8ᵗʰ Call for Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSMs) & Virtual Mobility Activities (VMs)

01 May 2024

NexusNet aims to empower collaborations between EU and international researchers and stakeholders, synthesize the existing empirical Nexus research and produce an intellectual toolkit, demonstrating a clear link to improved resource management and governance outcomes that underlie the value of Nexus.

Contents

NexusNet - STSMs & VMs

This is the 8ᵗʰ Call for applications for Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSMs) and Virtual Mobilities (VMs) funded by the COST Action CA20138 "Network on water-energy-food nexus for a low-carbon economy in Europe and beyond – NexusNet".

STSMs allow scientists to conduct short research and study visits to a research institution or laboratory in another COST Country to strengthen the existing networks and foster collaboration, learn a new technique, or use equipment, data, and/or methods not available in their own institution and contribute to the scientific objectives of the Action.

VMs allow scientists to conduct short research in a virtual setting among researchers or innovators within the COST Action, to exchange knowledge, learn new techniques, and contribute to the scientific objectives of the Action.

NexusNet is organized into 6 Working Groups (WGs). STSMs and VMs are considered a great opportunity for participants to focus their work on research topics that have been highlighted by WGs or introduce new ideas addressing the NexusNet objectives.

Details on the content and goals of WGs are available in the Action's Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

Guidelines for applicants

STSMs benefit to:

- *STSM grantees*, who receive funding for implementing a project with an international team and gain knowledge or access to equipment or techniques not available in the home institution.

- *STSM hosts*, who receive an international partner in their institution and can develop long-lasting collaboration.

VMs benefit to:

- *COST Action*, which uses a flexible tool to implement virtual activities inside the network, achieve the MoU objectives and significantly increase their impact and reach. Contributes to European leadership in knowledge creation and increasing its innovation potential.

- *VM grantees*, who develop capacity in virtual collaboration and networking in a pan-European framework.

In the framework of this 8ᵗʰ Call, NexusNet offers **5 STSM positions** financially supporting travel grants to individuals, **and 2 VM positions**. Grantees need to make their own arrangements for travel, accommodation, etc.

Regarding the STSM, the minimum visit should last for **15 days** (including travelling), without any limit to the maximum duration. In the case of VM, it is suggested that it lasts **at least 15 days**. However, the STSM and the VM must be accomplished from **May 2024 to September 2024**.

Applications should be submitted by **13 May 2024**. Decisions will be announced by **20 May 2024**.

The maximum amount of the STSM grant for this period is awarded to **2,500€ and the maximum amount for the VM grant is 1,500€**. Regarding STSMs, details about the maximum daily allowance that can be claimed for accommodation and meal expenses per country can be found in the COST Daily Allowance Rates. Applicants are also requested to consult the Annotated Rules for COST Actions.

Who is eligible to apply for an STSM or VM?

STSM travel grants or VM grants are available for researchers and innovators affiliated to a legal entity in COST Full/Cooperative Member, Near Neighbor Country, or European RTD. Young researchers and innovators (<40 years old) are strongly encouraged to participate.

Application instructions

Applications for STSMs or VMs are managed through the e-COST management tool. All applicants must have an e-COST profile.

The applicant must use the e-COST management tool to register the STSM or VM application request. In addition to the information entered at the website, the applicants should also upload the following documents in a single PDF file:

- Short CV with recent publications.
- STSM proposal or VM proposal.
- Requested budget in €.
- Confirmation letter from the Host Institution.

For additional information on the submission via the e-COST system, applicants may visit the Grant Awarding User Guide, or https://nexusnet-cost.com/index.php/how-to-apply/.

Once the STSM or VM has ended, the grantee must submit a short report on the outcomes of the STSM visit or VM. The report needs to be submitted within 30 days after the end date of the STSM/VM or 15 days after the end of the Grant Period (whichever date comes first). It is noted that if the applicant does not submit the required report on time, the grant is cancelled. The grant payment is expected to be deposited within 30 days after the approval of the report.

Additionally, after the completion of the STSM/VM activities the grantee is encouraged to participate in dissemination activities related to the work developed during the period of the grant, such as testimonies, blogs or/and reports about the activities described.

Evaluation of applications

Each proposal will be assessed independently by the STSM/VM committee of the Action, and an evaluation score will be given considering (i) the clarity of the proposal, (ii) the degree to which the proposed STSM/VM complements or contributes to the Action strategic priorities and objectives as defined in the MoU, (iii) the compliance of the proposed STSM/VM work plan with the timing of the deliverables of the Action according to the MoU, iv) planned work plan feasibility and outputs, (v) the ability of the STSM/VM applicant to successfully complete the proposed STSM/VM and disseminate relevant outputs and (vi) the added value to the ongoing work in the WGs.

The proposal should show clear evidence of how the proposed STSM will benefit the applicant and the Action. The proposal will be assigned to one of the following categories:

- *Very poor*: proposal unsound and incomprehensive. Not clearly linked to any of the WGs (0-10 points).

- *Poor*: proposal with limited understanding, planning and unclear objectives. Weakly linked to at least one WG (11-35 points).
- *Fair*: proposal with some understanding, planning, and objectives. Moderate linked to at least one WG (36-60 points).
- *Good*: good proposal but needs input to develop feasible STSM/VM. Well linked to at least one WG (61-80 points).
- *Excellent*: proposal well designed in terms of planning, feasibility, and expected outcomes. Strongly related to at least one WG (80-100 points).

A proposal can reach a maximum score of 100. The proposals will be ranked and those with the highest scores will be granted.

STSMs and VMs opportunities

STSM Topic 1: Advanced integrated leadership development for integrated and innovative Nexus collaborations

Description: One of the objectives of NexusNet (in Working Group 5) is to create opportunities and support empowerment for the network by organizing collaborative research, educational and training opportunities, exchange of knowledge, technical experience, and mobility events that include STSMs, training schools, workshops, symposium, and conferences. We support integrated approach which is needed for Nexus Thinking and Innovation. But what type of leadership, skills and innovations are needed? How will we need to work together in the future? What does it mean to have an intergenerational/ inter-disciplinary approach and how could it help us to develop the capacity building programme of NexusNet further.

This topic seeks a researcher/innovator with an interest in the development of new ways of working/ leadership style and training to create a vision on support for the future of the NexusNet Community. A proven knowledge, voice, and understanding of the

interests in Nexus thinking to find the (hidden) treasures in a human-centric and social innovation to support NexusNet. The result would be an advice and a framework of capacity-building development, while experiencing one yourself as well.

Career development of the Nexus, providing the next generation of researchers with the skills and knowledge to promote the implementation of Nexus thinking in decision-making.

The person will join and experiment an advanced leadership track to support leadership and innovation processes Sept – Oct 2024 online and face-to-face in the Netherlands (first week of October). Experience the trainings and ad a question for a Sprint (https://h2o-people.eu/programs/blue-innovation-track/). Be responsible for drafting an evaluation and a framework for the next steps in capacity building for NexusNet last year and how to create sustainability for the NexusNet Community at last.

The outcome of the VMG will serve as input into the follow-up activities of WG5. The submission of a deliverable is due directly after the STSM, half October.

Host Institution & contact person: H2O-People B.V., Eesergroen, The Netherlands – Ms. Naomi Timmer, email: ntimmer@h2o-people.eu

VM Topic 1: Develop publishable proceedings of the Regional Nexus Stakeholder Forum to be held in Malta on May 14, 2024

Description: This topic seeks a researcher who will transcribe the content of the discussions that took place during the Regional Nexus Stakeholder Forum that will be organized in Malta on May 14, 2024, through recordings and will create the minutes of the Forum. The person will be responsible for circulating the material to all panelists and iterating with them until it is approved. Then, they will organize the information in coherent text and will put together the results in an easy-to-read document that will be published on a repository to obtain a DOI and will be shared with relevant stakeholders as the results and recommendations for Nexus practitioners and policy-makers.

Host Institution & contact person: Water Europe, Brussels, Belgium – Ms. Luisa Prista, email: luisaprista@gmail.com

VM Topic 2: Nexus in the European policy context

Description: This STSM is linked with MoU – WG3 on Policy measures and WG4 Outreach.

The connection between European policies and the nexus primarily lies in addressing the interdependencies between water, energy, and food systems. European policies often aim to promote sustainability, resilience, and efficiency in these sectors, recognizing the nexus approach as crucial for addressing challenges such as resource scarcity, climate change, and environmental degradation. The European Green Deal covers a package of policy initiatives, aiming to set the EU on the path to a green transition, with the goal of reaching climate neutrality by 2050. It supports the transformation of the EU into a fair and prosperous society with a modern and competitive economy. A number of EU policies, addressing water, energy, agriculture and food, and nature restauration are essential to nexus, to its implementation by facilitating and promoting integrated management and holistic solutions for sustainable development. EU Research and innovation policy and actions are also crucial to advance with nexus solutions and developing a strong nexus community

On the other hand, the link between nexus research and European policies is symbiotic. Nexus research provides evidence-based insights into the interconnectedness of water, energy, and food systems, informing the development and implementation of European policies. European policies, in turn, often draw on findings from nexus research to design strategies, regulations, and initiatives aimed at addressing complex challenges such as resource scarcity, climate change, and environmental degradation. By integrating nexus principles into policymaking, European institutions seek to promote integrated approaches that enhance sustainability, resilience, and efficiency across multiple sectors.

Spreading the word about the importance of these topics, dealt at European level is of the utmost importance for the NexusNet COST network and for all scientists in general.

In this line, this topic seeks a researcher who will support WG3 with the preparation and implementation of a communication strategy, producing content for social media about: (1) Nexus and the European elections; (2) EU policies, pogrammes and Nexus implementation.

Host Institution & contact person: Water Europe, Brussels, Belgium – Ms. Luisa Prista, email: luisaprista@gmail.com

VM Topic 3: Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Grant Awarding and Empowerment activities in NexusNet

Description: One of the objectives of NexusNet (in Working Group 5) is to create opportunities for the network by organizing collaborative research, educational and training opportunities, exchange of knowledge, technical experience, and mobility events that include STSMs, training schools, workshops, symposium, and conferences. Now, half way the action we have a great amount of knowledge and network from these opportunities and we would like to map this for monitoring and evaluation and to able to create a plan to embed the future opportunities better within the network and utilize the outcomes more effectively.

This topic seeks a researcher/innovator with an interest in diving into the archives and mapping the last two years to be able to monitor and evaluate outcomes. But also, with a proven knowledge in Nexus thinking to find the (hidden) treasures in the data and outcomes of the Grants/ Events/ Network opportunities to support NexusNet. The result would be a map of the opportunities so far, and the basis and outlines for monitoring and evaluation of the opportunities. And hopefully the finding of some (hidden) treasures and advise how to utilize these. The monitoring and evaluation will build on the main pillars of NexusNet:

- Networking between nexus communities in Europe and beyond to empower collaboration with nexus international organizations, with a focus on North America, the Mediterranean Region, and Africa.
- Showcase benefits of improved Resource Management and governance outcomes underlying

the value of Nexus.

- Career development of the Nexus, providing the next generation of researchers with the skills and knowledge to promote the implementation of Nexus thinking in decision-making.

The person will be responsible for drafting a report and seeking feedback from the Core Group in N (including the Action Chair, the Vice Chair, the Grant Holder Manager, the Working Group Leaders, and the Working Group Co-leaders).

The new monitoring and evaluation agenda should be done at the end of summer 2024. The outcome of the VMG will serve as input into follow-up activities of WG5. The planning of the work will be agreed upon, but submission of a deliverable is due on September 1, 2024.

Host Institution & contact person: H2O-People B.V., Eesergroen, The Netherlands – Ms. Naomi Timmer, email: ntimmer@h2o-people.eu

---

VM Topic 4: Mapping the policy impact of Nexus research projects in Western Europe: database completion and questionnaire distribution

Description: This virtual mobility is linked with MoU – WG3 on Policy Measures. The main objective of WG3 is making nexus science meaningful and available to policy and decision-makers at local, national and EU levels. This VM will support the ongoing work developed so far within WG3 on taking stock of nexus challenges across Europe, mapping the proposed policy recommendations to overcome such challenges, and identifying barriers and opportunities for the adoption of the proposed measures. The VM will involve completing the database of contact details for nexus project case studies in Western Europe and distributing the questionnaire via email. The work must be completed by the end of June 2024. The grantee will have the opportunity to collaborate in any publications resulting from this work.

Host Institution & contact person: University of Greenwich, London (UK) – Sarah Milliken, email: S.Milliken@greenwich.ac.uk

---

VM Topic 5: Mapping the policy impact of nexus research projects in northern and central/eastern Europe: database completion and questionnaire distribution

Description: This virtual mobility is linked with MoU – WG3 on Policy Measures. The main objective of WG3 is making nexus science meaningful and available to policy and decision-makers at local, national and EU levels. This VM will support the ongoing work developed so far within WG3 on taking stock of nexus challenges across Europe, mapping the proposed policy recommendations to overcome such challenges, and identifying barriers and opportunities for the adoption of the proposed measures. The VM will involve completing the database of contact details for nexus project case studies in northern and central/eastern Europe and distributing the questionnaire via email. The work must be completed by the end of June 2024. The grantee will have the opportunity to collaborate in any publications resulting from this work.

Host Institution & contact person: University of Greenwich, London (UK) – Sarah Milliken, email: S.Milliken@greenwich.ac.uk

---

VM Topic 6: Mapping the policy impact of nexus research projects in Europe: questionnaire distribution and follow-up

Description: This virtual mobility is linked with MoU – WG3 on Policy Measures. The main objective of WG3 is making nexus science meaningful and available to policy and decision-makers at local, national and EU levels. This VM will support the ongoing work developed so far within WG3 on taking stock of nexus challenges across Europe, mapping the proposed policy recommendations to overcome such challenges, and identifying barriers and opportunities for the adoption of the proposed measures. The VM will involve completing the distribution of a questionnaire to case study leaders of nexus projects in northern, western and central/eastern Europe, and if necessary, conducting online meetings to assist with its completion. The work will take place in July and August 2024. The grantee will have the opportunity to

collaborate in any publications resulting from this work.

Host Institution & contact person: United Nations University, Dresden (DE) – Serena Caucci, email: caucci@unu.edu

STSM Topic 2: Unlocking Sustainable Urban Planning and Energency Risk Management under Extreme Events

Description: Understanding the complex field of extreme events management and its impact on sustainable development especially in time of crisis is an opportunity to shape integrated management strategies that can facilitate the mitigation of challenges posed by Climate Change, while advancing sustainable development goals in urban areas.

The STSM "Unlocking Sustainable Urban Planning and Emergency Risk Management under Extreme Events" will explore the use of cutting-edge tools and predictive models to monitor and spatially analyze extreme events (i.e. extreme heat, earthquakes, flood, wars) to prioritize resilient and sustainable urban planning towards the achievement of a more sustainable urban development.

On the long term, the work developed should be leading to a framework assessment to measure the impact of resilient urban planning on societal aspects as in the supply chain management of goods and services. The STSM can also focus on humanitarian logistical aspects that a sustainable urban planning management could have on the effectiveness of climate-induced management crisis.

Host Institution & contact person: Department of Civil Engineering, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece – Assist. Prof. Giannis Adamos, email: iadamos@civil.auth.gr

STSM Topic 3: Assessing the viability of extreme events risk management with the Nexus implementation lenses

Description: The escalating impacts of climate change have manifested in environmental and socioeconomic shifts, accentuated by the frequency and severity of natural hazard-induced disasters. From heatwaves to floods, droughts to wildfires, these events are not isolated occurrences but rather interconnected manifestations of a changing climate. For instance, wildfires exacerbate land desertification, heightening vulnerability to hydrological risks like flooding and runoff. Conversely, prolonged droughts, such as the devastating conditions experienced in 2022, intensify the likelihood and spread of wildfires, amplifying their destructive potential. Despite the urgency of this global challenge, half of the world's countries lack adequate multi-hazard early warning systems. Countries with limited coverage face mortality rates up to eight times higher than those with comprehensive systems, underscoring the critical need for enhanced preparedness and response mechanisms.

Host Institution & contact person: Department of Civil Engineering, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece - Assist. Prof. Giannis Adamos, email: iadamos@civil.auth.gr

Questions/inquiries

Please contact:

- NexusNet Chair: Prof. Chrysi Laspidou (laspidou@gmail.com)
- NeuxsNet Grant Awarding Coordinator: Assist. Prof. Tamara Rađenović (tamara.radjenovic@znrfak.ni.ac.rs)
- NexusNet Grant Holder Manager: Assist. Prof. Giannis Adamos (adamos.giannis@gmail.com)