

COST Action CA22122 - Rethinking the Blue Economy: Socio-Ecological Impacts and Opportunities (RethinkBlue)

THIRD YEAR ORDINARY OPEN CALL FOR APPLICATIONS FOR GRANT AWARDS

Types of Grant Awards in Year 3

During this first application period, we invite applications for the following types of grant awards:

- Short-Term Scientific Missions
- ITC conferences
- Dissemination conferences
- Young Research and Innovator Conferences (YRC)

Please read the information provided below carefully and check the evaluation criteria to see if the call is relevant for you. Before submitting your application, please ensure that your application is complete and includes all required documents.

Time Period of Activities and Application Periods in Year 3

Applications can be submitted by 1 March 2026 for STSMs and conferences that take place between 25 March and 31 October 2026

Grants for Short-Term Scientific Mission (STSM)

A Short-Term Scientific Mission (STSM) consists in a visit by a researcher or innovator to a host organization for specific work to be carried out and for a determined period of time. The host organization must be located in a different country than the country of affiliation of the researcher or innovator.

Scope. The grant provides a contribution towards traveling, accommodation and subsistence expenses, implementation of the project, delivery of the report to the COST Action MC and overall effort. The amount of the grant is determined by the Action's MC. The maximum amount is 4,000€ per grant (see COST C Level Annotated Rules, section A2-3).

How to apply. The applicant completes the grant application form in e-COST (on the "Grant applications" tab or <https://e-services.cost.eu/activity/grants/add>) and uploads any additional documents that are required.

For STSM grants, the following documents are required:

1. The COST STSM application form, available at https://www.cost.eu/STSM_GrantApplication

In the section "Expected outputs and contribution to the Action MoU objectives and deliverables" in this application form, applicants must specify how the

proposed STSM links to the topic of at least one of the Action's WGs and to the scientific goals of the Action.

2. A letter of motivation.
3. The applicant's CV.
4. A letter of invitation to the applicant from the host (i.e. a researcher affiliated at the host institution).
5. For PhD students and post docs: A letter of support from their supervisor or head of department.
6. Approximate budget and brief justification.
7. Recommended: A letter of support from the applicant's WG leader/co-leader or a Core Group member that documents the relationship of the STSM with a collaborative work between RethinkBlue Action participants, related with deliverables of the RethinkBlue Action (e.g., publications, policy briefs).

All required documents must be submitted before the deadline. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Evaluation Criteria for STSM grants. The proposed STSM must contribute to the scientific objectives of the COST Action CA22122 - Rethinking the Blue Economy: Socio-Ecological Impacts and Opportunities (RethinkBlue), and fit within the scope of one or more of the RethinkBlue Action's Working Groups. When submitting the application, the applicant must be a member of at least one of the Action's Working Groups.

STSM proposals will be evaluated in two steps, according to the following criteria:

Step 1: Initial screening

Evaluation criteria:

- the application is complete, and all required documents are submitted
- the application is submitted prior to the deadline
- the applicant is a member of at least one of the WGs of the RethinkBlue Action
- the time period of the STSM falls within the time period specified in the call for applications.

Applications that fail to meet these criteria will be rejected. Applications that meet these criteria will be reviewed.

Step 2: Review

Evaluation criteria:

- Relationship of the STSM with collaborative work between RethinkBlue Action participants, especially work on deliverables of the RethinkBlue Action (e.g., publications, policy briefs).
- Scientific quality of the project for which the STSM grant is sought
- Feasibility of the STSM / the work that is planned during the STSM
- Importance/necessity of the STSM for achieving the goals of the scientific project
- Connection of the STSM and of the project's scientific output to the aim of the RethinkBlue COST Action
- Connection of the STSM and of the project's scientific output with the theme of a specific working group of the Action

When several proposals meet the evaluation criteria outlined above, priority will be given to

- applicants who actively participate in the RethinkBlue Action
- proposals by young researchers and innovators, women, researchers and innovators from Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITC) and researchers and innovators with disabilities
- proposals from applicants who have not previously received an individual grant (STSM, VM, or conference grants) from the RethinkBlue Action
- ensuring a balance of grants awarded to members of different working groups

After the STSM. The grantee submits the required reports and relevant documentation in e-COST within 30 days after the end date of the STSM or 15 days after the end of the Grant Period, whichever date comes first. The timeframe may be shorter as per the Grant Holder / Grant Awarding Coordinator's request to meet reporting deadlines.

The report is submitted on e-COST. The grantee completes the report template on e-COST, and uploads any additional documents that are required. For STSM grants, the following additional documents are required:

- The completed report template available on the e-COST platform.
https://www.cost.eu/STSM_Report
- An official confirmation by a representative of the host institution (e.g. the researcher who hosted the grantee, or the head of department) of the successful execution of the STSM. The confirmation must state the dates of the grantee's stay at the host institution.

If results from the STSM are published (e.g. in a scientific journal) or presented at any national or international conference (oral or poster), it is mandatory to acknowledge the support of the COST Action CA22122 according to the COST guidelines on visual identity. Posters should also include the COST and EU logos as specified in the guidelines on visual identity.

Following the STSM, Science Communicator coordinators will ask the grantee(s) for an abstract and visual material from the STSM period to be published on the RethinkBlue webpage. The grantee(s) are committed to collaborate in dissemination while receiving support from the RethinkBlue action.

Grants for presentations at ITC conferences and dissemination conferences

ITC Conference grants provide financial support for Young Researchers and Innovators affiliated with an institution in an Inclusiveness Target Country or Near Neighbour Country to present their own research at a high-level conferences that are organized by third parties (i.e. conferences that are not organized or co-organized by the RethinkBlue COST Action). The presentation can take the form of an oral presentation or a poster.

Dissemination Conference grants provide support for an oral presentation by an Action Participant of the work of the Action in a high-level conference that is organized by a third party (i.e. conferences that are not organized or co-organized by the RethinkBlue COST Action).

It is understood that Dissemination Conference grants are intended for the presentation of research results obtained from the joint work of a team of Action members collaborating on a deliverable for our Action.

Scope. The grant provides a contribution towards traveling, accommodation and subsistence expenses, registration fee, printing of scientific poster and overall effort. The amount of the grant is determined by the Action's MC. The maximum amount is 2,000€ per grant for face-to-face conferences or 500€ per grant for virtual conferences (see COST C Level Annotated Rules, section A2-3).

The "**1 person rule**" will be applied: only 1 person of the team working on a deliverable can get a grant for a particular conference (e.g. we do not give grants for 2 people to present a paper together at the same conference)

How to apply. The applicant completes the grant application form in e-COST (on the "Grant applications" tab or <https://e-services.cost.eu/activity/grants/add>) and uploads any additional documents that are required.

For conference grants, the following documents are required:

1. The appropriate COST conference grant application form (for ITC conference or dissemination conference), available at <https://e-services.cost.eu/activity/grants>.
2. A letter of motivation. This should include information on the relevance of the conference for the scientific aims of the RethinkBlue Action and for one or more of the WGs. In addition, applicants for ITC Conference grants should describe the importance of the conference with regard to the potential impact on the future research and career. Applicants for Dissemination Conference grants should explain how the conference presentation aligns with the RethinkBlue Action's Science Communication Plan.
3. The applicant's CV.
4. Copy of the abstract of the accepted presentation (for ITC Conference grants: oral or poster presentation; for Dissemination Conference grant: oral presentation).
5. Acceptance letter from the conference organizers (e.g. email confirming that the presentation is accepted).
6. For PhD students and post docs: A letter of support from their supervisor or head of department.
7. Approximate budget and brief justification.
8. Recommended: A letter of support from the applicant's WG leader/co-leader or a Core Group member that documents the relationship of the conference attendance with a collaborative work between RethinkBlue Action participants, related with deliverables of the RethinkBlue Action (e.g., publications, policy briefs).

All required documents must be submitted before the deadline. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Evaluation Criteria for ITC and conference grants. The proposed conference presentation must contribute to the scientific objectives of the COST Action CA22122 - Rethinking the Blue Economy: Socio-Ecological Impacts and Opportunities (RethinkBlue), and fit within the scope of one or more of the RethinkBlue Action's

Working Groups. When submitting the application, the applicant must be a member of at least one of the Action's Working Groups.

Proposals will be evaluated in two steps, according to the following criteria:

Step 1: Initial screening

Evaluation criteria:

- the application is complete, and all required documents are submitted
- the application is submitted prior to the deadline
- the applicant is a member of at least one of the WGs of the RethinkBlue Action
- the time period of the conference falls within the time period specified in the call for applications.

Applications that fail to meet these criteria will be rejected. Applications that meet these criteria will be reviewed.

Step 2: Review

Evaluation criteria:

- Relationship of the conference presentation with collaborative work between RethinkBlue Action participants, especially work on deliverables of the RethinkBlue Action (e.g., publications, policy briefs).
- Scientific quality of the project that will be presented
- Connection of the presentation to the aim of the RethinkBlue COST Action
- Connection of the presentation with the theme of a specific working group of the Action
- For ITC Conference grants: potential for impact on the applicant's career
- For Dissemination Conference grants: alignment with the RethinkBlue Action's Science Communication Strategy

When several proposals meet the evaluation criteria outlined above, priority will be given to

- applicants who actively participate in the RethinkBlue Action
- proposals by young researchers and innovators, women, researchers and innovators from Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITC) and researchers and innovators with disabilities
- proposals from applicants who have not previously received an individual grant (STSM, VM, or conference grants) from the RethinkBlue Action
- ensuring a balance of grants awarded to members of different working groups

The conference presentation. It is mandatory to acknowledge the support of the RethinkBlue COST Action (CA22122) during the presentation, according to the COST guidelines on visual identity. Powerpoint presentations and posters should include the COST and EU logos as specified in the guidelines on visual identity.

After the conference. The grantee submits the required reports and relevant documentation in e-COST within 30 days after the end date of the conference or 15 days after the end of the Grant Period, whichever date comes first. The timeframe may

be shorter as per the Grant Holder / Grant Awarding Coordinator's request to meet reporting deadlines.

The report is submitted on e-COST. The grantee completes the report template on e-COST, and uploads any additional documents that are required. For conference grants, the following additional documents are required:

- Completed report template (available on e-COST).
- Certificate of attendance.
- The programme of the conference or book of abstracts / proceedings indicating the presentation of the grantee (ITC Conference: oral presentation or poster; Dissemination Conference: oral presentation)
- Copy of the given presentation (ITC Conference: oral presentation or poster; Dissemination Conference: oral presentation)

Following the conference, Science Communicator coordinators will ask the grantee(s) for an abstract and visual material from the conference to be published on the RethinkBlue webpage. The grantee(s) are committed to collaborate in dissemination while receiving support from the RethinkBlue action.

Contact for questions.

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