Virtual Networking Tools (VNT)

User guide

April/2021

CONTENTS

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 Vademecum)

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 Vademecum)

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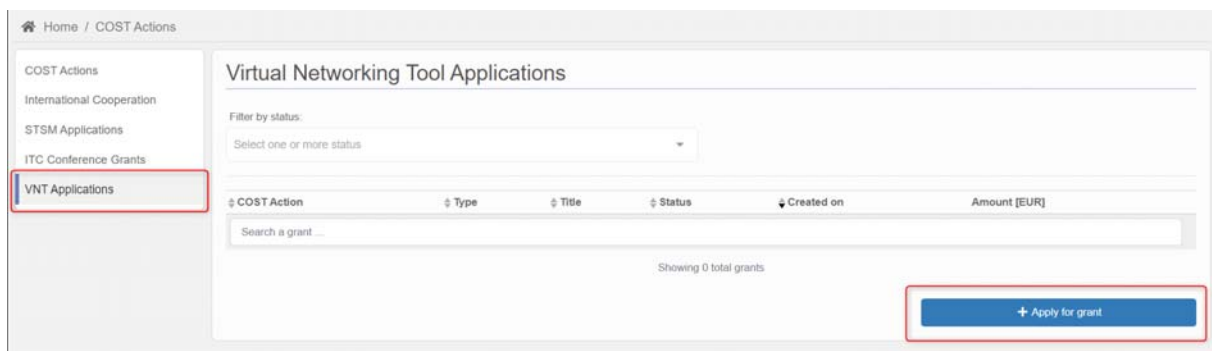
The page "Apply for a new Grant" contains the following sections, all mandatory to be filled:

- 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

Applicant name	
Primary affiliation	
Type *	⌄
COST 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 Member, in which of your primary affiliation resides, has joined the Action. In case that you are a researcher/participant from a Near Neighbour Country, then you can apply only to those Actions in which you have been approved as MC Observer.
Grant 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 one year unless stated otherwise.
Title *	
Amount *	EUR
Bank account *	⌄

✔ Save application

Supporting documents

⬆ Download Grant Application template

Upload document

Title / Description *	
	Example: minutes, report, agenda, etc.
File to upload *	Browse
	You can upload files up to 2 MB each. Supported file types are: pdf, png, jpg, jpeg, gif, doc, docx, odf, xls, xlsx.

⬆ Upload document

ℹ Upload at least **one document** to **submit** application

‹ Back to VNT Applications   ✔ Submit application

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

Virtual Networking Tool Applications

Filter by status:

Select one or more status ⌄

⇕ COST Action	⇕ Type	⇕ Title	⇕ Status	⇕ Created on	Amount [EUR]		
Search a grant ...							
	VNS	Virtual Networking Support	🔒 Draft	21/04/2021	2000.00	⏦ Submit	Options ▾

Showing 1 total grant

+ Apply for grant

Submit application

Draft	Submitted	Pre-Approved	Grant letter sent	Report submitted	Report approved	Paid

≡ Grant Virtual Networking Support 💾 Draft

Title	Virtual Networking Support
COST Action	
Claim	💳 EUR 2000.00
Supporting documents	Application ⬇ Download
	Application ⬇ Download
Templates	Grant Application template ⬇ 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.

Virtual Networking Tool Applications

Filter by status:

Select one or more status ▾

⇕ COST Action	⇕ Type	⇕ Title	⇕ Status	⇕ Created on	Amount [EUR]		
Search a grant ...							
	VNS	Virtual Networking Support	✈ Submitted	21/04/2021	2000.00	↩ Revise	Options ▾

Showing 1 total grant

+ 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.

- 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.

- 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://

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

☰ Grant

Virtual Networking Support   ◢ Submitted

Title	Virtual Networking Support Grant
COST Action	
Claim	EUR 1000.00
Supporting documents	Application details ⬇ Download
	Application ⬇ Download
History	27/04/2021 15:24 has submitted the grant application

Please **review the grant request**
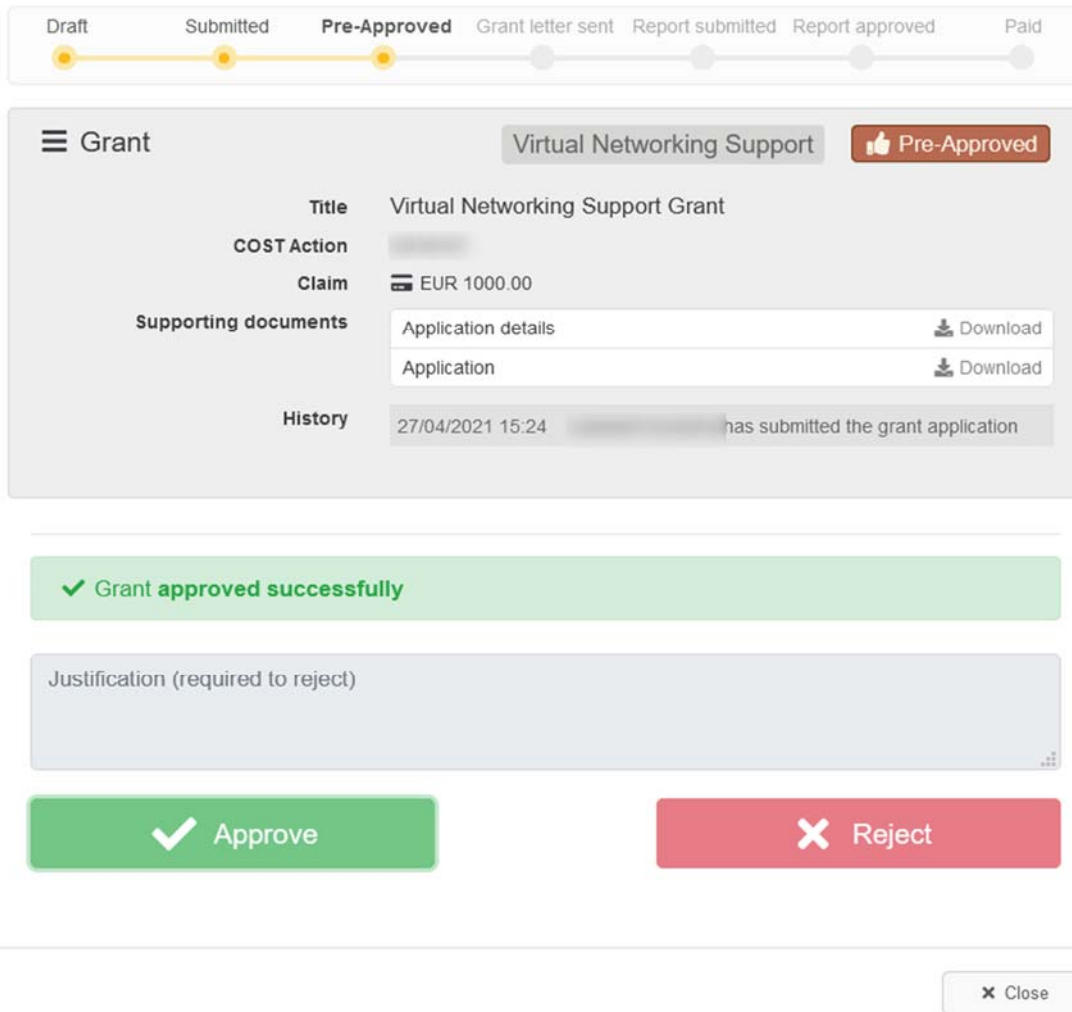
Justification (required to reject)

✔ **Approve**   ✘ **Reject**

✘ Close

Upon approval, the VNT application status will change from submitted to pre-approved

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.

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.

Virtual Networking Tool Applications

Filter by status:

Select one or more status

⌄

📥 Export all applications

↕ Applicant	↕ Type	↕ Status	↕ Title	Amount [EUR]	
Search a grant ...					
	VNS	👍 Pre-Approved	Virtual Networking Support	2000.00	✔ Send grant letter

Showing 1 total grant

Send grant letter   ✕

Draft	Submitted	**Pre-Approved**	Grant letter sent	Report submitted	Report approved	Paid
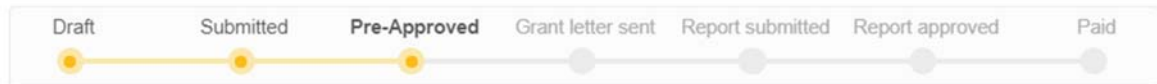
☰ Grant

Virtual Networking Support   👍 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   has submitted the grant application

27/04/2021 15:29   has approved the grant application

💳 Claim

Amount [EUR]   1000.00

✔ Send grant letter

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

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

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 above-mentioned 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.

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://████
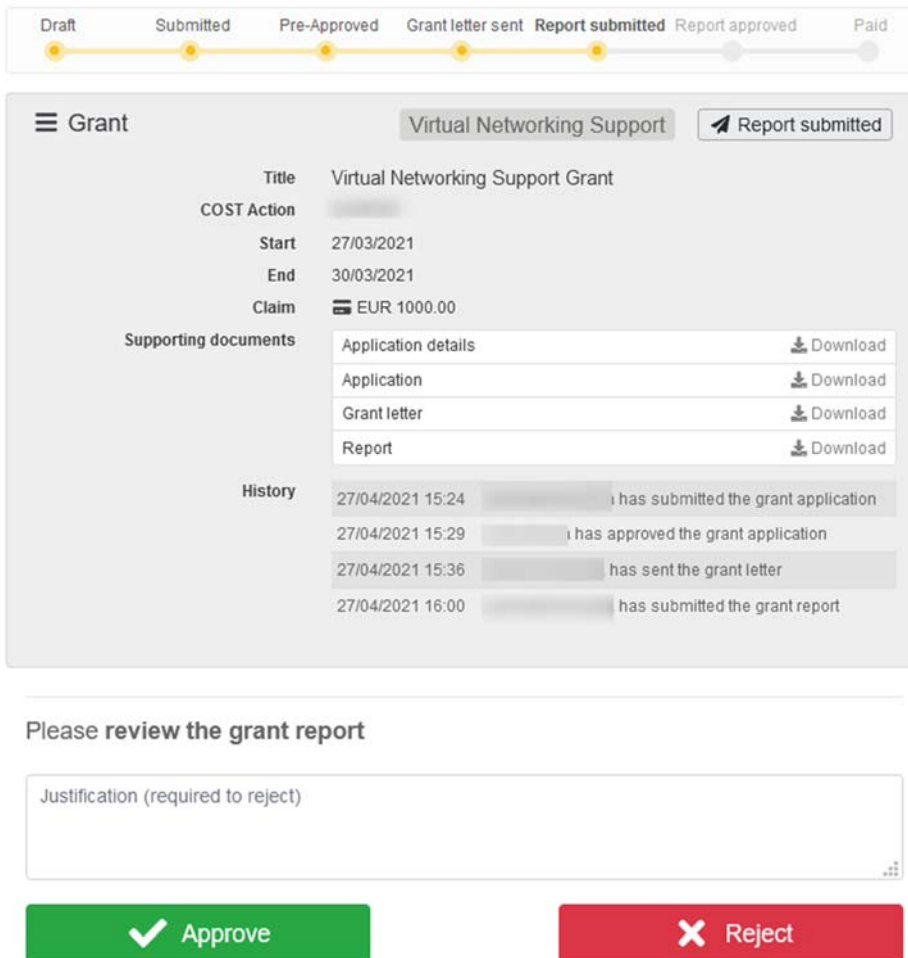
We thank you for your cooperation.

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.

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.

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.

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.