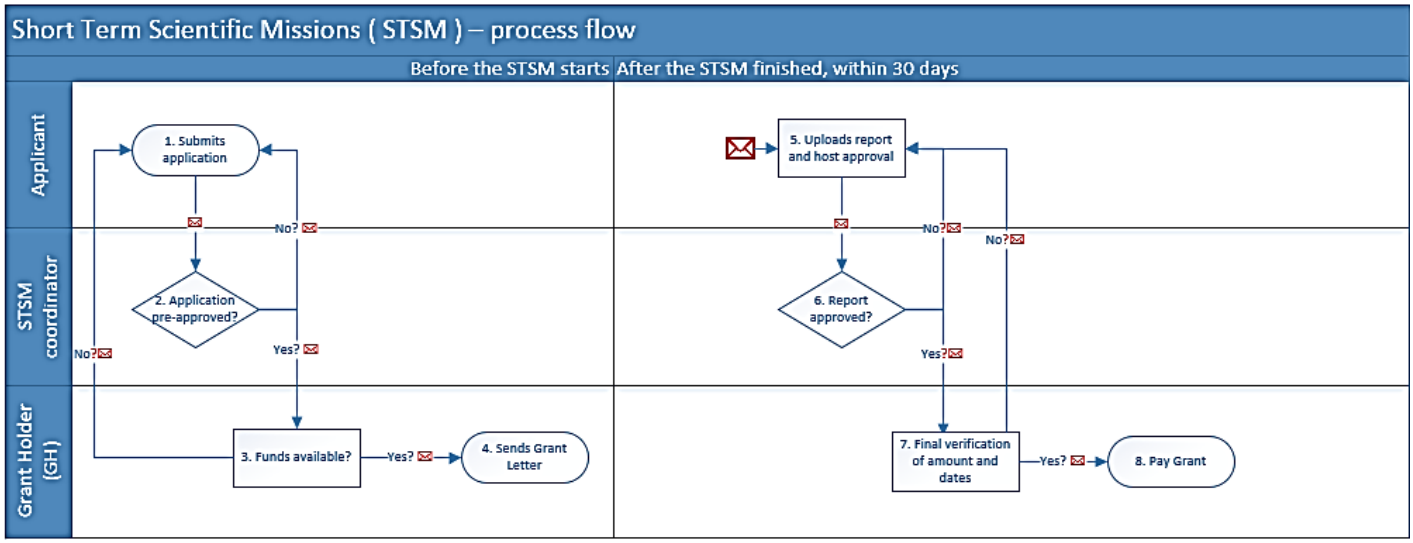
CONTENTS

1. Process flow 3
2. Key players 3
3. process overview 4

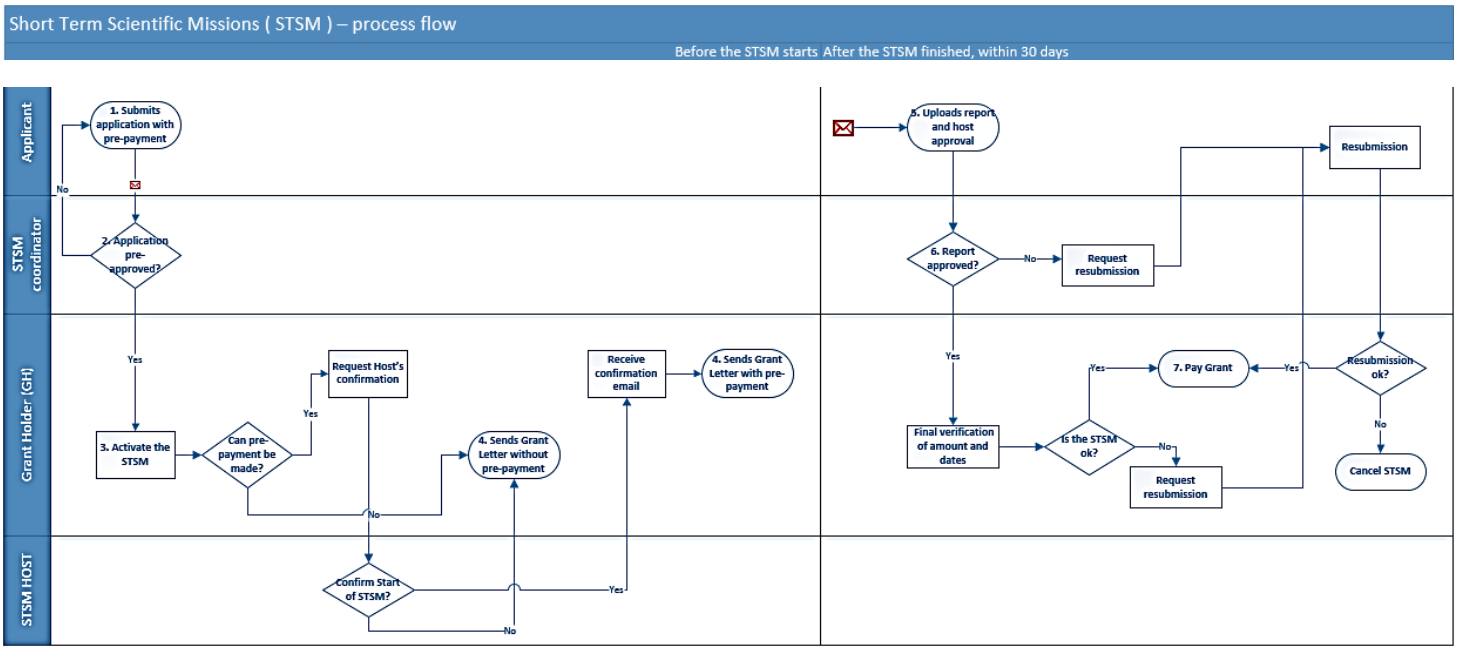
1. PROCESS FLOW

This document describes the STSM process, from the moment an applicant submits an application for approval by the STSM coordinator to the payment and recording of the amount paid by the Grant Holder (GH) to the STSM grantee.
It is necessary to separate the process in 2 parts: one describes the step to be performed before the mission starts and another the steps to be performed after the mission ends.

STSM – process flow



STSM with a pre-payment request – process flow



2. KEY PLAYERS

- STSM applicant

- STSM coordinator
- Grant Holder (GH)

STSM applicant

The STSM applicant can be any person with an e-COST profile. An STSM applicant must specifically contribute to the research coordination and capacity building objectives of the COST Action for which they are submitting a STSM application.

The STSM applicant must be engaged in an official research programme as a PhD Student or postdoctoral fellow or can be employed by, or affiliated to, an institution, organisation or legal entity which has within its remit a clear association with performing research.

Specific provisions have been made to encourage the application submission by researchers from ITC countries. [1] STSM applicants with an affiliation in an institution in an ITC country can request a pre-payment of 50% of grant. This is payable under 2 conditions: that the GH has sufficient funds to cover 50% of the grant in advance and that the host confirms to the GH that the mission has started.

STSM coordinator

The STSM coordinator is the person elected by the MC, ideally during MC 1, to coordinate the STSM awarding process. The STSM coordinator can perform the evaluation of applications alone or by heading an STSM panel.
The STSM coordinator's tasks include: evaluate applications, approve or reject these applications in e-cost, evaluate the scientific report after the mission, post-approve or reject the report.

Grant Holder

The GH monitors the incoming approved applications, determines the Grant amount in accordance with the request, but also with the budget available, sends the successful applicants their Grant Notification, makes the timely pre-payment of 50% of the grant (when applicable), and ensures that all grants are paid within the deadline of 30 days.

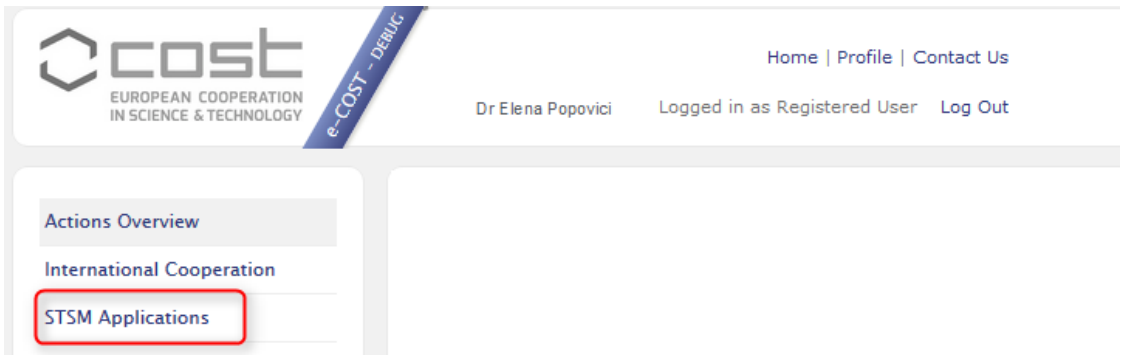
3. PROCESS OVERVIEW

3.1 Applicant creates an STSM request

The applicant encodes an STSM application by loging into e-COST and clicking on the STSM application tab.
If the applicant's e-COST profile is incomplete, they will first have to fill in the missing information (affiliation, education details, CV).

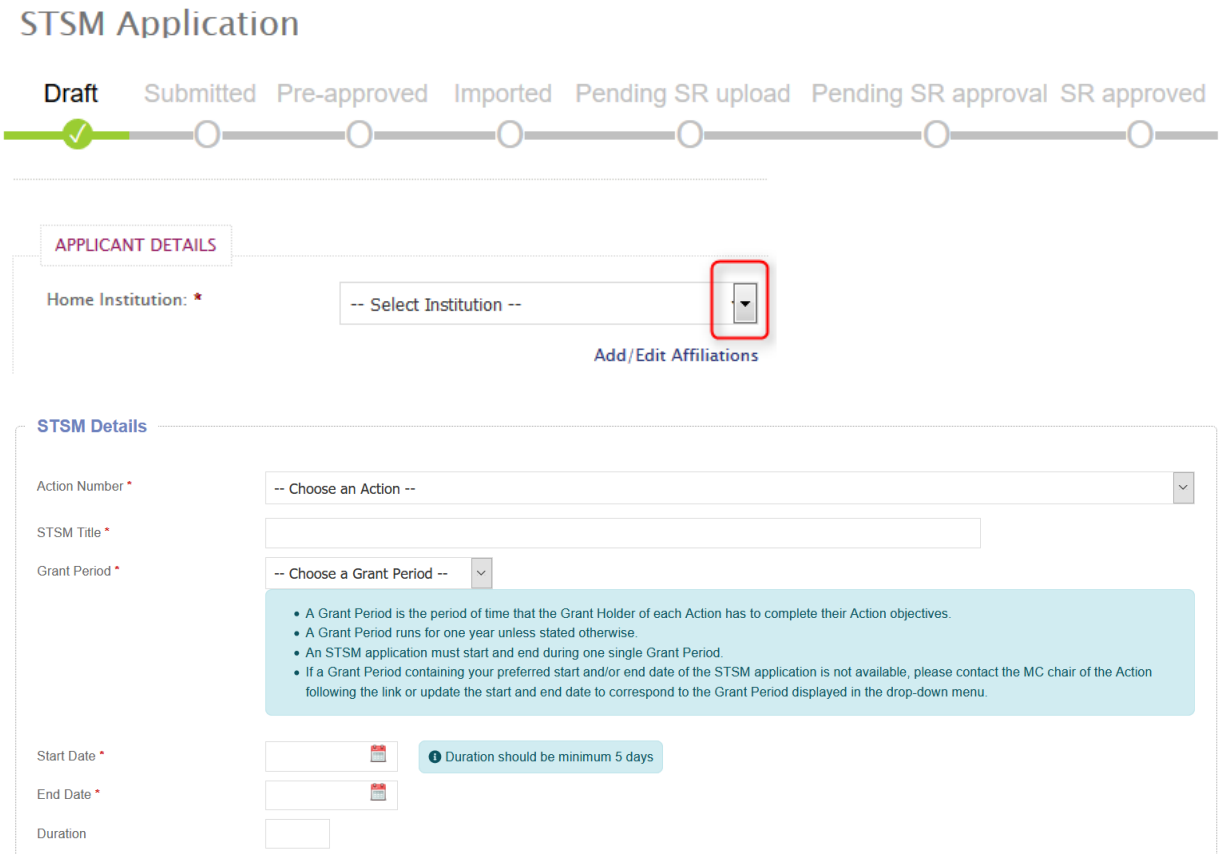
Any already submitted applications are available for consultation in the applicant's e-COST profile. To submit a new application, the applicant clicks on 'Create a new STSM Request'.

[1] The following countries are considered ITC: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Croatia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Republic of Serbia and Turkey.



The application page contains the following sections:

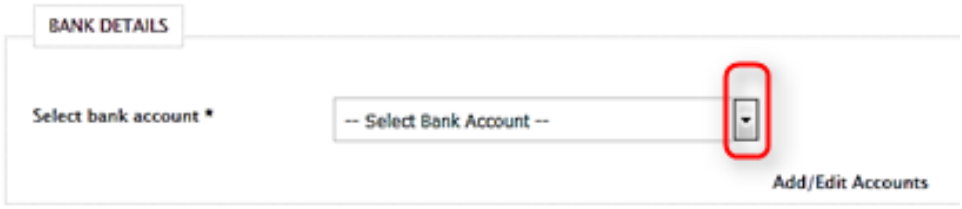
- Applicant details
- STSM details (the application must start and end during the same Grant Period (GP). If a GP is not active, the applicant will not be able to submit an application.
- Bank details
- Host details (must be located in a different country than the country of the applicant)
- Financial support
- Supporting documents (2nd page of the application also reachable by clicking on button in the upper left corner)

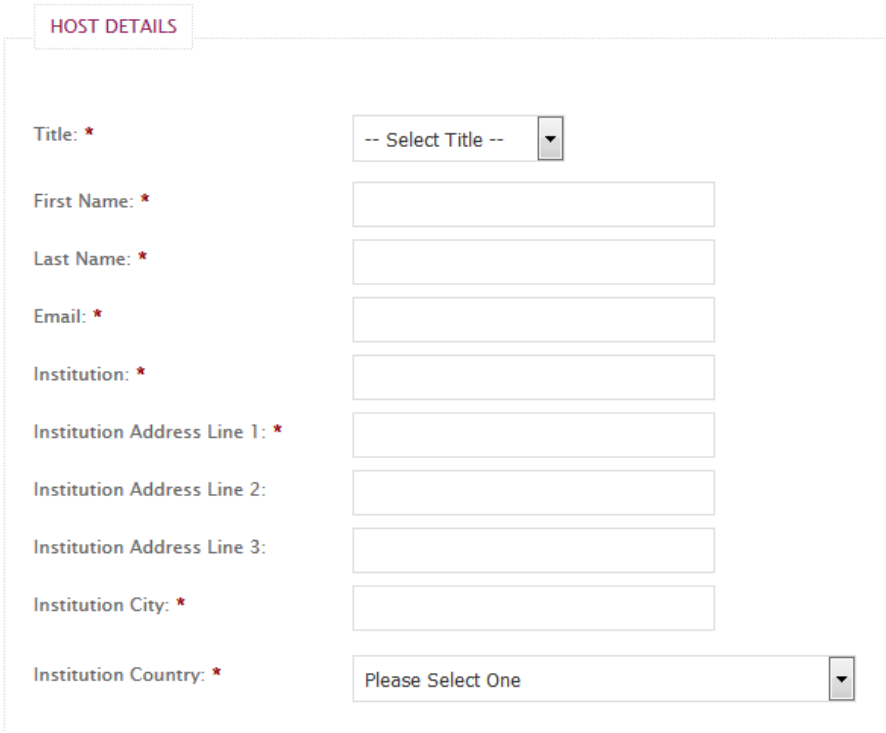


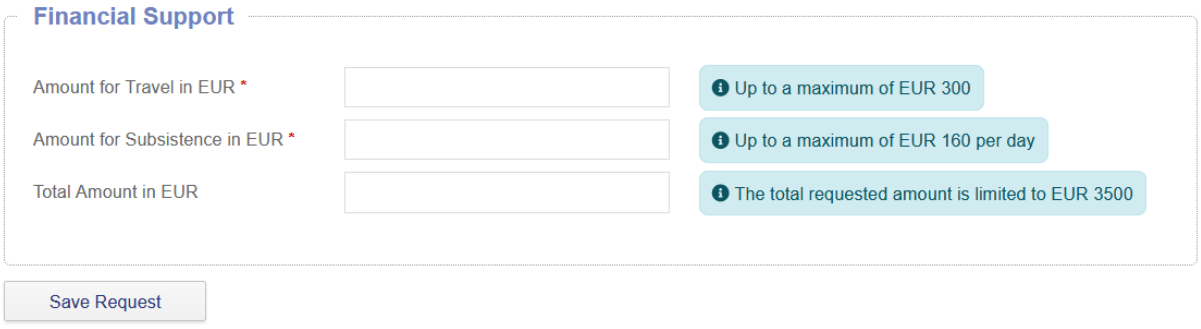
Motivation and Workplan summary

1. Aim & motivation - Please explain the scientific and/or other motivation for the STSM and what scientific and/or other outcomes you aim to accomplish with the STSM.
2. Proposed contribution to the scientific objectives of the Action.
3. Techniques - Please detail what techniques or equipment you may learn to use, if applicable.
4. Planning - Please detail the steps you will take to achieve your proposed aim.

limited to 2000 words

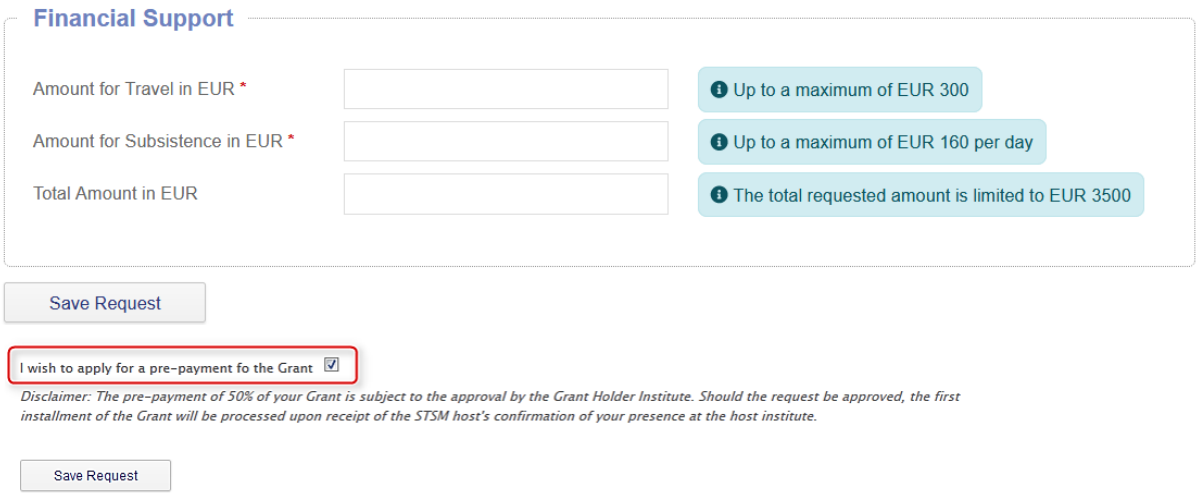




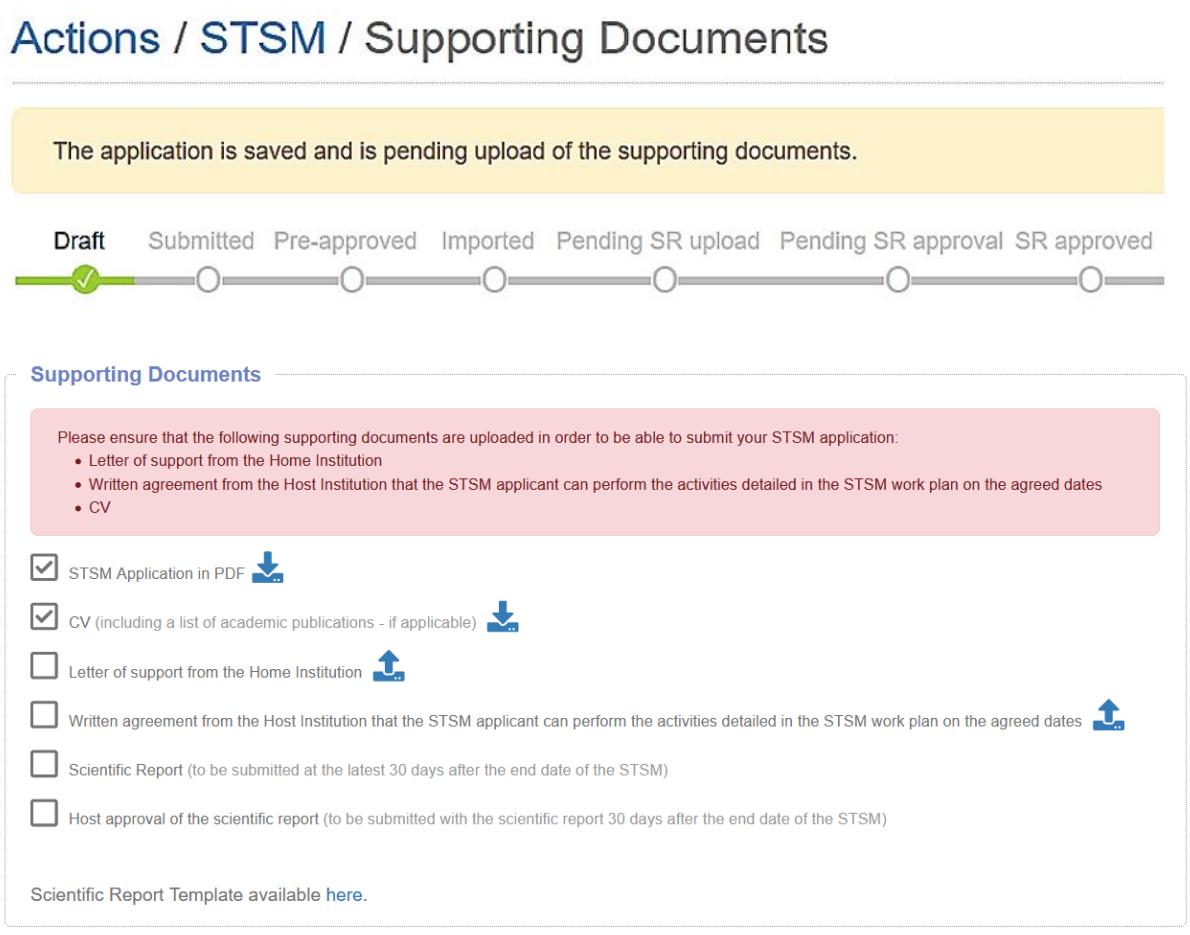


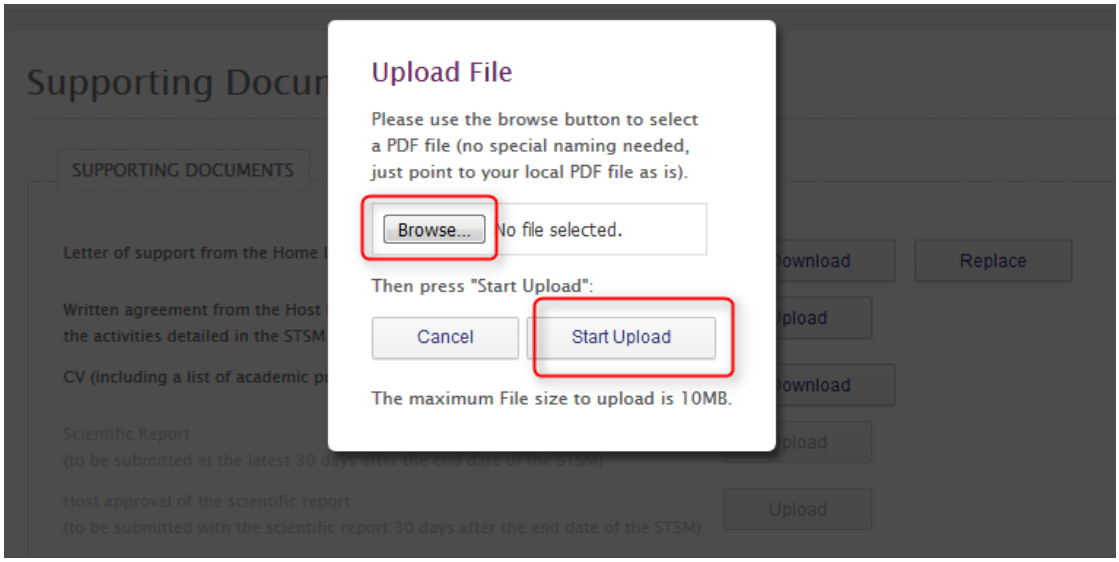
If the applicant is affiliated with an institute from an Inclusivenss Target Country, (s)he can apply for a pre-payment of 50% of the Grant. The applicant must keep in mind that the transfer of the 50% of the

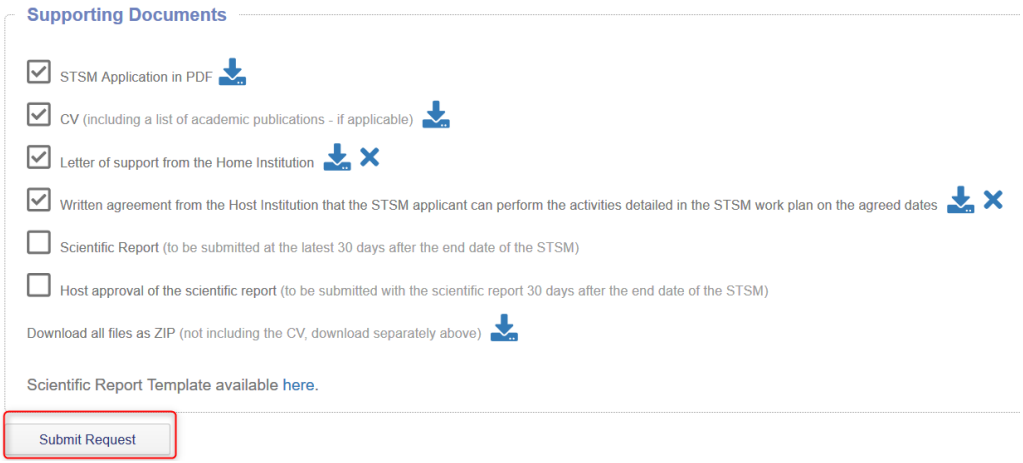
Grant can only take place after the mission has started and as such, requesting a pre-payment is more effective for STSMs longer than 1 month.

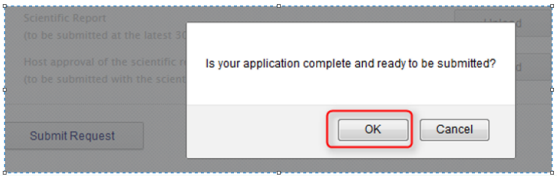


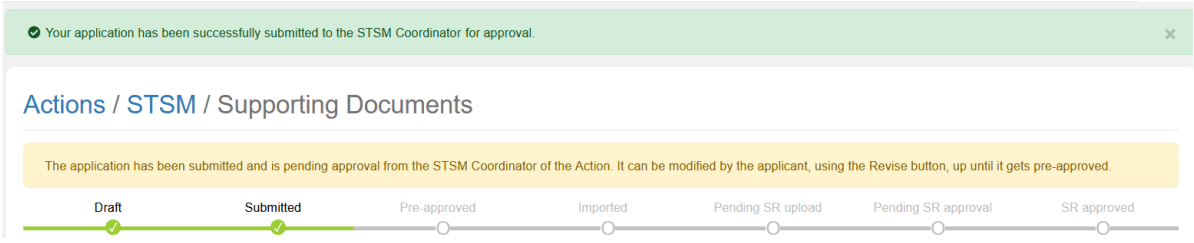
The request can be save only if all fields have been completely on the page, otherwise the information is lost. After saving the request, the applicant must upload specific supporting documents in order to be able to submit the application.











3.2 STSM Coordinator approves/rejects the application

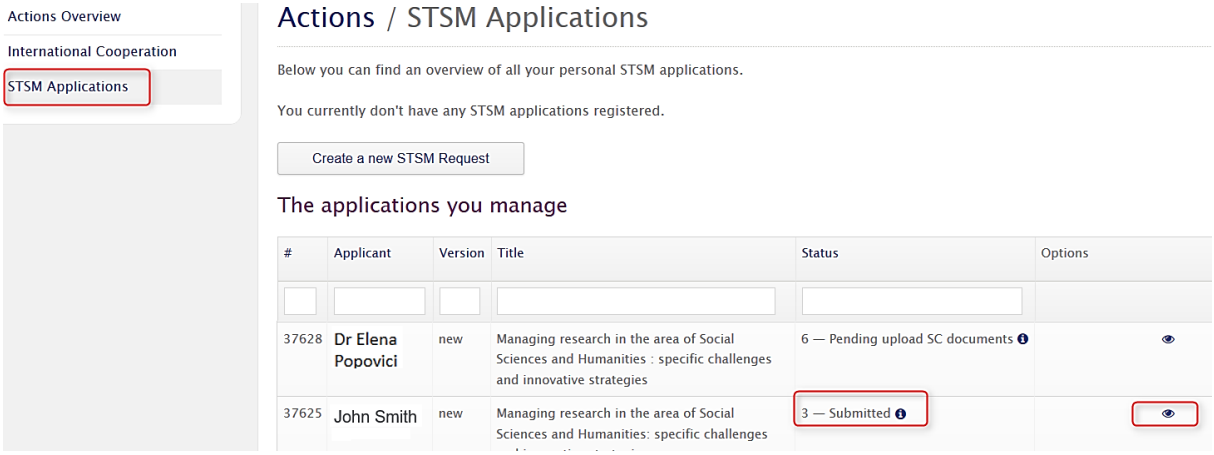
As soon as the application is submitted, the STSM coordinator is notified. The applicant also receives a copy of the notification.

Alternatively, the STSM Coordinator can check the status of applications via an STSM e-COST dashboard. The STSM Coordinator will be able to approve/reject only those applications whose status is 'Submitted'.

For all other applications, the STSM coordinator will be able to see at which stage in the process they are.

Dear STSM coordinator,

Dr Elena Popovici has submitted an on-line STSM application request.
Please verify the validity of this application and approve or reject it by clicking on the link below:
http://mirror.prod.cost.local/stsm/apply/37583
We thank you for your cooperation.
Kind regards,
e-cost
Ref: ST-1.SM

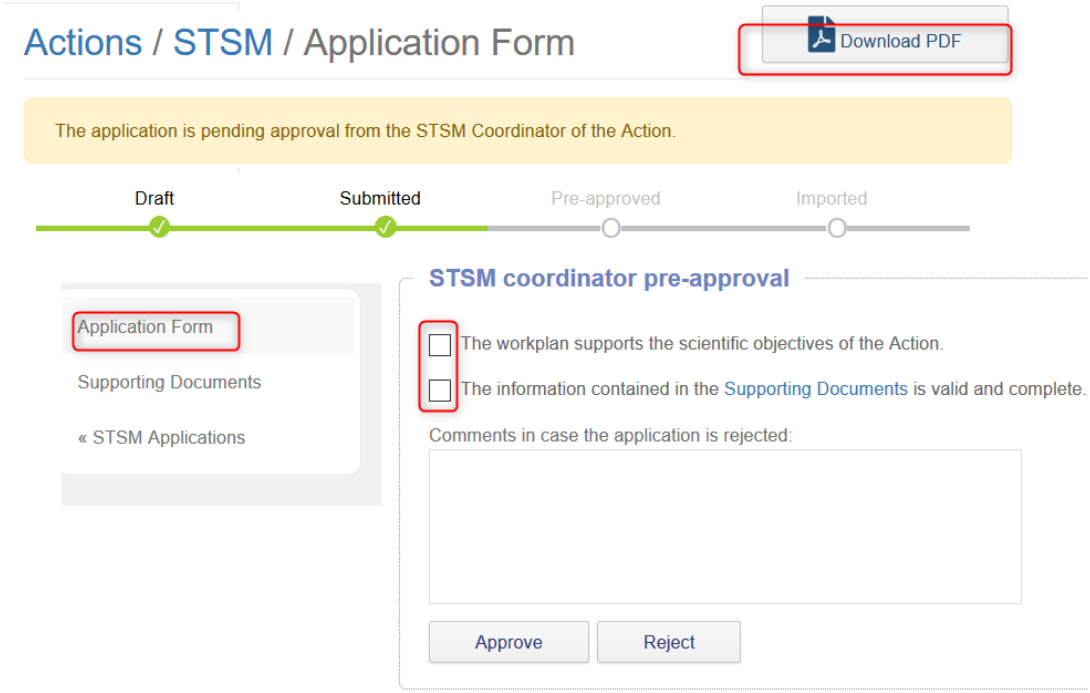


If the STSM coordinator wishes to approve the application, the STSM coordinator must confirm that the Workplan is in line with the Action's objectives and confirm that the supporting documents are valid.

If the application is rejected, the STSM coordinator must provide a justification to guide the applicant in her/his resubmission.

In the cases when the STSM Coordinator wishes to share the application package with the STSM Panel, (s)he can download:

- The application itself
- The CV of the applicant from his/her e-COST profile
- The documents supporting the applicant's request



3.3 The GH sends the applicant the Grant Notification Letter

As soon as the STSM coordinator approved the STSM application, the GH is notified and can send the Grant Letter notification.

Dear Grant Holder,

COST Action: CA15204
STSM reference number: 37289
STSM applicant name: Dr Elena Popovici
Home institution: Universitatea de Medicina, Iasi, RO
Host institution: Vienna University, Vienna, AT
STSM start and end date: 2017-05-01 - 2017-05-30

On behalf of the Management Committee of the COST CA15204, I would like to inform you that:

- The proposed STSM workplan is in line with the scientific objectives of the Action;
- The supporting documents are eligible and complete.

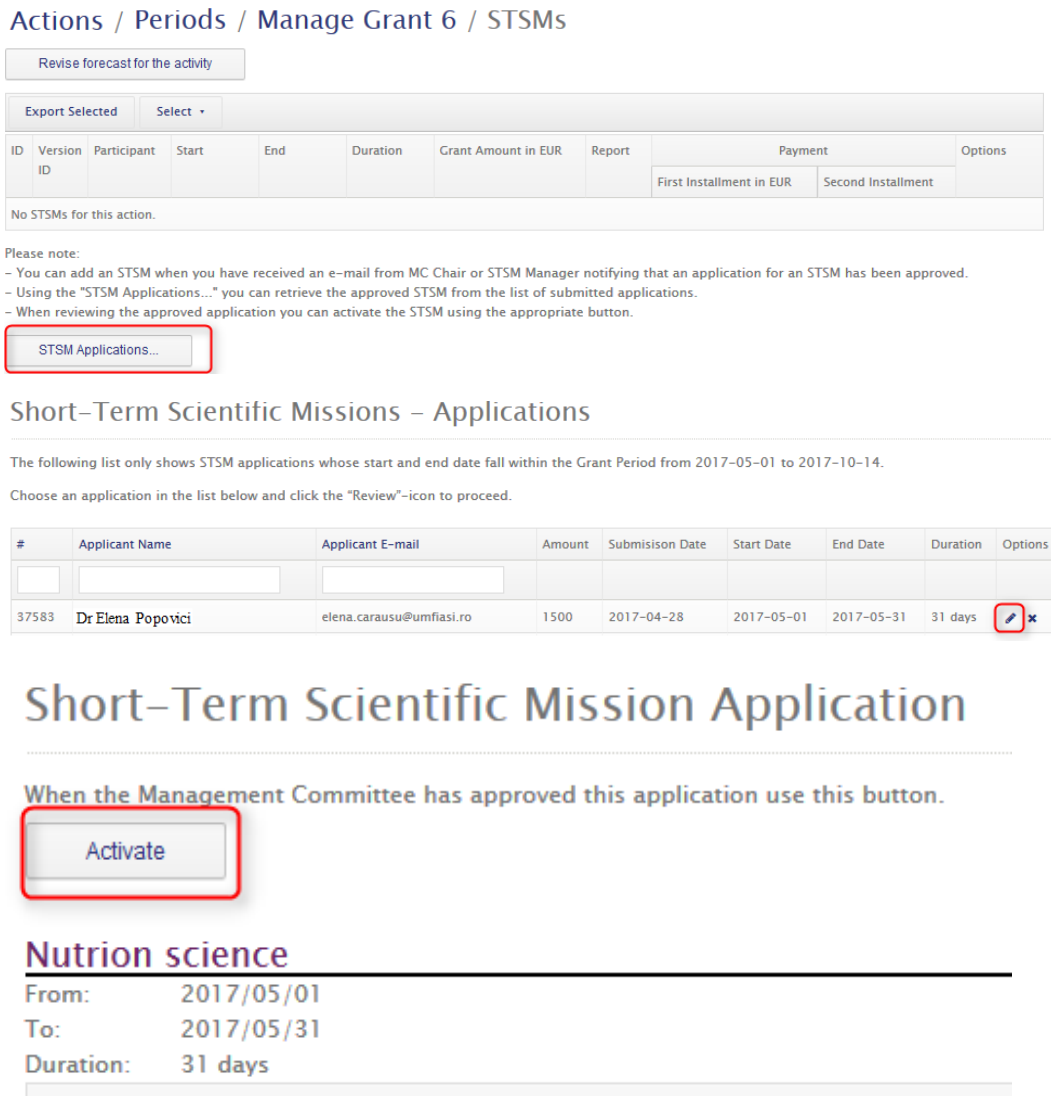
Please verify that funds are available to support this application and send the applicant the Grant Notification Letter.

Kind regards,

Dr Janet Smith
STSM coordinator

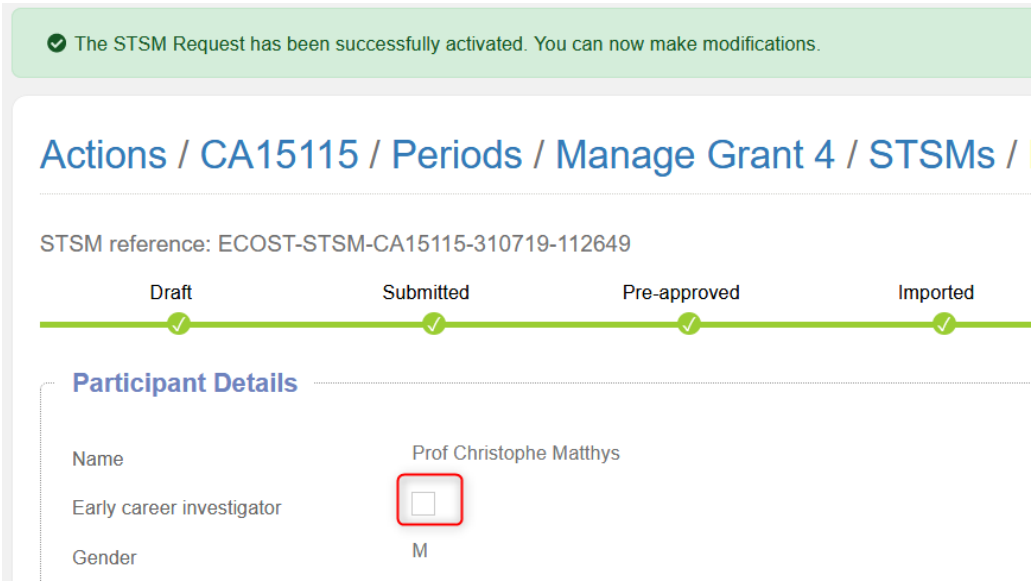
Ref: ST-2.SM

The GH logs into e-cost and first activates the application in its current state.



The GH is able to modify the title, topic, dates, and institute name, should this be required, once the STSM application has been activated.

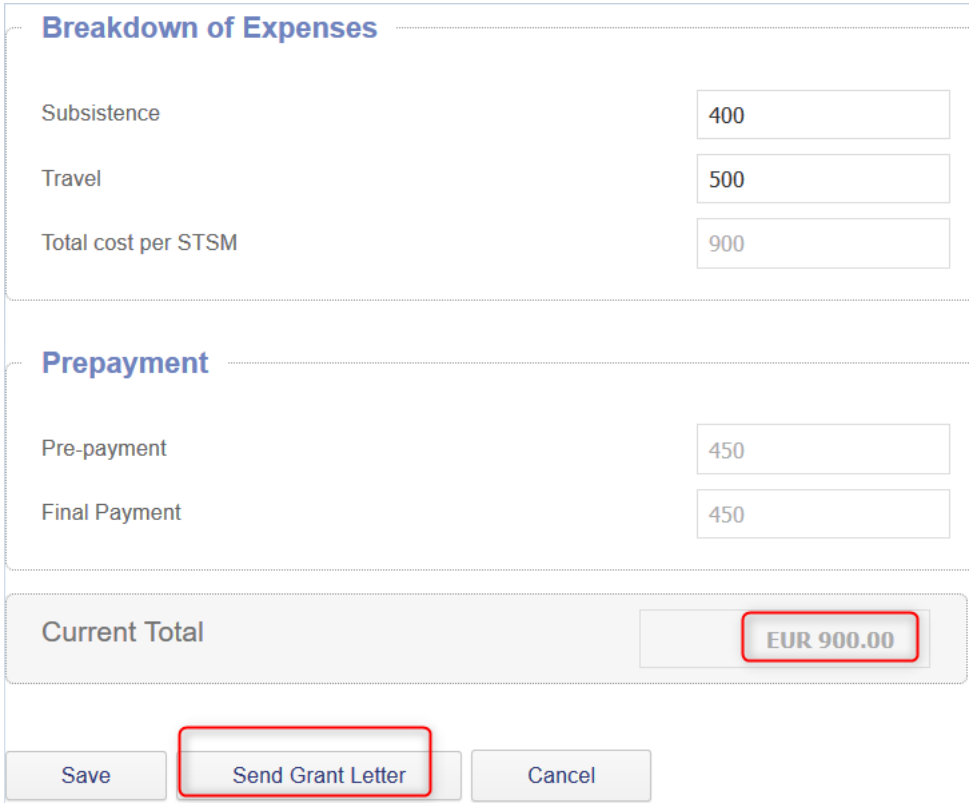
The GH must confirm if the applicant is an Early Career Investigator for statistical purposes.



The GH must confirm that the applicant is coming from an Inclusiveness Target country and, in cases when there is a request for a pre-payment of 50% of the Grant, that the GH has sufficient funds available.

In the screen 'Approved Grant amount", the GH can decide the level of the Grant to be awarded taking into account the funds available.

The Grant amount can be up to the level requested by the applicant or less.



3.3.1 The GH makes the payment of 50% of the Grant

When the STSM applicant from an ITC requests and is granted a pre-payment of 50% of the grant, the STSM host receives an notification requesting her/him to confirm to the GH that the STSM started on schedule. Without the host confirmation, the pre-payment will not be done.

The actual transfer of 50% of the grant can take several days after the receipt of the STSM host email confirmation.

Dear STSM Host,

Dr Elena Popovici has requested a pre-payment of 50% of the Grant related to the following STSM application:

COST Action: CA15130
STSM reference number: 456723
Home institution: University of Iasi, Romania
Host institution: Vienna University, AT
STSM start and end date: 2017-04-20 - 2017-04-24

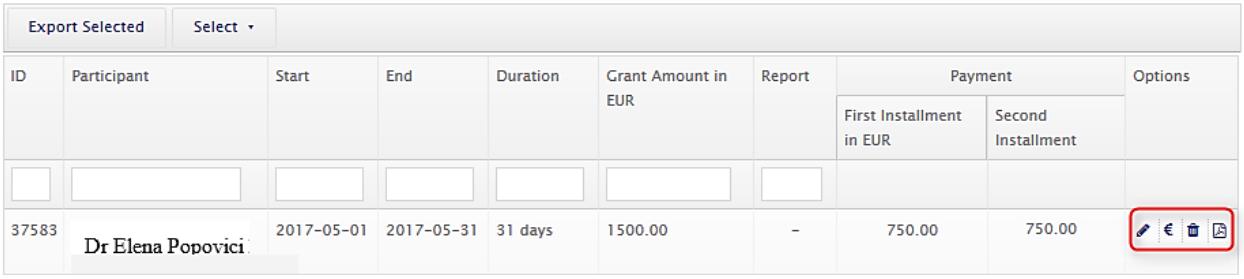
In order for the Grant Holder Institute to initiate the pre-payment, we kindly ask you
to send an email to the Grant Holder (grantholder@gm), on the date when the applicant will have started the STSM.

Kind regards,

Grant Holder

Ref: ST-4.SM

The GH can consult the approved application by using the different options available for each STSM, as shown below.



3.4 STSM grantee uploads the scientific report and host approval of the report

1 day and 15 days after the end of the STSM, the grantee receives a reminder to upload the scientific report and the host approval of the report. The deadline to submit the last supporting documents is 30 days from the end of the STSM.

The submission of the supporting documents is mandatory or the Grant is cancelled. Late submission, beyond the deadline, can also lead to the cancellation of the Grant and, in cases when a pre-payment was done, the obligatory reimbursement by the grantee of the amount received.

A scientific report template is available on the Supporting documents page or on-line here: http://www.cost.eu/STSM_report_template

The STSM grantee must complete this template and save it in pdf before uploading it in e-COST.

The host approval of the report can be an email confirming that the STSM took place and the goals outlined in the Work plan were reached.

Dear STSM applicant,

This is a reminder that you are required to submit for approval your scientific report within 30 days from the end date of your STSM.
You are kindly requested to complete the following steps:

- Ensure that your scientific report is approved by a senior scientist in the host institute.
- Click on the link below before 2017-05-20 and upload your approved scientific report and the host approval. http://branch.qa.cost.local/stsm/apply/37289
- Add the bank details on which you wish to receive the Grant to your e-cost profile, if you have not done so already.

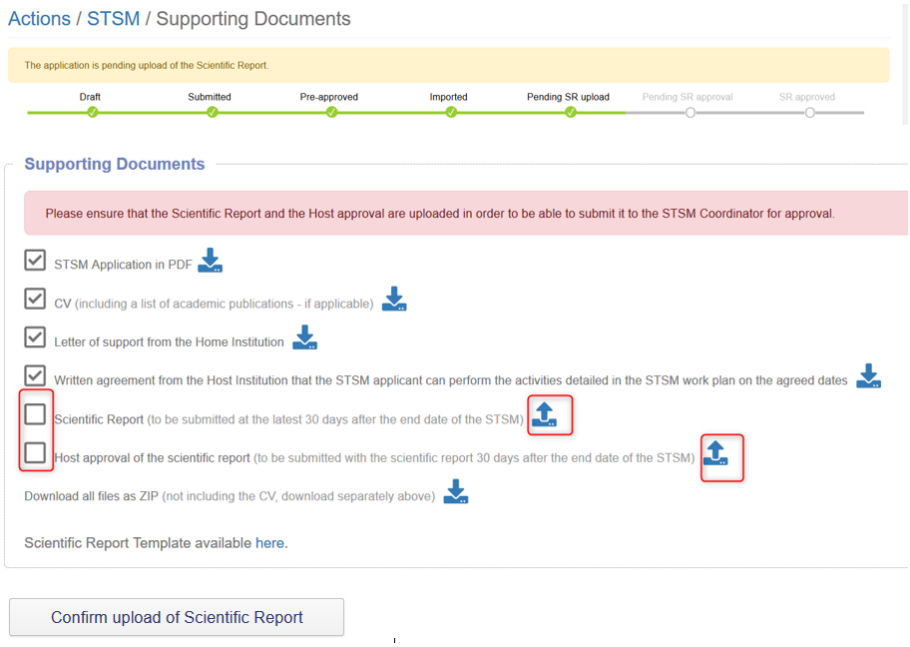
Failure to submit your scientific report on time may result in the cancellation of the STSM grant.

The payment of your Grant is carried out by the Grant Holder following the receipt of the STSM coordinator approval of your scientific report.

Kind regards,

e-COST

Ref: ST-6.SM



3.5 STSM Coordinator approves/rejects the scientific report

The STSM coordinator is notified when the applicant submitted the scientific report and host approval and has to verify the validity of the report by clicking the link in the notification. Alternatively, the STSM Coordinator can access the application via the STSM e-COST dashboard.

Dear STSM coordinator,

Dr Elena Popovici has submitted the scientific report related to the following STSM application:

COST Action: CA15204
Home institution: University of Iasi, RO
Host institution: Vienna University, AT
STSM start and end date: 2017-05-10 - 2017-05-31

Please verify the validity of this scientific report and approve or reject it by clicking on the link below:
http://branch.qa.cost.local/stsm/apply/37287

We thank you for your cooperation.

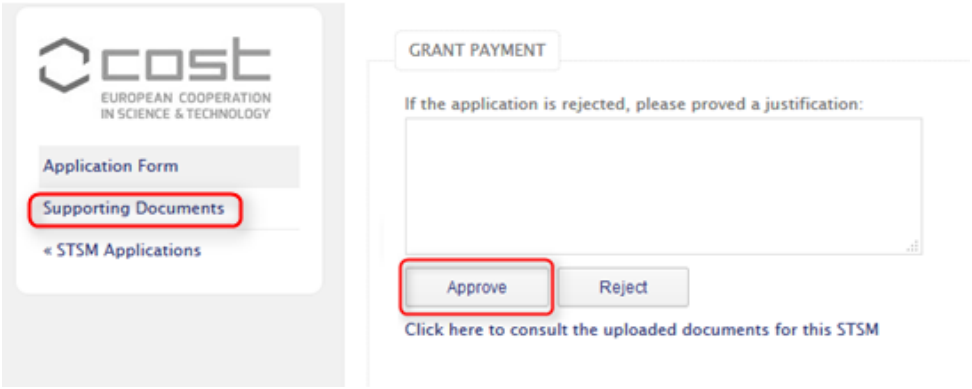
Kind regards,

e-COST

Ref: ST-7.SM

If the application is rejected, the STSM coordinator must provide a justification to guide the STSM grantee in her/his resubmission.

If the STSM coordinator approves the report, the GH is notified that the grant can be paid.



Dear Grant Holder,

COST Action: CA15204
Home institution: University of Iasi, RO
Host institution: Vienna University, AT
STSM start and end date: 2017-05-10 - 2017-05-31

On behalf of the Management Committee of the COST , I would like to inform you that :

- This STSM has been completed in line with the proposed STSM Workplan
- The scientific report is approved
- The Grant can be paid.

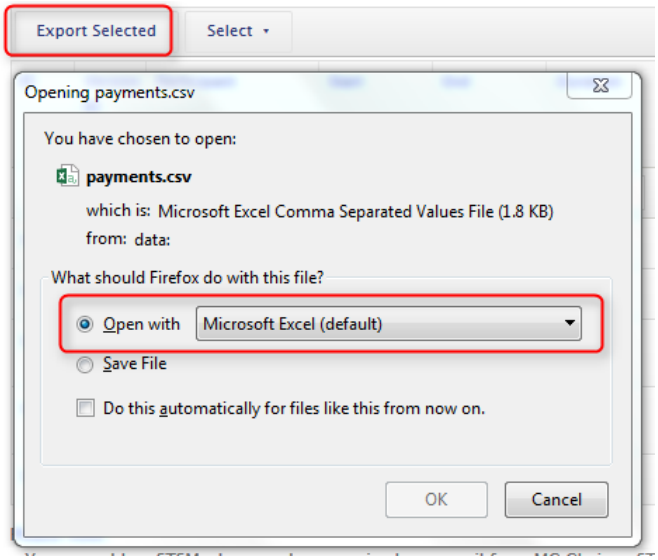
Kind regards,

STSM Coordinator

Ref: ST-8.SM

3.6 The GH makes the payment of the Grant or, if applicable, of the 2nd instalment of the Grant

The GH can download an excel list of STSM grants that are ready to be paid. This list contains the necessary information for the GH financial and accounting department to process the Grant transfer.



Once the GH financial and accounting department processed the Grant transfer, the GH can record the the payment and complete the STSM process.

In the cases when 50% of the Grant was pre-paid, the GH must complete the amount for the 2nd instalment before recording.
By recording the payment, the status changes to Paid.

The process is complete.

Participant	Start	End	Duration	Grant Amount in EUR	Report	Payment		Options
						First Installment in EUR	Second Installment	
Dr Elena Popovici	2017-02-06	2017-02-24	19 days	750.00	Accepted	750.00	Record Edit View Delete	
Dr Sorin Cheval	2017-04-22	2017-04-26	5 days	2100.00	Accepted	0.00	Paid View Revert	