



# UNDERGROUND4VALUE

#costCA18110

**Underground Built Heritage as catalyser for Community Valorisation**

## Virtual Networking Support (VNS) grant call

Dear Underground4value partners,

We would like to announce the opening of a new opportunity of grant, the Virtual Networking Support (VNS) grant call, aiming at promoting virtual collaboration as a complement to traditional ways of collaboration within the research and innovation communities. This new mechanism activated as a pilot by the COST Association intends to stimulate virtual collaboration among the members of the COST Action “Underground Built Heritage as catalyser for Community Valorisation”.

Essential information for the potential Virtual Networking Support (VNS) grant applicants is listed as the below:

### Eligibility Criteria

1. The applicant is an Action participant 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.
2. The applicant 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.

### Grant Amount

A financial contribution of up to EUR 4 000 will be awarded per Grant Period, as defined by the MC. The grant does not necessarily cover all expenses related to undertaking the virtual networking coordination role.

### Deadline

The application deadline is June 15th, 2021.

### Apply procedure

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

1. A description of how the COST Action can benefit from developing virtual networking activities, with a focus on:
  - Progress towards the MoU objectives and deliverables
  - COST Excellence and inclusiveness Policy, specially towards the support of researchers in COST Inclusiveness Target Countries.

- Stakeholder engagement and promoting the participation of researchers from NNC and IPC (COST Global Networking).
2. A proposal for the strategy outline on virtual networking, including an approach for coordinating Virtual Mobility Grants by:
    - Opening calls and managing the evaluation process for awarding the Virtual Mobility Grants.
    - Supporting and advising beneficiaries of the Virtual Mobility Grant.
  3. Additionally, the proposal shall include a plan on coordinating and reporting any planned COST Action events that will be held online and how they fit the overall Action strategy.

## Evaluation process

The evaluation of each submitted VNS grant application is performed by a VNT Committee appointed by the Action's MC. The evaluation criteria defined by the Committee shall be communicated to all potential applicants. In general, 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 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:

- 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 (following consultation with Action participants, subject to MC approval).
- Support the MC in the discussions and planning of virtual events and collaboration activities.
- Assist in the selection of hosts for the virtual networking events and collaboration activities.
- Assist the selected hosts in preparation and coordination of online events and collaboration activities (including the analysis of technical needs).
- 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 (upon decision of the MC).

The grantee has 15 calendar days from the end of the Grant Period to submit a report to the VNT Committee and to the Science Officer of the Action including:

- The Action's strategy on virtual networking approved by the MC.
- The list and brief description of virtual events and collaboration activities organised during the Grant Period.
- The contribution to the COST Action MoU objectives for each of the virtual events and collaboration activities
- The contribution to the COST Excellence and inclusiveness Policy, specially towards the support of researchers in COST Inclusiveness Target Countries.
- Stakeholder engagement and promoting participation of researchers from Near Neighbour Countries and International Partner Countries.
- Description of identified successful practices and lessons learned.

The report shall consider only virtual activities carried out in their entirety within a single Grant Period.

## Payment procedure

The Grant Holder shall pay the approved grant to the grantee after the MC has approved the grantee's report and no later than 30 days after 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.

Giuseppe Pace  
CA18110 Action Chair