STSM Host Offers 2026
COST Action CA23142 – Delve into Pneumocystis

This page presents the currently available host institutions for Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSMs) within the Action.

STSMs allow researchers to visit a host institution in another COST country to learn new techniques, develop collaborations, and contribute to the objectives of the Action.

Prof. Alexandre Alanio

Institution: Institut Pasteur / Hôpital Saint-Louis, Paris, France

Project Title: Characterizing Infection from Human Specimens Using Novel Molecular Strategies

Available Period: 1 August 2026 – 30 October 2026
Number of Positions: 2

Project Description:
This STSM offers training in advanced molecular approaches for the analysis of human respiratory specimens from patients with and without *Pneumocystis jirovecii* pneumonia. The project aims to improve the understanding of infection dynamics and diagnostic performance through the application of innovative molecular tools.

Training Activities Include:

- Screening of respiratory samples using different quantitative PCR (qPCR) assays
- Assessment of specimen quality for molecular analysis
- Phenotypic characterization of *Pneumocystis jirovecii*

Prof. Marta Kicia

Institution: Wroclaw Medical University, Poland

Project Title: Molecular techniques for *Pneumocystis* diagnosis and characterization

Available Period: June, July, September 2026 (to be agreed with the applicant)

Duration: 5 days to 1 month (preferably ~2 weeks)

Number of positions: Not specified (to be agreed with the host)

Description:

The host laboratory offers training in advanced molecular techniques for the diagnosis and characterization of *Pneumocystis*.

Project includes:

- Droplet digital PCR (ddPCR)
- Real-Time PCR
- Nested PCR
- Application of molecular tools in *Pneumocystis* detection and characterization

Focus of the STSM:

- Hands-on training in molecular diagnostic techniques
- Development of technical skills relevant to *Pneumocystis* research
- Knowledge transfer in laboratory-based diagnostic approaches

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Dr. Ortenca Kotherja

Institution: Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tirana, Tirana, Albania

Project Title: Psychological Strategies for Effective Scientific and Health Communication

Available Period: September–October 2026 (within the active Grant Period)
Duration: To be agreed with the host.
Number of Positions: 1–3

Project Description:
This Short-Term Scientific Mission (STSM) provides training in psychological and educational approaches to enhance effective communication in scientific and health-related contexts. The programme is particularly relevant for improving dissemination and public engagement in *Pneumocystis* research.

Participants will benefit from academic supervision and interdisciplinary collaboration within the Department of Pedagogy and Psychology at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tirana.

Training Activities Include:

- Guidance on psychological strategies for scientific and health communication
- Support in designing educational materials and outreach content for diverse audiences
- Mentoring for early-career researchers and PhD students
- Participation in a collaborative and interdisciplinary learning environment

Expected Outcomes:
Participants will develop skills in science communication, public engagement, and effective dissemination of research findings, particularly in the context of *Pneumocystis* studies.

Prof. Enrique Calderón

Institution: Biomedicine Institute of Seville (IBiS), Virgen del Rocío University Hospital, University of Seville, Seville, Spain

Project Title: Detection and Characterization of *Pneumocystis* Colonization in Biological Samples

Duration and Available Period: 1–2 weeks between 1 July 2026 and 30 October 2026 (excluding August)
Number of Positions: 2

Project Description:
This short-term research project offers students the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in molecular diagnostics applied to the detection of *Pneumocystis* colonization. Participants will be trained in a range of laboratory techniques commonly used in biomedical research and clinical microbiology.

The project focuses on the identification and molecular characterization of *Pneumocystis jirovecii* in biological samples, contributing to a better understanding of its role in respiratory diseases.

Training Activities Include:

- Extraction of nucleic acids from biological samples
- Application of quantitative PCR (qPCR) assays for pathogen detection
- Molecular characterization of *Pneumocystis jirovecii*

General Information for Applicants

Duration: 5–90 days

Funding: up to €4,000 per granted STSM

Deadline: 15 June 2026. Start dates depend on host availability (June–October 2026).

Application: Apply via e-COST: https://e-services.cost.eu

Contact:

contact@delve-into-pneumocystis.eu

Funding Conditions:

Financial support is provided in accordance with the rules and regulations of the COST Association. The maximum contribution per STSM is €4,000, however, the final granted amount will depend on the duration of the stay, the applicant's travel, and budget availability. All grants will be calculated and awarded following the official COST guidelines in force at the time of evaluation.