

Sustainable Thermoelectrics European Network

SUSTENET

COST Action CA24120

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1 TABLE OF CONTENTS

2	Action Objectives	3
3	Target Research Topics	3
4	Purpose of the Grant	4
5	Important Dates	4
6	Short-Term Scientific Missions Eligibility Rules	5
7	How to Apply	5
8	Financial Support	6
9	Evaluation Procedure and Selection of Applicants	6
10	Reporting and Reimbursement	7
11	Acknowledgment of SUSTENET Funding	7
12	Grant Awarding Committee and Additional Support Contacts	7
13	Additional Resources	8
14	Final Note	8

SUSTENET COST Action CA24120 launches a call for Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSMs) grants for Grant Period 1. These grants support mobility of researchers within the network in order to strengthen collaboration, exchange knowledge, and contribute to the scientific objectives of the Action.

Applicants are encouraged to carefully read the [COST Annotated Rules](#) for COST Actions before submitting their application.

2 ACTION OBJECTIVES

SUSTENET aims to **establish a strong collaborative framework that enables sustainable advancements in thermoelectric (TE) technology.** The Action fosters scientific excellence, cross-disciplinary research, and innovation by integrating materials science, data-driven methodologies, applications development, and socio-economic considerations.

The Action is organized around four interconnected Working Groups (WG):

- **WG1 – Scaling Sustainability through Artificial Intelligence:** Focuses on the use of AI, machine-learning approaches, and advanced modelling to predict, design, and optimize sustainable TE materials; and on implementing standardised reporting platforms.
- **WG2 – Applications and User Cases:** Identifying promising TE applications, evaluating module performance requirements, conducting environmental life-cycle assessments, and developing an Application White Paper and a TE application database.
- **WG3 – Business Development and Supply Chain:** Addressing economic challenges and supply chain issues; understanding current and future growth paths of the TE business sector in Europe; developing roadmaps for a "European Thermoelectric Industrial Association" and identifying business opportunities.
- **WG4 – Dissemination, Communication and Training:** Promoting knowledge exchange through workshops, seminars, training schools, and Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSMs); engaging with diverse stakeholders including policy makers, industry, and the general public.

3 TARGET RESEARCH TOPICS

STSMs funded under **SUSTENET** should contribute directly to the scientific, technological, or socio-economic objectives of the Action. Relevant topics include, but are not limited to:

- **Sustainable TE Materials**
 - TE materials based on abundant, non-toxic, and low-cost elements.
 - Environmentally friendly synthesis and processing routes.
 - High-throughput and materials acceleration platforms.
- **AI and Computational Methodologies**
 - Machine learning-assisted materials prediction and optimisation.

- Data-driven modelling of TE properties.
- AI workflows for TE systems and performance optimisation.
- **TE Device and Module Development**
 - Module architecture optimisation.
 - Printed, flexible, or tandem TE modules.
 - Thermal interface engineering and joining techniques.
 - Standardised evaluation of module performance.
- **TE Applications and System Integration**
 - Industrial waste-heat recovery.
 - Heating, cooling, and hybrid TE systems.
 - Life-cycle sustainability assessment.
 - Integration into energy-efficient and circular-economy contexts.
- **Supply Chain and Business Development**
 - Techno-economic analyses.
 - Circular-economy strategies and recycling.
 - Market and industry landscape analysis.
 - Regulatory and standardisation challenges.
- **Capacity Building and Training**
 - Skill development for Young Researchers and Innovators.
 - Knowledge exchange across European and international TE communities.
 - Strengthening academia–industry collaboration.

4 PURPOSE OF THE GRANT

Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSMs) support mobility between participating institutions in different countries of the COST network. STSMs enable researchers to:

- Undertake collaborative work.
- Access specialised equipment, data, methodologies, or expertise.
- Strengthen existing collaborations or establish new ones.
- Prepare joint publications, databases, or roadmaps.

STSM activities must clearly contribute to the objectives of **SUSTENET**.

5 IMPORTANT DATES

- **Call open:** 20th March 2026
- **Deadline for applications:** 30th June 2026 (or until the budget is exhausted)
- **Latest end date for STSMs:** 15th September 2026
- Applicants will normally be notified **within three to four weeks** of submission.

6 SHORT-TERM SCIENTIFIC MISSIONS ELIGIBILITY RULES

Applicants must meet the following conditions:

- ✓ Be a registered participant in **SUSTENET** with a complete e-COST profile.
- ✓ Be affiliated with an institution in a COST Full or Cooperating Member country, COST Near Neighbour Country or a European RTD Organization (please see the [Country Organization Table](#) for details).
- ✓ The host institution must be in a country different from the country of the applicant's home institution.
- ✓ The duration of an STSM must be between five and ninety calendar days, however, the maximum available budget for the whole stay is €2,000 (see section 8 below for details).
- ✓ Priority may be given to applications from Young Researchers and Innovators (YRIs) and from participants affiliated with institutions in Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITCs).
- ✗ STSM proposals received out of the timetable will automatically be discarded.

Eligibility activities include:

- ✓ Experimental or computational work advancing **SUSTENET** research topics (materials, devices, applications, sustainability, business/supply chain, AI, databases).
- ✓ Method or protocol transfer (e.g., advanced characterization, module testing, life-cycle assessment, techno-economic analysis, AI workflows).
- ✓ Joint development of databases, standards, or roadmaps relevant to **SUSTENET** WGs.

More details are given in section 3.

7 HOW TO APPLY

Applications must be submitted via the e-COST platform:

<https://e-services.cost.eu/activity/grants>

select "Apply for a Grant" and choosing the STSM grant type. Fill all the required information and upload all the supporting documents:

- Completed **STSM Grant Application** template (e-COST template).
- [Letter of Motivation](#) (word file).
- [Letter of Support from the-Home Institution](#) (word file).
- [Letter of Support from the-Host Institution](#) (word file).
- [Estimated budget plan](#) (excel file).
- **Curriculum Vitae** (maximum two pages).

Before submitting, applicants must contact the host institution to confirm feasibility and dates.

After submission, eligible applicants will receive a confirmation email from the e-COST system.

8 FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Financial support for networking activities organised through a Grant Awarding Process is provided to individuals in the form of a grant paid after completion of the activity. The STSM grants:

- are **contributions**, not reimbursements,
- do **not cover** employment or research material costs,
- **cover** travel, accommodation, and subsistence.

The amounts granted for each STSM will be determined during the evaluation process by the **SUSTENET** Grant Awarding Committee. The maximum available budget per grant should not exceed €2,000.

During the grant submission, see section 7, the candidate will prepare a justification of the requested amount by filling in the [Estimated budget plan template](#) and submit it with the application.

The selected applicants should **wait to receive the official Grant Letter** from e-COST before booking any travel arrangements. STSMs grantees may request up to 50% pre-payment of the approved grant. This amount is subject to availability of funds and approval by the Grant Holder Institution. The request of pre-payment shall be submitted to the Grant Holder Manager.

9 EVALUATION PROCEDURE AND SELECTION OF APPLICANTS

Applications will be evaluated by the **SUSTENET** Grant Awarding Committee based on the criteria listed below.

Criterion	Description	Weight
Scientific Quality & Alignment	Relevance to Action objectives and priority themes	40%
Impact and Visibility	Expected contribution to Action outputs and dissemination	25%
Career Development & Diversity	Benefit to applicant's skills, networking, and inclusiveness goals	20%
Feasibility and Commitment	Preparation, host support, and likelihood of timely completion	15%

The STSM Coordinator is responsible for the coordination process, while the final approval of grants is made by the Grant Awarding Committee. The decision will be communicated to applicants through the e-COST system.

Applicants may be contacted during evaluation if clarifications or missing documents are required. If documents are missing, the application must be resubmitted, which may delay the final decision.

10 REPORTING AND REIMBURSEMENT

Within **30 days** of the STSM end date (or end of the Grant Period), grantees must submit via e-COST:

- Completed **STSM Scientific Report**, available here: [STSM-report-template.docx](#)
- Upload the report on e-COST.
- Host Institution Confirmation Letter.
- Copy of ID card or Passport emailed to the Grant Holder Manager.

Reports are evaluated by the STSM Coordinator together with the Grant Awarding Committee.

Activities funded by **SUSTENET** will be highlighted on the website and social media; grantees will coordinate with WG4 for dissemination.

If the report is approved, the Grant Awarding Coordinator will approve the payment in the e-COST platform. The grant is paid by the Grant Holder Institution after the completion of the activity and approval of the required reports and documentation. Failure to submit the required documents within the specified deadline may result in cancellation of the grant and may negatively affect the grantee's eligibility for future funding opportunities.

11 ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF SUSTENET FUNDING

All outputs (publications, presentations, posters, etc.) must include:

- The COST logo and the Horizon Europe logo (please check the guidelines here <https://www.cost.eu/about/visual-identity/>, in order to ensure you use the COST brand identity correctly).
- The acknowledgement text:

"This work/presentation is based upon work from COST Action Sustainable Thermoelectrics European Network (SUSTENET), CA24120, supported by COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology)."

12 GRANT AWARDING COMMITTEE AND ADDITIONAL SUPPORT CONTACTS

For questions related to grant applications and evaluation procedures, please contact the corresponding coordinator/s listed here:

Grant Awarding Coordinator: Dr. Matej Baláž (balazm@saske.sk)

Grant Awarding Co-Coordinator: Dr. Jana Andžane (jana.andzane@lu.lv)

ITC Coordinator: Dr. Tamara Bajc (tbajc@mas.bg.ac.rs)

YRI Coordinator: Dr. Patricia Alegria (patricia.alegria@unavarra.es)

STSM Coordinator: Dr. Theodora Kyratsi (kyratsi.theodora@ucy.ac.cy)

Training School Coordinator: Dr. Vicente Pacheco (vicente.pacheco@ifam-dd.fraunhofer.de)

For technical issues with e-COST submission or account access, contact the COST helpdesk at <https://e-services.cost.eu/>.

For questions about **SUSTENET** activities and alignment with objectives, please reach out to the relevant **Working Group Leader** or the **Action Chair**.

13 ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **SUSTENET Website:** <https://www.cost.eu/actions/CA24120/>
- **SUSTENET Memorandum of Understanding:** Available through the COST Action website above
- **e-COST Portal:** <https://e-services.cost.eu/>
- **COST Annotated Rules:** <https://www.cost.eu/funding/documents-guidelines/>

14 FINAL NOTE

SUSTENET is committed to fostering excellence, collaboration, and inclusiveness across the European TE community. The Action strongly encourages participation from Young Researchers and Innovators and from institutions in Inclusiveness Target Countries.

STSMs support individual career development while contributing to shared European scientific progress. All applicants are strongly encouraged to propose activities that will have a tangible impact on both their research trajectory and the broader **SUSTENET** network.