

COST Action 24129
European Media and Born-digital Art Conservation and Knowledge Network (EMBARK)

Open Call for Virtual Mobility Grants (VMs)
Supporting WG1 and WG5 Activities

The COST Action CA24129 EMBARK is a pan-European research and collaboration network focused on the conservation of media and born-digital art, bringing together interdisciplinary expertise from academia, cultural heritage institutions, and the creative and technology sectors. Its main goal is to address the growing preservation crisis of media art by connecting fragmented knowledge, developing shared methodologies and tools, and strengthening Europe's capacity to sustainably conserve, document and access these technologically complex artworks, ensuring their long-term availability for research, culture and future generations.

More information including the Action's Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) can be found in the following web page: <https://www.cost.eu/actions/CA24129/>.

Important Dates:

Application: open continuously

Notification of Results: 15 working days after application submission

Mission Period (Mission to start and be completed within): 1 April 2026 - 1 October 2026

Grant Type Overview:

Virtual Mobility (VM) consists of a collaboration in an online setting among researchers or innovators within the COST Action, to exchange knowledge, learn new techniques, etc.

Virtual Mobility grant benefits to:

- COST Action: uses a flexible tool to implement online activities inside the network, achieve the MoU objectives and significantly increase their impact and reach. Contributes to European leadership in knowledge creation and increasing its innovation potential.
- VM grantee: develop(s) capacity in online collaboration and networking in a pan-European framework.

Examples of activities that can be performed by the VM grantee are:

- Virtual mentoring scheme, with special focus on activities and exchanges that can generate capacity building and new skills, particularly for Young Researchers and Innovators (e.g. managerial skills, methodological skills, communication skills, etc);
- 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 online networking activities.
- To support the implementation of research coordination related activities that do not necessarily require in-person presence, e.g.
 - computational or modelling activities;
 - data analysis of the Action for a specific report or activity.

Eligibility:

Virtual Mobility (VM) Grants are intended for researchers and innovators actively contributing to WG1 and WG5 within COST Action CA24129. Applicants are encouraged to establish contact with relevant Action participants and propose a well-defined plan of collaborative activities to be carried out during the VM. The Action may also publish VM collaboration offers to which applicants can respond, and both approaches are equally encouraged.

The proposed VM activities must clearly contribute to the objectives and expected outcomes of the Action, in particular through the development and implementation of planned WG surveys. Applicants are required to contact the relevant Working Group (WG) Leaders prior to submitting their application, in order to discuss the proposed activity and ensure its alignment with the objectives and ongoing work of the respective WG. Applicants are required to confirm this alignment by sending an email to the Grant Awarding Coordinator (GAC), with the relevant WG Leader(s) in copy, indicating that the application is supported by the Working Group. The WG Leader(s) are expected to confirm their agreement by replying to this email.

Particular encouragement is given to Young Researchers and Innovators (under the age of 40) and participants affiliated with Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITCs). Applications will be evaluated based on criteria assessing the relevance, quality, methodology and feasibility of the proposed work, its expected impact for the Action, and the expected benefit for the applicant.

Applicants must comply with the eligibility rules in accordance with the Annotated Rules for COST Actions. Before submitting an application, it is mandatory to ensure that all eligibility criteria are met. Applicants must carefully read the rules applicable to VMs as specified in the following documents:

- Annotated Rules for COST Actions (pp. 96-104):
<https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2025/11/COST-094-21-Annotated-Rules-for-COST-Actions-Level-C-V3.0-25-IX-2025.pdf>
- COST Grant Awarding User Guide:
<https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2025/01/COST-Grant-Awarding-user-guide.pdf>

Financial Support

The total budget allocated for Virtual Mobility Grants (VMs) under this COST Action for Grant Period 1 (GP1) amounts to €2,700 with an estimated capacity to fund up to two applicants, based on typical average costs of €1,300 per VM across COST Actions. Individual grant amount will be decided based on the applicant's requested budget and should reflect the duration, scope, and complexity of the proposed tasks and activities to be covered by the VM grant, as well as overall funding considerations, including average grant levels across COST Actions. The financial contribution will be awarded as a fixed grant, subject to the evaluation of the application by the Grant Evaluation Committee.

Application

Please read the COST Annotated Rules and Grant Awarding User Guide before applying.

The VM application procedure will be conducted online via the e-COST platform. Individuals can apply using their e-COST profile. Log in => Click COST Actions on left hand side of screen => My grant applications => Apply for a Grant => Virtual Mobility (VM).

To be filled in e-COST:

- Title;
- Start and end date (within the active Grant Period, i.e. no overlap across two consecutive Grant Periods);
- Budget requested by the applicant;

To be uploaded to e-COST:

- **Application form** (template available in e-COST) describing: Main Objective, description of the work to be carried out by the applicant, plan for participation, expected outcomes and description of the contribution to the Action MoU objectives.

Evaluation

VM applications are evaluated by the Grant Evaluation Committee of the Action. The selection of VM applications to be funded will be carried out based on the following main criteria:

- 1 Alignment with the objectives and priorities of the Action (including relevance to the Working Groups and planned activities);
- 2 Quality and excellence of the proposed work (clarity of objectives, expected outcomes, or contribution to the Action);
- 3 Methodology/feasibility of the proposed work plan/activity (methods, planning, timeline, and expected outputs);
- 4 Expected benefit and impact for the Action and its Working Groups (scientific contribution, capacity building, collaboration, networking and dissemination potential, knowledge exchange);
- 5 Expected benefit for the applicant, taking into account their career stage (e.g. knowledge exchange, skills development, networking opportunities, and career advancement).

The Committee will also assess the feasibility of the proposed activities, the profile and relevant experience of the applicant, and the expected output of the VM. Gender balance, career stage, and geographical inclusiveness will be taken into consideration. The Grant Evaluation Committee decides on the final financial contribution, taking into account the available budget, the requested amount, the scope and duration of the VM, as well as average grant levels (i.e. average costs) across COST Actions. Once the selection process is complete, applicants will receive a formal notification via the e-COST platform informing them of the outcome of the evaluation. If the application is successful, the applicant will receive a Grant Letter indicating the approved amount and the conditions for receiving the grant. The applicant may not start the VM activities before receiving the Grant Letter.

Reporting and Grant Payment

Upon completion of the VM, the grantee is required to submit a report via e-COST within 30 days after the end of the VM, or within 15 days after the end of the Grant Period, whichever occurs first. The report should describe the extent to which the aims and objectives of the VM have been achieved, outline the main results obtained, and indicate any dissemination activities related to the work carried out. In addition to the report, the submission must include One-page summary of the VM.

The following documents must be uploaded in e-COST:

- **VM Report** (template available in e-COST);
- **One-page summary of the VM (template to be provided)**, including the title of the VM grant, name of the grantee, list of the collaborators, as well as a short descriptive paragraph outlining the activities undertaken and main outcomes. The summary should also include a photo of the grantee and one representative photo illustrating the VM activities. This material is intended for communication and dissemination purposes and may be published on the Action's dedicated webpage or other dissemination channels.

Upon approval of the VM report by the Grant Awarding Coordinator, the grant will be processed and paid directly to the grantee.

Contact person

Grant Awarding Coordinator – Dr Jelena Brajković, jelena.brajkovic@arh.bg.ac.rs