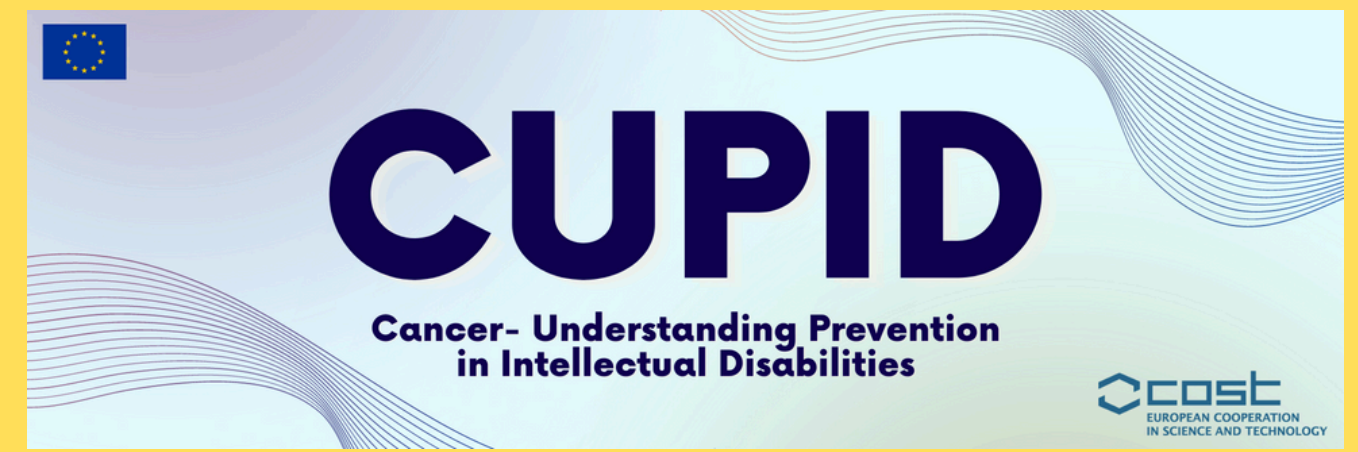




# Open Call



## for Short-Term Scientific Missions within CUPID COST



Funding is available for up to three Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSMs) during the current financial year.

If you are interested in traveling to another country for a minimum of five days to contribute to the objectives of COST, you are invited to apply via:

<https://e-services.cost.eu/activity/grants/add?type=STSM>

or scan the

QR code: 



A Short-Term Scientific Mission involves a visit to a host organization in a different country than the applicant's country of affiliation (as defined in Article 4.1.1.1.1). The mission enables researchers or innovators to carry out specific work for a determined period.

### Objectives of STSMs:

- Support capacity building and knowledge transfer through bilateral or multilateral collaborations.
- Contribute to specific research topics aligned with the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) objectives and deliverables of the COST Action.
- Foster networking activities that establish new collaborations or strengthen existing ones across disciplines and sectors (e.g., academia and industry/SMEs), with potential impact on career development.
- Generate outcomes such as publications, project proposals, and increased visibility for COST Actions, encouraging further participation.

### Benefits of STSMs:

- For the STSM Grantee: Funding to execute a project with an international team, access to new knowledge, facilities, or methodologies unavailable at their home institution.
- For the STSM Host: The opportunity to welcome an international collaborator and develop long-term partnerships.

### Eligibility and Financial Support:

STSMs must last a minimum of five calendar days, including travel, and must be completed within a single Grant Period and within the Action's lifetime. Grants are awarded as a fixed contribution based on the requested budget and the selection committee's evaluation (GAC + MC).

Each successful applicant may receive up to EUR 4,000 in total.

Daily allowances for accommodation and meals are capped at EUR 160 per day.

The grant is intended as a contribution towards travel, accommodation, and meal expenses and may not cover all costs.

For further details, please visit the COST Grant Application portal or contact [tim.pelle@radboudumc.nl](mailto:tim.pelle@radboudumc.nl)



# Experiences of previous STSM Grantees within the CUPID COST

## My experience of a STSM to the Yeditepe University in Istanbul, Turkey



**Vladimir Vukovic**  
WG2 Deputy Lead,  
Republic of Serbia



“Last year, I had an amazing opportunity to participate in the Short-Term Scientific Mission (STSM) within the COST CUPID project and spent some time at the Yeditepe University in Istanbul, Turkey.

The title of my STSM was “Identifying the roles of epigenetic modifications contributing to cancer development in people with intellectual disabilities (ID) to guide future cancer preventive and diagnostic strategies for people with intellectual disabilities”. Epigenetics refers to genomic regulatory mechanisms that modulate gene expression without affecting the DNA sequence(s), and these changes are found to be associated with all stages of cancer - initiation, progression and prognosis. The main objective of my STSM was to collaborate on research to study the roles of epigenetic modifications in cancer among people with ID, and also, to assess the available evidence on the roles of miRNAs and DNA methylation in ID patients with cancer. During my stay, I was supported by Prof. Soner Dogan and Prof. Bilge Guvenc Tuna, both faculty members at Yeditepe University and members of the COST CUPID Action.

The output of this STSM further strengthens the collaboration between COST CUPID members, and it may help enlightening some epigenetic modifications contributing to cancer with particular focus on people with ID. It contributes to the COST CUPID’s main goal which is Cancer understanding in people with ID and to the deliverables of potential biomarkers for cancer prevention, detection and screening which could, in future, be implemented in cancer prevention guidelines for this vulnerable group.

During this experience, I gained insight into the field of epigenetics, further widening and strengthening my scientific competence. Also, new ways of collaboration in other scientific fields and projects (ongoing and future) were discussed. Beside these scientific activities, I had the opportunity to explore the amazing cultural and historical heritage of Istanbul and to meet some great people.” STSMs are institutional visits aimed at supporting individual mobility, strengthening existing networks and fostering collaboration between COST Action participants. Benefits to successful STSM applicants include receiving funding for implementing a project with an international team and gaining new knowledge or access to equipment or techniques not available in the home institution.”

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# Experiences of previous STSM Grantees within the CUPID COST



## Bahar Aksoy

from Akdeniz University in Turkey completed her STSM in Trinity College Dublin under the guidance of Dr Martin McMahon, WG2 Leader

“At the start of the STSM, I learned from Dr Martin McMahon about the development and operation of both the Trinity Centre for Ageing and Intellectual Disability and School of Nursing & Midwifery. I learned a lot about nurse training and in particular intellectual disability nurse training in Ireland which is not available in Türkiye, and learning how these nurses support cancer prevention in people with Intellectual disability.

Ireland is unique in that it is one of the few countries that offer undergraduate registration with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland as an ‘Intellectual Disability Nurse’. Intellectual Disability Nursing is the cornerstone of health services and plays a critical role in early diagnosis of cancer, management of risk factors and promotion of healthy lifestyles. The training focuses on learning about cancer risk factors, recognizing early signs and symptoms, the screening methods available and how screening should be performed and results interpreted. The training of these nurses also includes prevention strategies available through encouraging healthy lifestyle habits and raising public awareness about cancer prevention by receiving training in public health education and advocacy. Once student nurses have received this essential training they are then better equipped to fulfil their roles effectively, applying their knowledge to society, to inform individuals, families and communities about cancer prevention and to be more competent professionally in early diagnosis and timely intervention.

Nursing students learn not only their own roles in cancer prevention, but also the importance of collaborating with other health professionals. This enables for a multidisciplinary approach to be adopted and thus a more effective cancer prevention strategy to be implemented. As a result, the education of nursing students on cancer prevention in people with intellectual disabilities is of great importance in terms of both individual and social health.

The academics in Trinity College Dublin, and in Intellectual Disability Nursing section of the School have undertaken important research in determining cancer risk factors in individuals with intellectual disability, these risks factors are also included in the cancer screening protocol for mentally disabled individuals in Türkiye, in creating cancer prevention and prevention strategies, and in monitoring the screening control protocol and its success.

During this STSM, I also visited Stewarts Care, which was established in Dublin in 1869 as an institution for the education, training and care of children with intellectual disability from all over the island of Ireland. Stewarts Care is dedicated to providing the services that children and adults with intellectual disability need and to providing optimum services that promote the education, well-being, dignity, health and happiness of individuals. During my time at Stewarts Care, I observed the playrooms, individual study rooms, painting rooms, bathrooms, individual rooms, gardens and other occupational areas offered to children and adults with cancer. The clinical services offered to include occupational therapy, physiotherapy, speech and language therapy, dietetics, psychology, psychiatry, social work, medical and nursing care.

With this STSM, I also learned about research on individuals with cancer at the Trinity Center for Ageing and Intellectual Disability, and the functioning of this process at Stewarts Care. Trinity Center for Ageing and Intellectual Disability conducts meticulous and participatory research on the physical and social determinants of health and well being, addressing the inequalities and health disparities that occur in individuals with intellectual disability as they age, and transferring the findings to policy and practice models, and identifying and monitoring individuals with intellectual disabilities and potential patients. The process followed by this research center was taken as a reference in the creation of a cancer prevention and screening protocol for individuals with intellectual disabilities.”