

The role of NBS in urban planning

The Cost Action on Circular Cities (CA17133) announces STSMs about “The role of NBS in urban planning” at the following Institutions:

1. Centre for Social Sciences (Budapest, Hungary)
2. Zürich University of Applied Sciences (Wädenswil, Switzerland) (2 Months)
3. Reykjavik University (Reykjavik, Iceland)
4. alchemia-nova (Vienna, Austria) (2 Months)
5. University of Córdoba and IMGEMA, Royal Botanic Garden of Córdoba(Cordoba, Spain)
6. University of Novi Sad.(Novi Sad, Serbia)
7. University of Ljubljana (Ljubljana, Slovenia)

Each STSM should have a duration of minimum of 1 – 3 months.

Description of the STSM

Contemporary urban planning has to respond to phenomena like urban heat islands, flooding, treatment of waste- and runoff waters from different origins, and food provision at the same time. The present short-term scientific mission (STSM) aims at exploring and understanding how city councils and local governments across Europe deal with these problems.

The research is based on qualitative methods: content analysis of planning documents and semi-structured interviews with experts, urban planners, representatives of city councils, and civic organizations in five selected European cities. The interviews will be transcribed and analysed using a semi-open-coded method. The code structure will be developed jointly by the applicants and tutors from the host institution. The final output will be a peer-reviewed publication about the visited European city and a comparative paper about the results of the STSMs.

The successful candidates will work together with the colleagues of the host institutions using qualitative sociological methods to analyse how urban planners and local decision-makers see their role in implementing NBS in urban-planning, water management, resource recovery and especially urban agriculture and what obstacles they are facing. The interviews can be conducted in English, the grey literature and planning documents are mainly in local languages.

The host institutions provide the necessary infrastructure and assistance to organize the fieldwork during the STSM.

The successful candidates:

- shall be PhD or post-graduate student,
- are fluent in English,
- have practice in qualitative (sociological) methods (conducting semi-structured interviews)
- be familiar with the concept of NBS and circular economy,
- the knowledge of local languages is not an expectation, but an advantage.

Planned Research

The planned research should help to understand how city councils use the tools and methods of Nature-based solutions (especially urban agriculture) in urban planning, how the elements of circular economy appear in their everyday practices. The STSM aims at exploring the factors influencing urban planning and city council policies, and formulates recommendations to introduce NBS at the local level. A comparative analysis on the use of NBS in urban planning will be conducted by analysing relevant documents and interviewing decision-makers, planners and representatives of locals.

The research will cover the different aspects of water management, resource recovery and urban agriculture. The selected sites of the STSMs will allow for geographical heterogeneity, diversity in practice and also in size of the settlement.

Theoretical back-ground

The effects of climate change in an urban setting are amplified by the forces of urban development (degradation of ecosystems, depletion of resources, destruction of habitats, etc.). Urban green and blue areas have the capacity to mitigate these issues in a number of ways (Kabisch 2015), especially with harnessing natural processes via 'nature-based solutions'.

NBSs should be implemented from the earliest stages of planning. The issues of responsibility and competence of urban planning within climate change debates were raised more than a decade ago (Campbell 2006), and proposed frameworks to handle the issue have been published (Raymond et al. 2017), but establishing the norm takes time. Exploring the root of the problem from the planning perspective, Scott et al. (2006) urge a deepening of an ecological turn in planning theory and practice.

As urban agriculture is a very visible NBS, it can bring the concept closer to local residents. Thus we aim at analysing the role of NBS in urban planning with a special focus on urban agriculture.

Methodology:

The guidelines for the semi-structured interviews will be developed by a team recruited from the COST Action 17133, while the codes for the analysis will be developed jointly. In each country at least 15 interviews are to be done. Each interview will be transcribed and coded by two researchers to check each other.

The structure of the papers about the cities will be developed by the same team as the interview guidelines. The final version of the papers will be reviewed by the members of the teams participating in the STSMs before submission to a peer-reviewed journal.

Please note that the procedures are adapted to take into account the COVID-19 pandemic.

Rules for application

General rules are described in the [COST Vademecum](#). Here the specific rules, as decided by the Action are outlined.

Due to COVID-19, the duration of this Grant Period (GP) has been extended to October 2021. STSMs have a maximum duration of two months, all STSMs have to be finalised prior to 30 September 2021. We request candidates to submit a pre-application (see below).

STSM grants are a fixed contribution based on the budget requested by the applicant and the evaluation of the application by the STSM Committee. This grant will not cover all expenses; it is intended only as a contribution to the travel and subsistence costs of the participant.

The calculation of this contribution for a STSM is based on the following rules:

- The COST Action 17133 decided to offer a maximum EUR 1,700 in total (including travel expenses) to the grantee for two months. Shorter stays will be reimbursed proportionally less.
- Up to EUR 500 may be attributed for travel expenses.
- Please note the grant will only be paid to the grantee after the STSM has been completed and the STSM report, which is submitted by the grantee, has been approved by Chair and the STSM coordinator.

The pre-application for this call should contain:

A short CV and a letter of motivation by the applicant, stating the 3 preferred cities and stating if a posting in another city is also acceptable.

The deadline for Pre-Application is 10.07.2021.

Send the pre-application files as an e-mail attachment to the STSM Coordinator Ranka Junge (ranka.junge@zhaw.ch) and in cc to Megyesi.Boldizsar@tk.hu and ca17133@boku.ac.at.

Online Application

Once the application is pre-approved you can proceed to the online application. To complete the online application form you have to log in into e-COST and click on the STSM application tab (<https://e-services.cost.eu/stsm/apply/new>). The on-line registration tool will create a formal STSM application file, which the applicant can download.

You will need to upload:

- Work plan. As the work plan is defined by the call, this can be very short (1-2 pages).
- Letter of agreement by the host scientist to accept and supervise the applicant to the STSM host institution. This letter should also contain a brief outline of the COVID-19 safety measures at the hosting institute and an outline of the current situation in international travel for the two countries (exit-entrance rules, testing & quarantine rules).
- Letter of agreement by the sending institution.
- CV.

After the STSM

The grantee is required to submit a short scientific report to the host scientist, the Action Chair and the STSM coordinator for approval within 30 days after the end date of the STSM. The report (a template is provided in the eCOST system) contains:

- Cover page with applicant's name, affiliation address, e-mail, name of the host scientist and institute
- Purpose of the STSM;
- Description of the work carried out and the main results obtained during the STSM;
- Future collaboration with the host institution (if applicable);
- Foreseen publications/articles resulting from the STSM;
- A letter of confirmation by the host scientist of the successful execution of the STSM.

In addition, the grantee should send the following information directly to the STSM coordinator. This information will be used to publish the results of the STSM on the Action Website.

- Abstract of the STSM (max 300 words)
- A picture of him/herself (for example during the field work)
- 5 lines describing why this STSM was beneficial for the Action and to which Working Group it contributed.

The Action Chair and STSM coordinator are responsible for approving the scientific report. The failure to submit the scientific report PLUS additional information within 30 days will effectively cancel the grant. The most important criterion of assessment is how effectively the STSM will contribute to the

scientific aims of Action CA17133. Once approved, payment of the STSM grant will be made by bank-to-bank transfer to the grantee.

NOTE: For the period of the STSM, neither the Grant Holder of the Action, Management Committee of the Action, etc., nor the COST Office may be considered as the employer of the grantee, and grantees must make their own arrangements for all health insurance, travel insurance, social security, personal security and pension matters as may be needed and appropriate to the grantee.