VIRTUAL MOBILITY (VM) GRANT CALL

COST Action CA18211

14th March 2022

A. GENERAL INFO

GYNOCARE (CA18117) aims to create a unique network between key stakeholders covering five distinct domains (from concept to cure): basic research on rare gynaecological cancer, biobanking, industrial dimension, legal and regulatory requirements for international trials and other research collaborative efforts, and high-quality, international, and innovative clinical trials. To achieve our ambitious goals, we have devised research coordination and capacity building objectives in accordance with mission and vision of the COST Action.

Virtual Networking Tools (VNTs) have been introduced by COST in April 2021. This project has run as a pilot until 31 October 2021, and, following its' success, it was reintroduced by COST in the current grant period. **Virtual Mobility (VM) Grants** aim at strengthening the existing networks by allowing scientists to foster collaboration in a virtual setting, to exchange knowledge, learn new techniques, disseminate the Action results, etc.

COST did not impose a limit of the number of Virtual mobility Grants per Action that canl be funded but specified the capping of up to 1,500 EUR per grant, as in the previous Grant Period.

B. ELIGIBILITY AND APPLICATION PROCEDURE

PARTICIPANTS

- 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 inform the MC 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.

EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF APPLICANTS

The evaluation of each received VM grant application is performed by the Virtual Networking Support (VNS) Manager together with the Action Vice-chair.

The selection of successful grantee shall be based on contributions to the overall objectives of the Action as per Memorandum of Understanding, COST policy, and the approved strategy on the virtual networking for the Action and the implementation of the COST Excellence and Inclusiveness Policy.

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

• **Main objective** of the Virtual Mobility Grant.

• **Working Plan:** Description of the collaborative initiative to be implemented.

• **Plan for Participation:** List of participants in the collaborative initiative (short description of their expertise and contribution).

• **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.

• **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.

C. IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIVITIES

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 activities expected to be performed by the successful applicant, but not limited to, are:

•   To support the harmonisation and standardisation of methods and procedures within the Action networking activities, e.g.

  o   setting up a survey amongst all Action members to collect different results and outcomes from experiments done in their respective labs and research groups.

  o   coordinating the discussions to create common protocols to be used by the network afterwards.

  o   preparing questionnaires and response scales to be used by the Action members as part of virtual networking activities.

•   To support the implementation of research related activities that do not necessarily require in-person presence, e.g.

  o   computational or modelling activities.

  o   data analysis of the Action for a specific report or activity.

•   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).

•   Content preparation and coordination of science communication activities, e.g.

  o   Massive Online Open Courses (MOOC).

  o   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.

D. REPORT AFTER THE COMPLETION

The grantee has 30 calendar days from the completion of the Virtual Mobility Grant to submit a report to the Action Chair/ the VNS Manager and to the Science Officer of the Action including:

- 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.

E. NON-ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

1. Expenses already covered under other networking tools (e.g. LOS, STSM, ITC Conference Grants).

2. Expenses considered non-eligible under any other networking tool (e.g. LOS, Dissemination, etc)

3. Expenses related to licence fees for virtual communication tools beyond the permitted amount for the Action for a Grant Period.

4. Expenses related to the participation in a conference.

5. Translation or interpretation expenses.

6. Purchase of software and technical equipment or electronic devices such as mobile phones, computers, printers, etc.

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cost
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F. IMPORTANT NOTES

- VNTs are not intended for costs already covered under other networking tools (Zoom license under OERSA), or non-eligible expenses (e.g. electricity, Internet fees). They are contributions as grants for Action participants to perform certain activities.

- VM grants are not replacing STSMs. STSMs require physical mobility which is not necessary in the VNTs.

- The grant payment does not require any justification of person-months because it is not meant to be a salary. It is paid against the submission and approval of the required final report. As it is a fixed grant, receipts and invoices are NOT required to be submitted.

For detailed rules regarding eligibility and financial support, please see the relevant sections of the COST Vademecum.

For further queries please contact Virtual Networking Manager and Action Chair – Prof Jean Calleja-Agius at jean.calleja-agius@um.edu.mt.