

## **COST Action CA24145**

### **International Food Techno-functionality - Data (INFOTECH-DATA)**

#### **Call for applications for short-term scientific missions (STSM)**

**for implementation from March 2026 to October 2026**

#### **Call 1**

**Continuously open  
(first come first served basis)**

### **1. About INFOTECH-DATA**

The production of food products that meet all societal requests (e.g. sustainable, biodiversity-friendly, healthy and affordable) is impaired due to a lack of data. To be specific, techno-functionality data is needed to formulate new food products. The data is currently being obtained by a widespread analysis of techno functionality using different techniques by food companies and research groups. The result is a lack of comparable, accessible and reusable data, which thus hampers the food formulation process, especially in terms of predictive decision-making. Therefore, INFOTECH-DATA (International FOod TECHno-functionality – DATA) aims to create a network and facilitate the creation of open-access databases with comparable techno-functionality data of food ingredients. The Action will create methodologies with the whole EU food science community to achieve this. The methodologies will consist of 1) standardised techno-functionality method and 2) blueprints from database architecture and data management strategies. Consensus on these methodologies will lead to an immense scientific milestone within the community and have immense technological and socio-economical impact on the food industry. Additionally, this Action will host an extensive educational programme to empower young, talented researchers, who will play a key role in implementing these methodologies in the future. By bringing together food techno-functionality and data scientists, INFOTECH-DATA will be able to create effective methodologies that will accelerate the production of healthy, sustainable and affordable foods, and, at a same time, build an interactive and collaborative community which will support these methodologies and collaborate in long-term joint research.

## 2. The key objective of the INFOTECH-DATA Action

- Determine key techno-functionalities that require standardisation;
- Develop standardised and approachable techno-functionality methodologies;
- Develop open-access databases and approachable storage methodology;
- Build a community which will support the methodologies and provide data.

## 3. Five working groups (WG) focus on work as follows

**WG1.** Validation, dissemination and implementation to ensure the long-term success of INFOTECH-DATA.

**WG2.** Review and definition of techno-functional characteristics

**WG3.** Methodology standardisation for techno-functionality analysis

**WG4.** Data infrastructure and management

**WG5.** Communication and dissemination

## 4. What is a short-term scientific mission (STSM)

A short-term scientific mission (STSM) is a visit to a host organization located in a different country by a researcher or innovator to conduct a specific piece of work for a determined period of time. A STSM grantee receives funding for this work within an international team and gains new knowledge or access to equipment or techniques not available in the home institution. STSMs serve several key purposes in EU COST Actions. COST networks encourage international collaboration among researchers and innovators in various scientific fields. The STSMs are an integral part of every COST Action. They:

- Facilitate the international mobility of researchers, especially early-career scientists, to foster new collaborations and sharing knowledge across borders.
- Enhance research skills by transferring new techniques and using equipment in different environments.
- Build and strengthen networks that lead to long-term collaborations, joint publications, and other research activities.
- Boost research projects by providing essential skills, data, and collaborations that support the Action.
- Foster development of early career researchers, including through the establishment of a research profile and gaining international experience.
- By encouraging collaboration and knowledge sharing, STSMs contribute to the overall scientific excellence of the research community involved in COST Actions.
- Support COST policies on promoting gender balance, enabling young researchers, and broadening geographical inclusiveness. Grantees should be selected in an open and transparent way.
- Advance COST Excellence and Inclusiveness Policy and Principles of Openness.

## 5. This open call:

Applications are invited from scientists and innovators for STSMs that support the INFOTECH-DATA objectives and Working Groups as described in this document. This call is continuously open. Each application will be processed on a *first-come first-served basis*, response up to 1 month after submission.

It is especially aimed at STSMs that will be implemented from March 2026 to October 2026.

## 6. Eligibility

STSM travel 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.

## 7. Financial Support

Before applying, candidates should read [Annex 2 of the Annotated Rules for COST actions](#).

STSM grants provide a contribution for travelling, 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 up to October 2025. Up to a maximum of EUR 3,000 (this call) in total can be awarded per grant. 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 decided by the Action Chair/Grant Holder based on the advice of the Grant Awarding Coordinator. The request of the applicant should reflect the duration and location of the STSM.

## 8. The grant awarding process

Each STSM must be carried out entirely within one Grant Period. This Grant Period runs until the 31 October of 2026. The grant awarding process for STSMs starts with a call under a strict (annual) budget. Each application is reviewed by a minimum of two up to four MC or WG members who are guided by the Grant Awarding Coordinator. The Grant Awarding Coordinator advises the Action Chair who acts on the advice if the budget allows. An STSM ends when the payment is recorded. Missions must be complete by 31 October 2026. STSM applicants should not book anything (e.g., transportation or accommodation) before receiving a confirmation through a Grant Letter.

## 9. Application procedure

Applicants must have an [e-COST profile](#) and applications must be submitted online in e-COST via <https://e-services.cost.eu/user/activity/grants>.

Applications comprise:

1. An online Grant Application (found at <https://e-services.cost.eu/user/activity/grants>) which includes:
  - A project title for the mission that communicates the content and purpose of the work.
  - Start and end date of the STSM (within the active grant period up to 31 October 2026, i.e., no overlap across two consecutive grant periods).
  - Grant requested.
  - 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 ([application file](#)).
4. A justification document setting out:
  - The statement describing applicant's motivation (1-2 pages).
  - 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 ([example here](#)).
6. A support letter from the home institution ([application file](#)).

Note: Any documents that cannot be uploaded via the e-COST interface should be sent directly to the Grant Awarding Coordinators (José Bonilla, [bonilla@food.ku.dk](mailto:bonilla@food.ku.dk) or Cláudia P. Passos, [cpassos@ua.pt](mailto:cpassos@ua.pt)) with Cc for the Chair of COST action (Jack Yang, [jack.yang@wur.nl](mailto:jack.yang@wur.nl)).

## 10. Evaluation of Applications

Applications will be evaluated for their quality and for their relevance to the objectives of INFOTECH-DATA and its Working Groups. To avoid time-wasting, each application will be first screened 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.

Following passing of the screen, STSM applications are evaluated by at least two independent experts guided by the Grant Awarding Coordinator on behalf of the Management Committee (MC). External advice may be sought. The Grant Awarding Coordinator manages the process so that evaluators have no personal or financial interest in the application. An evaluation score is given considering the proposal clarity, relevance for the Action, feasibility, planning, and expected outputs. Scores are from 1 to 6. The final evaluation outcome is announced within one month of submission.

### 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.

A score is given (from 1 to 6 as above) for proposal clarity, feasibility, planning and expected outputs. Each reviewer scores each proposal independently. The STSM Grant Awarding Coordinator collates the outcomes of the independent evaluations and communicates the final scoring (range 5-30 points) after confirming the fulfilment of requisites to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Action.

Proposals with high scores ( $\geq 25$  points) will be financed, proposal with ( $\geq 20$ , but  $25 <$  points) will be decided on the approval by the WG leader, but only when all other evaluation criteria are acceptable, and the available budget justifies. The outcome will be communicated to the applicant by email. The results will be published in the COST Action website.

### Summary of the evaluation criteria

Category	Notes	Scoring
<b>Requisites</b>		
Support letter - home Institute	Required for students only	Y/N
Support letter - host Institute		Y/N
<b>Evaluation</b>		
Motivation letter	Convincing	Y/N
Work Plan		
<i>Clarity and relevance</i> (Contribution of the mission for the objectives of the action)	Score	1-6
<i>Feasibility</i>	Score	1-6
<i>Planning</i>	Score	1-6
<i>Expected outputs</i>	Score	1-6
Suitability of the candidate (evaluation of the curriculum vitae)		
<b>Grant request</b>		
Travel	Acceptable	Y/N
Accommodation	Acceptable	Y/N
Subsistence	Acceptable	Y/N
Miscellaneous	Acceptable	Y/N

## 11. Submission of the STSM report and payment

- Once the activity has ended, the applicant claims the payment of the grant via e-COST. For this, the grantee submits the short STSM report using the STSM report ([template](#)), and relevant documentation within 15 working days of the completion of the mission.
- The report includes a short description of the work, and main achievements of the STSM and planned future follow-up activities.
- Grants are paid by the Grant Holder after the completion of the activity and approval of all required report/documentation.

In addition to providing the STSM report, the applicant must upload a Scientific Report for use in communications that includes:

- The background and a full description of the work and the main scientific findings.
- The effect of the visit on personal development, networking, and capacity building (e.g., collaborations).

- Foreseen publications/articles resulting from the STSM (if applicable).
- The summary of the report will be published on the INFOTECH-DATA website.
- In addition to the Mission Report, a document confirming the host institution of the execution of the STSM and
- Proof of evidence of the stay (a picture of the grantee working at the host institution facilities and a picture with the collaborators) that might be published in social media and website.

Note: Any documents that cannot be uploaded via the e-COST interface should be sent directly to the Grant Awarding Coordinators (José Bonilla, [bonilla@food.ku.dk](mailto:bonilla@food.ku.dk) or Cláudia P. Passos, [cpassos@ua.pt](mailto:cpassos@ua.pt)) with Cc for the Chair of COST action (Jack Yang, [jack.yang@wur.nl](mailto:jack.yang@wur.nl)).

## 12. Frequently asked questions

1. Can I postpone my STSM? If the originally intended period is not feasible, STSM could be postponed after consultation with the Grant Awarding Coordinator and Action Chair. Grantees should keep in mind that the approved STSM must be completed within the actual Grant Period, i.e. before 31 October 2026.
2. I am uncertain about the exact dates for my trip. Can I apply for a flexible three-week period within a one-month timeframe, for example? Yes, it is possible. However, STSMs require specific start and end dates, therefore, supporting documents have to state the period in which the applicant is considering doing the STSM.
3. Where do I upload receipts for accommodation or meals after I have returned from the STSM? You do not have to provide any receipts for accommodation or meals. The financial support is paid in the form of a grant. However, travel expenses and accommodation invoices must be presented in the case of cancellation by force majeure.

**Notes:** Each publication produced with support of a STSM must acknowledge the support of the COST Action and whenever possible use the COST and INFOTECH-DATA logos (on slides and posters).

**Acknowledgement text:** “This publication is based on work supported by the COST Action CA24145: International Food Techno-functionality - Data (INFOTECH-DATA)”.