

# Virtual Networking Tools (VNT)

**User guide** 

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# **1. INTRODUCTION**

This document describes the VNT process as implemented in e-COST, from the moment an applicant submits an application for approval by the VNS manager to the payment and recording of the amount paid by the Grant Holder manager (GHM) to the VNT grantee. The applicant can draft and submit an application for either a Virtual Networking Support (VNS) grant or for a Virtual Mobility (VM) grant, the process for both types of grants is similar.

# **KEY PLAYERS**

- Virtual Networking Support (VNS) grant applicant
- Virtual Mobility (VM) grant applicant
- Virtual Networking Support (VNS) manager
- Action Chair
- Action Vice Chair
- Grant Holder manager (GHM)

### **VNS** applicant

The VNS applicant(s) 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. The applicant(s) shall be prepared, among others, to develop a virtual networking strategy, coordinate the call for expression of interest for the Virtual Mobility Grants, and draft a report to be approved by the MC (further details are provided in the <u>Vademecum</u>)

VNS templates: www.cost.eu/virtual\_networking\_support\_grant\_application www.cost.eu/virtual\_networking\_support\_grant\_report\_

### **VM applicant**

The VM applicant(s) 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. 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 overall objectives and relevant deliverables of the Action and submit an activity report at the end, to be approved by the VNS manager on behalf of the MC.

VM templates: www.cost.eu/virtual\_mobility\_grant\_application www.cost.eu/virtual\_mobility\_grant\_report

### **VNS** manager

The VNS manager is the person appointed by the MC as VNS grantee. The VNS manager shall develop, among others, a virtual networking strategy, coordinate the call for expression of interest for the Virtual Mobility Grants, approve the VM application(s) on behalf of the MC and draft a report to be approved by the MC (further details are provided in the <u>Vademecum</u>)

### **Action Chair**

The Action Chair acts as default VNS manager and appoints the VNS manager on behalf of the MC.



### **Action Vice Chair**

The Action Vice Chair has access to the monitoring VNT applications and receives a copy of relevant notifications.

### **Grant Holder manager**

The GH manager monitors the incoming approved VNT grant applications, determines the Grant amount in accordance with the request, but also with the budget available, sends the successful applicants their Grant Notification letter and ensures that all grants are paid within the deadline for payment.

# 2. PROCESS OVERVIEW

### 2.1 Applicant creates a VNT application

The applicant encodes a VNT application by logging into e-COST and clicking on the VNT Application tab.

Any already existing applications are available for consultation in the VNT applications overview. To encode a new application, the applicant clicks on 'Apply for grant'.

COST Actions	Virtual Networking	Tool Applica	ations			
International Cooperation STSM Applications	Filter by status:					
ITC Conference Grants	Select one or more status			*		
VNT Applications		\$ Type	\$ Title	¢ Status	≑ Created on	Amount [EUR]
	Search a grant					
				Showing 0 total	l grants	
						+ Apply for grant

The page "Apply for a new Grant" contains the following sections, all mandatory to be filled:

- Applicant name: pre-filled and non-editable
- Applicant primary affiliation: pre-filled and non-editable
- Type: selection type of VNT Grant, among Virtual Networking Support (VNS) grant and Virtual Mobility (VM) grant
- COST Action: selection of COST Action or COST Innovators Grant to which the VNT grant application is submitted
- Grant Period: selection of applicable Grant Period associated to the selected Action
- Title: title of the VNT grant application
- Amount: requested financial contribution
- Bank account: selection among bank accounts encoded in the e-COST user profile

After encoding correctly the VNT application form by filling all above-mentioned sections, the applicant also needs to upload the actual VNT application by uploading it as a supporting document:

- VNT grant Application template: COST template for VNT grant applications (1 template for VNS grant, 1 template for VM grant).
- Upload of Grant Application document: actual VNT application. It can be submitted in various file formats and up to 2 MB in size. Uploading of multiple supporting documents is allowed.



### Apply for new Grant

nt name		
ry affiliation		
		v .
Action *		~
	Please select from the list the Action to which you want to apply. You can apply only to Actions when the COST Full or Cooperating Membe case that you are a researcher/participant from a Near Neighbour Country, then you can apply only to those Actions in which you have bee	er, in which of your primary affiliation resides, has joined the Action. In in approved as MC Observer.
period *		~
	A Grant Period is the period of time that the Grant Holder of each Action has to complete their Action objectives. A Grant Period runs for or	e year unless stated otherwise.
int*		EUR
account *		~
		✓ Save application
unnorting docu	iments	✓ Save application
upporting docu	Iments	✓ Save application
▲ Download Grant	r Application template	✓ Save application
🛓 Download Grant	r Application template	Save application
▲ Download Grant	r Application template ument *	Save application
▲ Download Grant Upload docu Title / Description	f Application template ument * Exemple revulus, suport aganta, etc.	
Downlead Greet Upload docu Title / Description File to upload *	f Application template ument * Exemple revulus, suport aganta, etc.	Broose
Downlead Greet Upload docu Title / Description File to upload *	4 Application template umment * * Exempte minutus, report, agenda, etc Yiv user-uplated files up to 2 Mill anch. Supported file types are: pill, proj. gap, gap, gd, dec, doos, soft, site, site.	Broose

After adding the supporting document(s), the applicant can submit the grant application.

ilter by status:							
Select one or more	status		*				
COST Action	\$ Type	≑ Title		¢ Created on	Amount [EUR]		
Search a grant							
	VNS	Virtual Networking Support	B Draft Showing 1 total gra	21/04/2021	2000.00	🖪 Submit	Options

5



# Submit application

Draft	Submitted P	re-Approved	Grant letter sent	Report submitted	Report approved	Paid
<mark>≡</mark> Grar	nt		Virtu	ual Networking	Support	Draft
	Title COST Action Clain	1	Networking Sup 2000.00	port		
	Supporting documents	S Applica	ation		2	🛓 Download
		Applica	ation			L Download

### Are you sure you want to submit the application?

🗸 Submit		
	Options 👻	× Close

The application status will change from draft to submitted. Prior to approval of the application, if need be, the applicant will be able to revise the application.

Filter by status:							
Select one or more	status		Ť				
≑ COST Action	\$ Type	\$ Title	≑ Status	¢ Created on	Amount [EUR]		
Search a grant							
	VNS	Virtual Networking Support	A Submitted	21/04/2021	2000.00	+ Revise	Options
			Showing 1 total g	rant			
					+	Apply for grant	

×



### 2.2 Approval /rejection of the application on behalf of the MC

As soon as the VNT application is submitted, the Action Chair (acting as default Virtual Networking Support manager) is notified. The applicant and Action Vice Chair also receive a copy of the notification.

Alternatively, the Action Chair/ VNS manager can check the status of VNT applications pending review via the VNT Applications Monitoring.

							5 Reset	<b>T</b> Filter
COST Action \$	Applicant \$	Type \$	Status \$	Title \$	Amount [EUR] \$	Created on +	Options	
						dd / mm / yyyy		
			Nothing selected +			dd / mm / yyyy		
		VM	A Submitted	Virtual Mobility grant	1000.00	27/04/2021	QF	Review

• For VNS Grant, the Action Chair will be able to review and approve/reject the VNT application on behalf of the MC. In case of rejection, a justification needs to be encoded. The justification will be included in the e-notification to the applicant.

Once the VNS grant application is approved, the Action Chair will be able to assign the VNS grantee as VNS manager. In order to do so, the Action Chair needs to log into e-cost, click on the Role Action Chair and access the Leadership positions tab.

The Action Chair is the default Virtual Networking Support Manager in c	case none explicitly assigned.	
- Hide		
↔ Assign another person (not MC Member/Substitute)		
Choose an eligible Virtual Networking Support Manager (between MC Members/Substitutes)	ELIGIBLE VIRTUAL NETWORKING SUPPORT	

• For VM Grant(s), the VNS manager will be able to review the VM application and approve/reject on behalf of the MC. In case of rejection, a justification needs to be encoded. The justification will be included in the e-notification to the applicant.



Dear Dr .

Dr has submitted an on-line application request for a Virtual Networking Support Grant.

Please verify the validity of this application and organise its evaluation (for approval or rejection) following the procedures agreed by the MC. You can encode the final MC decision by clicking on the following link:

#### https://u

For further information about this procedure, please contact the Science Officer and Administrative Officer of your COST Action.

We thank you for your cooperation.

Best regards,

COST Association

Draft	Submitted	Pre-Approved	Grant letter sent	Report submitted	Report approved	Paid
🔳 Gran	t		Virtual	Networking St	upport 🛛 🖪 Sul	bmitted
	Tit COST Acti Cla	on	etworking Supp	oort Grant		
:	Supporting documer	Applicatio	on details		\$	Download
		Applicatio	n		<b>*</b> [	Download

### Please review the grant request

V Approve	🗙 Reject



Upon approval,	the VNT	application	status wil	I change from	submitted to	pre-approved
- 1 1 ,				9		1 11

<b>⊒</b> Grant	Virtual Networking Suppo	ort 🚺 Pre-Approved
Title COST Action	Virtual Networking Support Grant	
Claim	EUR 1000.00	
Supporting documents	Application details	🛓 Download
	Application	🛓 Download
History	27/04/2021 15:24 has sub	mitted the grant application
✓ Grant approved successf	ully	
	ully	
✓ Grant approved successf Justification (required to reject)	ully	
	ully	X Reject

### 2.3 The GH manager sends the applicant the Grant Notification Letter

As soon as the VNS manager approved the VNT application, the GH manager is notified and can send the Grant Letter notification. The Action Chair and Vice Chair also receive a copy of the e-notification.

Dear Ms
With reference to the following application for a Virtual Networking Support Grant with the following details:
<ul> <li>COST Action:</li> <li>Reference: E-COST-GRANT-</li> <li>Title: Virtual Networking Support Grant</li> <li>Grant amount: 1000.00</li> <li>Start and end date: 27/04/2021 - 31/10/2021</li> <li>Applicant:</li> <li>Applicant institution:</li> </ul>
On behalf of the Management Committee of the COST Action , I would like to inform you that the proposed Virtual Networking Support Grant application and supporting documents have been reviewed and approved.
Please verify that funds are available to support this application and send the applicant the Grant Notification Letter to the applicant:
https://



The GH manager follows the link provided in the notification and logs into e-cost. The GH manager can send the grant letter to the VNT grantee.

Filter by status:					
Select one or more status			¥		
					LExport all application
Applicant	¢ Type	O Status     O	¢ Title	Amount [EUR]	
Search a grant					
	VNS	Pre-Approved	Virtual Networking Support		✓ Send grant letter

# Send grant letter

<b>Ξ</b> Grant	Virtual Networking St	upport I Pre-Approved
Applicant		
Primary affiliation		
Title	Virtual Networking Support Grant	
Start	27/04/2021	
End	31/10/2021	
Supporting documents	Application details	🕹 Download
	Application	🛓 Download
Template	🛓 Download Grant Report template	
History	27/04/2021 15:24 ha	s submitted the grant application
	27/04/2021 15:29 has app	roved the grant application
Claim		
Amount [EUR]	1000.00	

×



Upon sending of the grant letter, the status of the VNT application will change from pre-approved to Grant Letter sent.

Draft Submitted Pre-A	pproved Grant letter sent Report submitt	ed Report approved Paid
<b>Ξ</b> Grant	Virtual Networking Supp	oort
Applicant		
Primary affiliation		
Title	Virtual Networking Support Grant	
Start	27/04/2021	
End	31/10/2021	
Supporting documents	Application details	🛃 Download
	Application	🛓 Download
Template	L Download Grant Report template	
History	27/04/2021 15:24 has	submitted the grant application
	27/04/2021 15:29 has appr	oved the grant application
Claim		
Amount [EUR]	1000.00	

The grant letter notification is sent to the applicant. The GH manager and the VNS manager will be in copy of the notification.

Dear Dr	
With reference to your application for a Virtual Networking Support Grant with the following details:	
COST Action: Virtual Networking Grant: E-COST-GRANT. Title: Virtual Networking Support Grant Grant amount: 1000.00 EUR Start and ed date: 27-04-2021 - 31-10-2021 Applicant: Applicant: Applicant home institution: We are happy to inform you that the application has been approved by the MC of the COST Action.	
Please download from the link below the terms and conditions that outline the rights and duties of the grantee and of the Grant Holder.	
https://	
While this Grant Letter highlights and summarises important items linked to your Virtual Networking Grant, it does not substitute the rules and conditions detailed in the relevant section of the COST Vademecum – see <a href="https://www.cost.eu/Vademecum">https://www.cost.eu/Vademecum</a> .	
A user guide providing an overview of the process is available here:	
https://www.cost.eu/virtual networking tools ecost user guide	

Kind regards,



### Article 2 - PAYMENT MODALITIES AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

2.1 The payment of the Grant will be made in Euro (EUR) and is subject to the availability of funds.

2.2 The payment of the Grant is subject to the report being approved by the VNS Manager on behalf of the MC. The report must be uploaded in e-COST within 15 days from the end date of the Grant Period.

2.3 The grantee is irrevocably and unconditionally responsible for any amount due to the Grant Holder and implicitly to the COST Association. The grantee shall be aware that the COST Association reserves the right to postpone or cancel all payments and to recover the amounts already paid to the grantee in case the grantee does not fulfil their obligations.

### Article 3 - PENALTIES

3.1 Failure to request the VNS Manager's approval and to inform the Grant Holder about any changes to the approved Virtual Networking Grant application, and failure to submit the report within the abovementioned deadline may lead to the cancellation of the Grant.

Kind regards,

### 2.4 VN grantee uploads the report and MC Chair/ VNS manager approves.

1 day and 10 days after the end of the grant, the VN grantee receives a reminder to upload the report.

The deadline to submit the report is 15 days from the end of the grant period for the Virtual Networking Support grant and 30 days from the end date of the activity for the Virtual Mobility grant.

The VNT grantee receives an e-notification to submit the report on e-COST.

[Note: this is an automatic reminder] Dear Dr This is a reminder that you are required to submit your report for approval to the Action MC. Your report is due within 15 days from the end date of the Grant Period. You are kindly requested to complete the following steps: • Click on the link below to upload your report. this link • Review the bank details on which you wish to receive the Grant to your e-cost profile, if you have not done so already. Failure to submit your report on time may result in the cancellation of the grant.

The payment of your Grant is carried out by the Grant Holder following the receipt of the approval of your report by the Action MC.



The VNT grantee must complete the report template, upload and submit it in e-COST. The status of the VNT application changes from Grant letter sent to Report submitted.

Draft Submitted Pre-	Approved	Grant letter sent	Report submitted	Report approved	Pai
≡ Grant		Virtual Netwo	orking Support	A Report su	bmitted
Title	Virtual	Networking Sup	port Grant		
COST Action					
Start	27/03/20	021			
End	30/03/20	021			
Claim	= EUR	1000.00			
Supporting documents	Application details			*	Download
	Applica	ation		*	Download
	Grant	letter		*	Download
	Report	t -		*	Download
Application submitted succe	essfully				
		. Cubmitte	vd		
		V Submitte			
					× Clos

Upon submission of the VNT grant report, an e-notification is sent to the VNS Manager, and a copy to the VNT grantee, Action Chair, Vice Chair and GH manager.

Dear Dr ,

A report for the awarded Virtual Networking Support grant application described below has been submitted:

- COST Action:
- Reference: E-COST-GRANT-
- Title: Virtual Networking Support Grant
   Grant amount: 1000.00
   Start and end date: 27/03/2021 30/03/2021
- Applicant: Dr Applicant home institution:

Please verify the validity of this report and approve or reject it on behalf of the MC by clicking on the link below:

### https://u We thank you for your cooperation.

Best regards,

COST Association



### 2.5 Action Chair/ VNS manager approves/rejects the report

The VNS manager is notified when the VNT grantee submitted the report and has to verify the validity and content of the report by clicking the link in the notification. Alternatively, the report can be accessed from the VNT Applications Monitoring page.

After the review of the report, the VNS manager needs to encode its approval or rejection on behalf of the MC.

Draft •	Submitted	Pre-Approved	Grant letter sent	Report submitted R	eport approved Paid
E Grar	nt		Virtual Netwo	orking Support	Report submitted
	T COST Act		Networking Sup	port Grant	
		tart 27/03/2 End 30/03/2			
Claim			R 1000.00		
	Supporting docume	nts Applic	ation details		🛓 Download
		Applic	ation		🛓 Download
		Grant	letter		🛓 Download
		Repo	rt		🛓 Download
	Hist	ory 27/04/	2021 15:24	i has subr	nitted the grant application
		27/04/	2021 15:29	has approved th	he grant application
		27/04/	2021 15:36	has sent th	ne grant letter
		27/04/	2021 16:00	has subr	nitted the grant report

Please review the grant report

Justification (required to reject)	
✓ Approve	🗙 Reject

If rejected, a justification is required and its content wil be included in the e-notification to the VNT grantee, who is asked to revise and re-submit the report. In this case, the status of the VNT application goes back to Grant letter sent.

If the VNS manager approves the report, the VNT application status changes to Report Approved and the GH manager is notified that the grant can be paid. The applicant, Action Chair and Vice Chair receive a copy of the e-notification.



#### Dear Ms

On behalf of the Management Committee of the COST Action, this is to inform you that the report for the Virtual Networking Support Grant described below was reviewed and found in line with the submitted application, thus approved by the Action MC.

Therefore, please process the payment by following this link.

Grant details:

- COST Action:
- Reference: E-COST-GRANT-
- Title: Virtual Networking Support Grant
- Grant amount: 1000.00
  Start and end date: 27/03/2021 30/03/2021
- Applicant:
- Applicant home institution:

We thank you for your cooperation.

### 2.6 The GH manager makes the payment of the Grant.

Following the link in the e-notification, the GH manager reaches the Virtual Networking Tools page (part of the Manage Grant section) from which the grant payments can be recorded.

Virtual Networ	king Tool Ap	plications			
Filter by status:					
Select one or more statue	5		×		
					Ł Export all applications
Applicant	ф Туре	∲ Status	\$ Title	Amount [EUR]	
Search a grant					
	VNS	✓ Report approved	Virtual Networking Support Grant	1000.00	<ul> <li>Record payment</li> </ul>

The GH manager can download an excel list of VNT grants that are ready to be paid via the Export all applications. This list contains the necessary information for the GH financial and accounting department to process the Grant transfer.

Once the GH financial and accounting department processed the Grant transfer, the GH manager can record the payment and complete the VNT process.



Details

Draft	Submitted	Pre-Approved	Grant letter sent	Report submitted	Report approved	Paid
E Gran	it		Virtu	ual Networking	Support -	Paid
	Appl Primary affili	icant ation				
		Title         Virtual N           Start         27/03/20           End         30/03/20		Grant		
	Supporting documents		ation details		20	ownload
		Applic	ation		<b>*</b> C	ownload
		Grant	letter		<b>2</b> C	ownload
		Report			<b>*</b> [	ownload
	Hi	story 27/04/2	021 15:24	has su	bmitted the grant app	lication
		27/04/2	021 15:29	has approve	d the grant application	n
		27/04/2	021 15:36	has sen	t the grant letter	
		27/04/2	2021 16:00	has su	bmitted the grant repo	ort
		27/04/2	021 16:04	has approve	d the grant report	
- Clair	ກ Amount [	eur] 1000.	00			

Upon the recording of the payment, an e-notification is sent to the VNT grantee, with a copy to the GH manager.

Dear
We inform you that your submitted payment request Ref: E-COST-GRANT- of EUR has been processed and sent to the bank You will receive your money within a few days.
Hereby are the details:
COST Action: (
Grant: Virtual Networking Support Grant
Reference: E-COST-GRANT-
The amount of EUR has been transferred to the following account:
Account Holder Name:
Bank Name:
Bank Country:
Bank Account: *********
SWIFT: ********
For any further requests feel free to contact me.

×