Virtual Mobility Grants

1st call for applicants – First Grant Period 2021

Introduction

The COST Association has recently launched a new tool 'Virtual Networking Tools' with 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. performing activities that do not necessarily require in-person presence.

The call for the second one, the VM grants, is now being announced upon selection of the VNS Manager and approval of the HyperChildNET virtual networking strategy.

Eligibility criteria to apply for a Virtual Mobility Grant

VM applicant
1. The VM applicants are Action participants with a primary affiliation to an institution located in a COST Full or Cooperating Member country or a COST Near Neighbour Country participating in the Action.
2. The applicants shall present an application form which demonstrates the outcomes that generate benefits to the Action, actively contribute to the overall objectives and relevant deliverables of HyperChildNET and its WGs; and submit an activity report at the end, to be approved by the VNS Manager on behalf of the MC.

Other criteria of the candidates that can be valuable:

- Experience and qualification in the topics of the corresponding HyperChildNET Working Groups

- Capacity to provide an added value to the actions planned in the HyperChildNET Working Groups as reflected in their application forms.
- Experience in team management and virtual collaboration in the framework of research projects.

Duration

The Virtual Mobility grants will start from its official appointment until October 31, 2021.

Grant amount and payment

A financial contribution of up to EUR 1,500 will be awarded for each of the six Virtual Mobility grants, as defined by the Management Committee (MC) of HyperChildNET.

Therefore, the total budget for this call for applicants is EUR 9,000 for the six VM grants.

The grant duration depends on the activities foreseen in each Virtual Mobility action (no minimum duration).

The grant does not necessarily cover all expenses related to undertaking the virtual mobility 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 final report and no later than 15 days after the end of each Grant Period.

Deadline

The deadline for the applicants to send their application forms is July 15, 2021.

Application procedure

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

1. <u>Main objective of the Virtual Mobility Grant</u>
2. <u>Working Plan:</u> Description of the collaborative initiative to be implemented.
3. <u>Plan for Participation:</u> Indicative list of participants in the collaborative initiative (short description of their expertise and envisaged contribution).

4. <u>Main expected outputs:</u> Main expected results and their contribution to the progress towards the Action objectives (either research coordination and/or capacity building objectives) and deliverables.

5. <u>Contribution to the COST Action Strategy:</u> How will the Virtual Mobility contribute to the COST Excellence and Inclusiveness Policy[1] and to the Action plans for stakeholder engagement and promoting participation of researchers from Near Neighbour Country (NNC) and International Partner Country (IPC), and to the approved virtual networking strategy, if available.

Furthermore, applicants have to demonstrate in their applications forms how they will provide an added value to one or several HyperChildNET Working Groups in connection to the proposed Virtual Mobility.

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

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

Applicant MUST use the following template to apply for a Virtual Mobility:

www.cost.eu/virtual_mobility_grant_application

This template has to be uploaded by the applicant when filling in the online application form within eCOST platform.

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, Vice-Chair and VNS Manager will carry out a first assessment of the candidates and will present the eligible ones to the Core Group.
- This 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.

---

[1] https://www.cost.eu/who-we-are/cost-strategy/excellence-and-inclusiveness

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 applicants shall take the Virtual Mobility (VM) role in the COST Action. The activities expected to be performed by the successful applicants, but not limited to, are:

To strengthen the existing networks by allowing individual participants to foster collaboration, exchange knowledge, learn new techniques, etc., performing activities that do not necessarily require in-person presence.

To support the harmonisation and standardisation of methods and procedures within the Action networking activities.

To support the implementation of research related activities that do not require in-person presence.

Virtual mentoring scheme, with special focus on activities and exchanges that can generate capacity and build new skills, particularly for Early Career Investigators.

Content preparation and coordination of science communication activities.

At the end of the grant, the grantee will have to submit a report to justify his/her work by using the following template:

www.cost.eu/virtual_mobility_grant_report

This template will be also uploaded using the eCOST platform.

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 and Virtual Networking Tools (VNT) User Guide.

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

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.