



VM Grants WG5 “Communication and Collaboration”

CA23121 GENOA

Call for a Virtual Mobility Grant (VMG)

Work on VMGs taking place between **1st June - 15 September 2026**

CALL DEADLINE: May 20th, 23:59 CEST

ANNOUNCEMENT DATE: ten working days upon receipt of the applications or May 30th, 17:00 CEST at the latest

BACKGROUND

Working Group 5's primary goal is to foster multifaceted networking and effective communication within the biodiversity monitoring community. We achieve this by coordinating with major external organisations to promote collaboration across the three biodiversity pillars (genes, species, ecosystems). Internally, WG5 manages all communication and handles the Action's website, social media, news, and reports. WG5 specifically works to overcome language barriers by engaging local communicators, ensuring information is consistent and clear across all channels.

The **TWO Virtual Mobility Grants** in this call aims to support progress in the work plan of WG5 through contribution to objectives O5.1 and O5.3, and deliverable D4.5.

THE PURPOSE OF THE VM GRANT 1

Key Responsibilities

The Virtual Mobility (VM) grant directly supports the WG5 mandate and the deliverable D4.5 “5 (*stand-alone*) cartoons and 1 comics series” by developing high-impact visual content. The required deliverable is a stand-alone cartoon or a comics series focused on simplifying and widely disseminating a key message related to the Action's objectives.

Competencies



Grantees are expected to have demonstrated expertise in visual communication (e.g. cartoons, comics, illustration, or digital storytelling) and a strong ability to distil and communicate complex Action-related messages in a visually compelling and scientifically accurate manner for broad audiences.

THE PURPOSE OF THE VM GRANT 2

Key Responsibilities

The purpose of the second Virtual Mobility Grant (VMG) is to support the development of high-impact visual content that communicates key GENOA messages and contributions related to global biodiversity policy. While the VMG is open to a range of visual communication approaches aligned with the Action's objectives, **applications proposing to produce visual content that supports GENOA's online communication campaign linked to its participation in COP17 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) will be particularly favoured**, especially where complex messages are translated into clear, engaging formats suitable for broad dissemination.

Competencies

Grantees are expected to have demonstrated expertise in visual communication (cartoons, comics, illustration, or digital storytelling) and the ability to distil and visually communicate complex scientific and policy-relevant messages in a scientifically accurate and engaging manner, suitable for online dissemination in the context of international biodiversity processes.

Eligibility

Individuals affiliated to a legal entity in a COST Full/Cooperating Member, in a European RTD, or in a Near Neighbour Country (NNC) institution can apply for a VMG.

Non-eligible activities

All activities that are covered by other networking tools, licenses of programmes or online tools, conference fees, translations, purchase of any software and technical equipment.

ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANTS

The following eligibility criteria apply:

- 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 successful applicant(s) shall:
 - inform the MC and the Core Group 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,

- submit a report at the end, to be approved by the Grant Awarding Coordinator on behalf of the MC.

FUNDING

The maximum amount for one VM grant is € 1,500. However, please note that the requested amount can be decreased or increased as Core Group will define the exact amount for each grant reflecting the scope and complexity of the task and activities.

No in advance payments are foreseen. Approved VM Grant will be paid to the grantee after the Core Group has approved the grantee's report and no later than 15 days from the end of Grant Period.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

VM Grant applications must be submitted using [the e-COST system](#). The applicants should use VM templates provided by e-COST in the [Grant Awarding User Guide](#) (page 4). VM Grant applications submitted in any other way (email, post etc.) will not be evaluated. Details of application procedure are described in the [Grant Awarding User Guide](#).

1. Applicants are encouraged to contact respective WG4 leaders Elena Buzan and Gernot Segelbacher or subtask leaders Erich Griessler and Alice Albertini, prior to submitting their application to ensure that the proposed outcome of their VMG agrees with the objectives of this action.
2. All applicants must complete, submit and download their VMG applications online within their e-COST profile at: <https://e-services.cost.eu/activity/grants/add?type=VM>.
3. All applicants must send their submitted VMG application form and the relevant supporting documents through the e-COST platform <https://e-services.cost.eu/user/login> for evaluation by the Grant Awarding Coordinator. The VMG applicant must submit (see also [Annotated Rules](#), pp. 100):
 - VM Grant application template (template is provided in the e-COST and in the Grant Awarding User Guide (page 4). The final document will be generated by e-COST system after filling in all requested information).
 - If needed, VM Grant Applicant can submit other supporting documents. Number of supporting documents is not limited, while the size of each file is limited to 2 MB. VM Grant applicant is allowed to submit various formats of the files, but applicant must ensure that the grant Awarding Coordinator will be able to download and check the document.
4. The evaluation procedure will follow the decision of the Core Group (following the mandate given by MCs) and the Grant Awarding Coordinator will process each received VM Grant application against the perceived contribution that the virtual mobility will make against the deliverables outlined in the Action's Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) of GENOA (but see also Annex to this document).

5. The applicant will be formally notified of the outcome of their VM application by the Grant Awarding Coordinator **no later than May 30, 2026**.

Report

Within 30 days from the end date of the VMG, the successful applicant must submit a scientific report to the Host institution and to the Grant Awarding Coordinator (**through the e-COST platform**).

- 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 VMG collaboration (including constructive reflection on activities undertaken, identified successful practices and lessons learned). The template of the report is provided in the e-COST and in [the grant Awarding User Guide](#).

* Due to administrative tasks related to the approval of the report, it is strongly recommended that reports of the VM grants are completed as soon as possible after the completion of the grant.

(Please note that the COST Association can request additional information to substantiate the information contained within the documents submitted by VMG applicants)

Application content

Each VM Grant Application must include the following information that is also provided in the application template:

- Main objective of the VM Grant in direct relation with Action deliverables.
- 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](#) deliverables (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 e-COST Excellence and Inclusiveness Policy and plans for stakeholder engagement and promoting participation of researchers from Near neighbouring countries and International partner countries and to the approved virtual networking strategy, if available.

EVALUATION CRITERIA



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Each VMG proposal will be evaluated according to the following five criteria:

- Connection to the objectives of GENOA (as per the topical call) (40%)
- Scientific quality (25%)
- Output (potential publications) (20%)
- Involvement of inclusiveness target countries (ITCs) (5%)
- Gender balance (5%)
- Young Researcher (5%)

Notification about the call's results

Successful VM Grant Applicants will be informed by an email automatically generated by the e-COST platform. **The results of the evaluation are expected to be known ten working days upon receipt of the applications or May 30, 17:00 CEST at the latest.**

If you have any questions related to the VM Grant and the application procedure, please contact GENOA Grant Awarding Coordinator Joachim Mergeay (email: joachim.mergeay@inbo.be) or WG5 leaders Belma Kalamujić Stroil, Alexander Kopatz, and Peter Galbusera (genoa.costaction@gmail.com).

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