

Virtual Mobility Grants Open Call for Applicants 4th Grant Period

By 2050, the number of people in the EU aged 65 and above is expected to grow by 70% and the number of people aged over 80, by 170%, which will increase demand and costs for healthcare. Integrating ICT solutions into habitats, along with improved building design, will allow us to live at home and stay active and productive for longer despite cognitive or physical impediments.

Improving accessibility, functionality, and safety at home, at work and in society in general requires combining many disciplines together to develop solutions that integrate ICT, ergonomics, healthcare (psychological and physical), building and community design.

The furniture sector plays an incredibly important role. Not only is it a critical part of the European economy, it also can significantly improve the accessibility of the built environment for older adults by integrating ICT solutions, ergonomic design, and taking into account the health needs of the elderly more completely.

COST Action CA16226 *Indoor living space improvement: Smart Habitat for the Elderly* (Sheldon) is a science and technology network where relevant actors from academic, research and industry sectors utilise networking tools and activities to address the ageing population challenges facing Europe, helping to reduce redundancy in RDI efforts, ensure solutions are developed with a broader set of expertise, and help refine the efforts of diverse group of researchers.

The Sheldon COST Action CA16226 is opening a call for Virtual Networking Mobility Grants, under the pilot action implemented by the COST programme that will run until October 2021, in order to build capacity and spread the uptake of virtual collaboration across different research communities.

Virtual Mobility (VM) Grants aim to strengthen existing networks by allowing individual participants to foster collaboration, to exchange knowledge, to learn new techniques, etc. Successful applicants will be selected by 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.

A maximum of 6 Virtual Mobility Grants, not exceeding EUR1500 each, will be awarded. Applicants can be 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. Applications must be submitted in e-cost using this template including 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).

Priority will be given to those applications that contribute to the [methodology established in Working Group 4](#) under one or more of the four sub-working groups that will finally lead to the White Paper on Recommendations:

- By updating the identified existing solutions by WG4 members
- By analysing the existing solutions and defining weaknesses and success.
- By defining and prioritising core challenges.

The evaluation and selection of applications will be performed by the Action's Virtual Networking Support (VNS) Manager with the support of the Core Group, if necessary, on behalf of the MC.

The selection of successful grantees shall be based on contributions to the criteria below:

	Description	Grading	Minimum score	Weight
1.	Alignment with the working methodology established in Working Group 4 on Solutions for Ageing Well at Home, in the community and at Work.	1 to 5	3	50.0 %

2.	Alignment of the proposal with the aims and objectives of the Sheldon COST Action and the COST Association.	1 to 5	3	30.0 %
3.	Adequate implementation of the COST Excellence and Inclusiveness Policy, especially towards the support of researchers in ITCs and NNCs.	1 to 5	3	20.0 %

In case of equally ranked applications underrepresented persons, ECI and applicants from ITC will be given preference.

Additional information can be found in the Vademecum, The FAQ for VNTs and the VNT user guide.

Each VM applicant can define their scope within the 4 Sub-Groups¹ of Working Group 4, as long as they directly contribute to the work being actually developed within WG4 so far. This should be made explicit in the application and coordination with WG4 Leader, Vice-leaders and members is valued.

The requirements on activities expected to be performed by the successful applicant are listed in section 10.2.3 of the Vademecum, as potential examples:

- 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 the 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.
- To support the implementation of research related activities that do not necessarily require in-person presence, e.g.: Desk search on relevant items, or 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., Online workshops like 'webinar series' or 'tv series'-like format, or online COST Action

¹ WG4.1 Solutions for Ageing well at Home
WG4.2 Solutions for Ageing well in the Community
WG4.3 Solutions for Ageing well at Work
WG4.4 Technology Adoption

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.

The call will be open until the 6 grants are awarded, however, there will be a cut off on August 29th where all submitted applications will be assessed. With the provision that the submission and grant implementation will be within the Grant Period lasting until October 31, 2021, taking into account application evaluation processing time – up to 7 days. The grantee has 30 calendar days from the completion of the Virtual Mobility Grant to submit a report to the VNS Manager and to the Science Officer of the Action.

In case you have any questions about the application procedure or VM rules, please contact the Virtual Networking Support Manager, Michael Burnard (michael.burnard@iam.upr.si), and the Action Chair Francisco Melero (fj.melero@cetem.es).

Useful links:

Action Website

Action page on COST Website

Memorandum of Understanding

Explanatory video about Introduction to WG4 Objectives, expected results and Methodology