PIMo Virtual Networking Tools (VNTs)
Call for applications
close: 20 August 2021

In response to the changed conditions created by the COVID 19 pandemic, COST recently announced the introduction of two new categories of grants available to COST members: **Virtual Networking Support (VNS) Grants**, and **Virtual Mobility (VM) Grants**. These new grants are available (through reallocated Action funds) for Virtual networking activities **from now until 31 October 2021**.

We would like to encourage suitable applications from PIMo members for one of the two categories:

- **Virtual Networking Support (VNS)**: max 1 per Action per Grant Period (up to 4,000 EUR per grant, max 4,000 EUR)
- **Virtual Mobility (VM) Grants**: max 6 per Action per GP (up to 1,500 EUR per grant, max 9,000 EUR)).

Virtual Networking Support (VNS) Grant

Eligibility:

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. The applicant(s) shall be prepared 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.

Applications:

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. **The VNS application shall be submitted in e-COST** and include the following information:

A description of how the COST Action can benefit from developing virtual networking activities, with a focus on:
   o Progress towards the MoU objectives and deliverables.
   o COST Excellence and inclusiveness Policy, specially towards the support of researchers in COST Inclusiveness Target Countries.
   o Stakeholder engagement and promoting the participation of researchers from NNC and IPC (COST Global Networking).

Additionally, the proposal shall include a plan on coordinating and reporting any planned COST Action events that will be held online

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:

   o 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 (subject to MC approval).
   o Support the MC in the discussions and planning of virtual events and collaboration activities.
   o Assist in the selection of hosts for the virtual networking events and collaboration activities.
   o Assist the selected hosts in preparation and coordination of online events and collaboration activities (including the analysis of technical needs).
   o 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.

Virtual Mobility (VM) Grants

Eligibility:

All Action participants with a primary affiliation to an institution located in a COST Full Member country or Cooperating Member, or MC Observers from a COST Near Neighbour Country are eligible to apply for the grants.

Applications:

Applications should detail the aim of the VM Grant and how its outcomes will generate benefits to the Action. Applicants should also address how the proposed Grant will actively contribute to the activities and overall objectives of the Action, and will be required to submit a report at the end, to be approved by the Virtual Networking Support (VNS) Manager.

The VM application shall be submitted in e-COST and include the following information:
- o Main objective of the Virtual Mobility Grant.
- o Working Plan: Description of the collaborative initiative to be implemented.
- o Plan for Participation: List of participants in the collaborative initiative (short description of their expertise and contribution).
- o Main expected outputs: results and contribution to the progress towards the PIMo Memorandum of Understanding objectives (either research coordination and/or capacity building objectives can be tackled) and delivery of the MoU objectives.
- o 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

What activities does the VM Grant cover?

Some examples of activities to be performed by the successful applicant are described in the COST Vademecum Section 10.2.3 (VM). The activities expected to be performed by the successful applicant, but not limited to, are:

- o To support the harmonisation and standardisation of methods and procedures within the Action networking activities, e.g. setting up a survey amongst all Action members to collect different results and outcomes from experiments done in their respective labs and research groups; coordinating discussions to create common protocols to be used by the network afterwards; preparing questionnaires and response scales to be used by the Action members as part of virtual networking activities.
- o To support the implementation of research related activities that do not necessarily require in-person presence, e.g. computational or modelling activities; data analysis of the Action for a specific report or activity.
- o Virtual mentoring scheme, with special focus on activities and exchanges that can generate capacity building and new skills, particularly for ECIs researchers (e.g. managerial skills, methodological skills, communication skills, etc).
- o Content preparation and coordination of science communication activities, e.g. Massive Online Open Courses (MOOC); Online workshops like 'webinar series' or 'tv series'-like format.
- o Online COST Action workshops in external international conferences or events, when the applicant can demonstrate a role in the organising committee, that could help in the promotion of the Action activities.

Further details of eligible activities can be found on pp. 38-39 of the COST Vademecum (version issued on April 21, 2021, available for download here: https://www.cost.eu/funding/how-to-get-funding/documents-guidelines/).

The call closes on 20 August 2021.