# Virtual Networking Support Manager

## 1st call for applicants – First Grant Period 2021

### Introduction

The COST Association has recently launched two new types of grants in COST Actions to respond to the rising need of digital tools in the context of the COVID pandemic and to ensure the continuity of the COST Actions' work activities. It concerns a pilot scheme that will run until 31 October 2021.

The two new types of grants are:

- Virtual Networking Support (VNS) Grant: aims at promoting a virtual alternative to in-person collaboration. This grant intends to stimulate virtual collaboration by designating a Virtual Networking Support Manager.
- Virtual Mobility (VM) Grant: aims at strengthening the existing networks by allowing researchers and innovators to carry out collaboration in a virtual setting, to exchange knowledge, learn new techniques, disseminate Action results, etc.

The current call relates to the first type, the VNS Grant.

The call for the second one, the VM grants, will be announced upon selection of the VNS Coordinator and approval of the HyperChildNET virtual networking strategy.

### Eligibility criteria to apply for Virtual Networking Support Manager

1. The applicant is an Action participant with a primary affiliation to an institution located in a COST Full or Cooperating Member country or Management Committee (MC) Observers from a COST Near Neighbour Country.
2. The applicant shall be prepared and have the necessary skills to develop a virtual networking strategy, coordinate the call for expression of interest for the Virtual Mobility Grants and draft at the end of the grant period a report to be approved by the MC, among other tasks.

Besides the above-mentioned eligibility criteria, there are some other characteristics of the candidates that can be valuable:

- Experience in virtual networking and online coordination of teams.
- Knowledge about ITC technologies and virtual platforms for meetings and events.
- Experience in working and managing international teams.
- Capacity to promote creativity and debate among professionals using virtual tools.

**Duration**

The Virtual Networking Support Manager will start form its official appointment by the MC until October 31, 2021.

**Grant amount and payment**

A financial contribution of EUR 4,000 will be awarded, as defined by the Management Committee (MC) of HyperChildNET, for undertaking the VNS Manager role in Grant Period 1. The grant does not necessarily cover all expenses related to undertaking the virtual networking coordination role.

The COST Association and the Grant Holder of the Action cannot be considered as being the grantee's employer who shall make their own arrangements for all provisions related to personal security, health, taxation, social security, and pension matters. The grantee must also ensure they have the required technical material/equipment and infrastructure to carry out the activities proposed in their application to the grant.

The Grant Holder shall pay the approved grant to the grantee after the MC has approved the grantee's report and no later than 30 days after the end of Grant Period.

**Deadline**

The deadline for the applicants to send their application forms is June 22, 2021.

**Application procedure**

The application shall be submitted through the e-COST and include the following information:

1. A description of how the COST Action can benefit from developing virtual networking activities, with a focus on:
   - Progress towards the HyperChildNET objectives, work plan and deliverables.
   - COST Excellence and inclusiveness Policy, specially towards the support of researchers in COST Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITC)
   - Stakeholder engagement and promoting the participation of researchers from ITC and IPC (COST Global Networking).
2. A proposal for the strategy outline on virtual networking, including an approach for coordinating Virtual Mobility Grants by:
   - Opening calls and managing the evaluation process for awarding the Virtual Mobility Grants.
   - Supporting and advising beneficiaries of the Virtual Mobility Grant.
3. Additionally, the proposal shall include a plan on coordinating and reporting any planned COST Action events that will be held online and how they fit the overall Action strategy.

More information about the application process can be found in this link:

https://www.cost.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/VNT-userguide.pdf

## Evaluation process

The evaluation of each submitted application is performed through the process agreed by the HyperChildNET Management Committee. The evaluation criteria defined in this call are the same to all potential applicants.

The evaluation of the applications will be performed according to the following procedure:

- Chair and Vice-Chair will carry out a first assessment of the candidates and will present the eligible ones to the Core Group.
- This executive management body, the Core Group, will study the candidates and will make a decision for the most appropriate candidate.
- This decision will be presented to the Management Committee for its final approval. In case of denial, another decision shall be made by the Core Group until getting the approval of the MC.

The selection of successful grantee shall be based on contributions to the overall objectives of the Action and the implementation of the COST Excellence and Inclusiveness Policy.

## Implementation of activities

The successful applicant shall take the Virtual Networking Support (VNS) Manager role in the COST Action. The activities expected to be performed by the successful applicant, but not limited to, are:

- Prepare and distribute among the MC members of the Action and the COST Science Officer a detailed strategy on virtual networking for the entire Action (following consultation with Action participants, subject to MC approval).
- Support the all HyperChildNET participants in the discussions and planning of virtual events and collaboration activities.
- Assist in the selection of hosts for the virtual networking events and collaboration activities.
- Assist the selected hosts in preparation and coordination of online events and collaboration activities (including the analysis of technical needs).
- Oversee the selection of the most appropriate virtual tools for each specific virtual activity (webinar, virtual conference, online library containing learning material for use by the Action members) considering the needs of the Action and the activities (need for sub-groups, forums, etc.), demonstrate the principle of best value for money, adhere to GDPR requirements.
- Support the call, evaluation process, and coordination of the Virtual Mobility Grants (upon decision of the MC).
- Facilitate the WGs online meetings and support them in their virtual networking.

The grantee has 15 calendar days from the end of the Grant Period to submit a report to the Grant Holder Manager and to the Chair of the Action including:

- The Action's strategy on virtual networking approved by the MC.
- The list and brief description of virtual events and collaboration activities organised during the Grant Period.
- The contribution to the COST Action MoU objectives for each of the virtual events and collaboration activities

- The contribution to the COST Excellence and inclusiveness Policy, specially towards the support of researchers in COST Inclusiveness Target Countries.
- Stakeholder engagement and promoting participation of researchers from Near Neighbour Countries and International Partner Countries.
- Description of identified successful practices and lessons learned.
- Other actions implemented.

The report shall consider only virtual activities carried out in their entirety within the First Grant Period, until October 31, 2021.

**More information**

For more information on specific terms and conditions set in this call, please follow the COST Association guidelines described more in detailed in Vademecum v10.1

https://www.cost.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Vademecum-V9-28-April-20212-1.pdf

In case of contradiction between the current call and the official documents generated by the COST Association, the latter shall prevail.