

Virtual Mobility (VM) Grant Application Criteria and Rules

Definition

Virtual Mobility (VM) Grants aim at strengthening the existing network VascAgeNet by allowing scientists to foster collaboration in a virtual setting, to exchange knowledge, learn new techniques, disseminate Action results, etc. The successful applicant(s) will be selected by the Virtual Networking Support (VNS) Manager and a committee with a mandate from the MC to perform activities that do not necessarily require in-person presence. These activities may include surveys, questionnaires or preparation of protocols, virtual mentoring of activities that can generate capacity, build new skills, etc. It is a new tool for virtual activities approved by the COST Association.

Applicants

Applicant(s) are Action participants with a primary affiliation to an institution located in a COST Full or Cooperating Member country or MC Observers from a COST Near Neighbour Country participating in VascAgeNet. The applicant(s) shall inform the VNS Manager and Committee about the aim of the VM Grant and how its outcomes will generate benefits to the Action, actively contribute to the activities and overall objectives of the Action and submit a report at the end, to be approved by the VNS manager on behalf of the MC.

VM duration

Dependent on the activity (no minimum). VM Grants should end before 30/09/2021 to ensure reimbursement within the running Grant Period.

Evaluation criteria

The selection of successful grantee will be based on contributions to the overall objectives of the Action, the approved strategy on the virtual networking for the Action and the implementation of the COST Excellence and Inclusiveness Policy. VM applications must be based on the **scientific scope of the application** and how it can support the COST Action in achieving its scientific objectives and take into account the COST Policy and Rules with particular attention on Inclusiveness and Excellence.

This policy aims to provide collaboration opportunities to all researchers, engineers, scholars and other stakeholders and to overcome the bottlenecks that prevent the use of all talented and creative human resources available for European science.

Special considerations will be made with respect to supporting **COST policies and rules** on:

- strengthening the excellence through the creation of cross-border networking of researchers;
- counterbalancing research communities' unequal access to knowledge, infrastructures, funding and resources;
- promoting geographical (i.e., at most 1 grant per host institution and country (except there are less than 6 applications)), age and gender balance;

- enabling Early Career Investigators;
- promoting activities relevant to multiple working groups;
- promoting activities reaching the research coordination and capacity building objectives of the COST Action (see MoU: https://e-services.cost.eu/files/domain_files/CA/Action_CA18216/mou/CA18216-e.pdf)

Application submission

The application is done in two stages:

1. Submission to the VNS Manager and VNS Committee at the following respective links: <http://vascagenet.eu/vm-grants> and <http://vascagenet.eu/vm-application>
2. After approval by the VNS Manager and VNS Committee submission in the e-Cost tool at the following web address: <https://e-services.cost.eu/> (for details on the submission process, see <https://www.cost.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/VNT-userguide.pdf>)

A template for the application can be found here: http://www.cost.eu/virtual_mobility_grant_application

Each online submission should include details about:

- 1- Applicant name and general information about the applicant
- 2- Applicant primary affiliation
- 3- Country of affiliation
- 4- Type: Choose Virtual Mobility (VM) grant (in e-Cost)
- 5- COST Action: Selection of COST Action CA18216 (in e-Cost)
- 6- Grant Period: selection of applicable Grant Period associated to the selected Action (select GP2; in e-Cost)
- 7- Title: title of the VM grant application
- 8- WG: selection of related working groups
- 9- Objectives: mention all related research coordination and capacity building objectives of the COST Action as defined in the MoU (https://e-services.cost.eu/files/domain_files/CA/Action_CA18216/mou/CA18216-e.pdf)
- 10- Amount: requested financial contribution (max. 1 500€)
- 11- Bank account: Selection among bank accounts encoded in the e-COST user profile (just in e-Cost)
- 12- Upload of Grant Application document: actual VM application (see template: http://www.cost.eu/virtual_mobility_grant_application). It can be submitted in various file formats and up to 2 MB in size. Uploading of multiple supporting documents is allowed. The application includes:
 - a. Main objective of the VM grant.
 - b. Working Plan: Description of the collaborative initiative to be implemented.
 - c. Plan for Participation: List of participants in the collaborative initiative (short description of their expertise and contribution).
 - d. Main expected outputs: results and contribution to the progress towards the MoU objectives (either research coordination and/or capacity building objectives can be tackled) and delivery of the MoU objectives.
 - e. Contribution to the COST Action Strategy: How will the Virtual Mobility contribute to the COST Excellence and Inclusiveness Policy and plans for stakeholder engagement and

promoting participation of researchers from NNC and IPC (COST Global Networking) and to the approved virtual networking strategy, if available.

13- A CV of the applicant.

Calls for application - Timetable

The call for VM Grant application submission will be open until 15th of June and extended, if less than six applications are submitted. Applicants will be informed within 15 days after application.

If the application is rejected, the VNS Manager will provide a justification to guide the applicant in future applications.

VM Grants should end before 30/09/2021 to ensure reimbursement within the running Grant Period.

Grant selection

Eligibility will be based on:

- Outcome of the evaluation process
- Appropriateness of budget request

The evaluation of VM applications and the selection of the successful candidates are in charge of the Action Management Committee (MC). The Action MC formally delegates the evaluation of VM Grant applications to the VNS Manager and the VNS Committee.

The VNS Committee is constituted by the Working Group Leaders, the Chair, the Vice-Chair, the STSM Manager, the ITC Grant Manager and the Science Communications Managers (i.e., the VascAgeNet CORE Group). In case of a tie, the VNS Manager has double vote. Potential conflict of interest that may involve participants to the VNS Committee are not allowed.

Selected VM grantees, allocated grants including the details of the applications will be communicated during each Action MC meeting and will be included in the minutes of the meeting.

The successful applicant(s) shall implement the workplan approved in their application within the time frame also there defined and always within one single Grant Period. The grantee has 30 calendar days from the completion of the VM grant to submit a report to the VNS Manager and to the Science Officer of the Action including a:

- Description of the outcomes and achieved outputs (including any specific MoU deliverables, or publications resulting from the Virtual Mobility).
- Description of the benefits to the COST Action Strategy (what and how).
- Description of the virtual collaboration (including constructive reflection on activities undertaken, identified successful practices and lessons learned).

The report shall consider only virtual activities carried out in their entirety within a single Grant Period. The MC must be informed at the end of the respective activity of the main results of each Virtual Mobility Grant. Also, the grantee will have the obligation to actively contribute to the activities of the Action WG relevant to those findings.

A one-page short report (including a photo) is also requested to be published on the webpage.

Financial support and payment terms

A maximum of 6 Virtual Mobility Grants per Action per Grant Period can be awarded. Each Virtual Mobility Grant cannot exceed EUR 1 500.

The VNS Manager and VNS Committee shall define the exact amount of each grant reflecting the scope and complexity of the task and activities. The grant does not necessarily cover all expenses related to undertaking the virtual mobility activity.

The Grant Holder shall pay the approved grant to the grantee after the VNS Manager and VNS Committee have approved the grantee's report and no later than 15 days from the end of Grant Period.

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.

A template for the report can be found here: http://www.cost.eu/virtual_mobility_grant_report