



COST Action CA22160

Enhancing knowledge of BIOMolecular solutions for the well-being of European AQUAculture sector - BIOAQUA

Call for VMG (Virtual Mobility Grant) Applications

The COST network BIOAQUA is pleased to announce the 2024 call for VMG applications. Before applying, all candidates must read [Annex 2 of the Annotated Rules for COST actions](#). The present document is for reference and does not include the complete guidelines. Any updates to the official Annotated Rules take precedence over this document.

1. Scope

According to the Annotated Rules for COST Actions, Virtual Mobility consists of a collaboration in a virtual setting among researchers or innovators within the COST Action, to exchange knowledge, learn new techniques, etc. VMG consist in grants to support the participation in ad-hoc and on a short notice meetings held online.

In the case of this call and in accordance with the Action's Grant Agreement for period 1: *"In relation to VM: 1) During this period, the project will be working on a great analysis of the state-of-the-art around WGs 1,2,3,4 (verticals) and at their intersections (looking for synergies and gaps)... The purpose is that it will be used to constantly feed the other goals ... for P2-P4. For this study: ... 1.B) 1 virtual discussion will be organised for each WG. The grant in this case will be used for supporting members in ... compiling and processing all input information, extracting conclusions / insights / open issues to be discussed during the meeting, etc."*.

These discussions within WGs 1-4 are being organised by Working Groups Leaders between the last week of September and the first half of October 2024 – It is up to WG leaders to set the date and time of the meeting, and this call for VM grants will only support participation in at least one of those meetings and contribution to the activities related to the prospective analysis of state of the art.

The purpose of the VM grants within the context of the aforementioned purpose is "to support the implementation of research coordination related activities that do not necessarily require in-person presence".

2. Eligibility

Only VMG aligned with the scope described in section 1 will be eligible under this call.

Only one VM grant can be awarded to the same person under this call. Only BIOAQUA members can be supported in this activity.

3. Financial support

According to the Annotated Rules, “VMG provide a contribution for the overall effort, not necessarily covered by an employer or by a Grant Holder institution, up to a maximum of EUR 1.500,00 per grant”. **In BIOAQUA:** The final amount of financial support is decided by the Action Chair/Grant Holder based on the proposal of the Grant Evaluation Committee, in turn based on the request of the applicant.

4. Period of Application

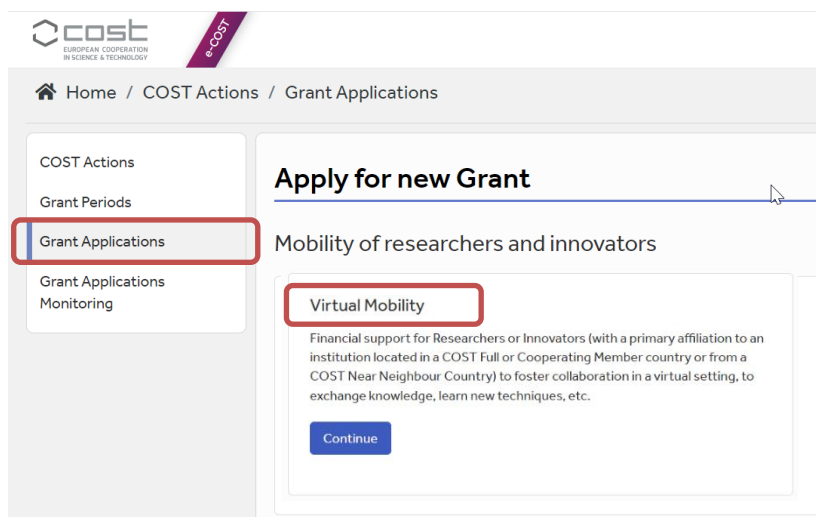
According to the Annotated Rules, “researcher or Innovator must respect that the VMG need to be carried out entirely within one Grant Period”.

In BIOAQUA: The grant awarding process for VMGs will occur through a periodic call, an annual budget, review by 2 (or 3 in case the outcome is not consistent) MC or WG members, an advice by Grant Awarding Coordinator communicated to Action Chair who takes over the advice if the budget allows.

Applicants should schedule the VMG around the meetings for WGs 1-4 between September and October 2024 scheduled by WG leaders, and allowing time for submitting the report, evaluating it, and processing the payment within the Grant Period. This means that the final report must be sent via de e-COST platform before 23/10/2024.

5. Application Procedure

According to the Annotated Rules, “Applicants must have an e-COST profile and applications shall be submitted online in e-COST.



To be filled in e-COST:

- Action and period:

COST Action *	CA22160 - Enhancing knowledge of BIOMolecular solutions for the well-being of European AQUAculture sector	▼
You can apply only to COST Actions for which you are eligible for the selected grant.		
Grant period *	AGA-CA22160-1 (01/11/2023 - 31/10/2024)	▼

- Title
- Amount requested and bank account.
- Bank account.
- Start and end date of the VM grant (equal to the date of the WG meeting in which you take part).

To be uploaded to e-COST:

- Application form ([VMG application template](#)) describing the motivation to participate in the planned activities (described in Section 1), the applicant's contributions in the past within the corresponding WG in relation to the aim of this call for VMG (described in section 1), and the relevant work to be carried out and the expected outcomes contributing to the [Action MoU objectives](#) by the applicant beyond the meeting.

In this regard applicants are informed that their application can be accessed by the holders of leadership positions and any evaluation committees in the Action for evaluation purposes.

Follow the [link](#) for a helpful user guide in the Application Procedure. Documents that cannot be uploaded via the e-COST interface should directly be sent to the Grant Awarding Coordinator Konstantina Bitchava (bitchava@aua.gr).

6. Evaluation of Applications

Proposals will be evaluated for their quality and for their relevance to BIOAQUA and Working Groups, as well as the scope of the activities described in Section 1. In brief, the BIOAQUA working groups have the following objectives:

- ✓ *WG 1 "Biomolecular solutions for water prophylaxis and biosafety", with particular focus into new proteins and biomolecular biomarkers.*
- ✓ *WG 2 "Biomolecular solutions as alternative methods and tools for fish-farm production", with particular focus in environmental-friendly and safe treatments, and new molecular engineering methodologies or disruptive combinations.*
- ✓ *WG 3 "Fish welfare" will be a horizontal WG focused in developing an integral perspective of the potential impact over fish derived from the solutions explored in WGs 1 and 2 (disease, stress, growth, feeding, behaviour, etc.)*
- ✓ *WG 4 "Sustainability insights" will focus on an in-depth analysis of the drivers and barriers in relation to the sustainability of aquaculture and the potential adoption of the solutions explored in WGs 1 and 2. This will include regulation aspects and proposing an innovative conceptual pathway for veterinary applications and fish tracking systems. It will also be a horizontal WG to all previous WGs described.*
- ✓ *WG 5 "Informed creativity", is a complementary WG that will focus on the context of R&I management, including the technological, sectorial, territorial, policy-oriented, and social dimensions potentially impacting research and uptake of results.*

7. Submission of the VMG report and payment

According to the Annotated Rules,

- "Once the activity has ended, the applicant claims the payment of the grant via [e-COST](#). For this, the grantee submits the **Report** using the [VMG report template](#), and relevant documentation **within 15 days after the end date of by 23/10/2024**, whichever date comes first;
- The Report must include the work developed, main achievements of the VM and planned future follow-up activities.
- Grants are paid by the Grant Holder **after** the completion of the activity and approval of all required report/documentation."

Documents that cannot be uploaded via the e-COST interface should directly be sent to the Grant Awarding Coordinator Konstantina Bitchava (bitchava@aua.gr).

Notes:

Each publication produced with support of a VMG must acknowledge the support of the COST Action and whenever possible use the COST and BIOAQUA logos (on slides and posters). See acknowledgements text section down.

Acknowledgement text:

Two versions, short (for posters) and long (for papers) are proposed:

Partially funded by...../Person A had a grant from... COST Office (CA22160 BIOAQUA).

Partially funded by...../Person A had a grant from... COST Office (COST Action CA22160

Enhancing knowledge of BIOMolecular solutions for the well-being of European AQUAculture sector - BIOAQUA).

Memorandum and Evaluation Criteria for Virtual Mobility Grants

Assessment (general criteria)

In BIOAQUA, a **Scientific Committee will evaluate VMG applications on the MC behalf**. The Scientific Committee will consist of the grant awarding coordinator and 2 or 3 reviewers for each proposal. External advice may be sought.

MC members and other assessors should not involve themselves in the assessment of proposals in which they have a personal or financial interest. In exceptional circumstances (e.g., uniqueness of expertise), such a bar may be waived with the agreement of the other members involved, if the interest is declared and considered not to compromise the potential decision.

Requisites

Only VMG aligned with the scope described in section 1 will be eligible under this call.

Only one VM grant can be awarded to the same person under this call. Only BIOAQUA members can be supported in this activity.

Evaluation

An evaluation score will be given considering the proposal clarity, relevance for the Action and expected outputs. Scoring should be attributed from 1 to 6. Final evaluation outcome should be one month after submission.

Scores

1 - Very poor: proposal illogical and not understandable. Not clearly linked to any WG.

2 - Poor: proposal with limited understanding, planning and no clear objectives. Weakly linked to at least one WG.

3 - Fair: proposal with some understanding, planning and objectives. Moderate links to at least one WG.

4 - Good: good proposal but needs input to develop feasible STSM. Well linked to at least one WG.

5 - Very Good: very good proposal. Well linked to at least one WG.

6 - Excellent: proposal well designed in terms of planning, feasibility and projected outputs. Strongly linked to at least one WG.

For each of the considered topics a score has to be given (from 1 to 6 as above).

Each reviewer will score each proposal independently. The Grant Awarding Coordinator will collate the outcomes of the independent evaluations, average them, and communicate the final scoring (range 4-24 points) after verifying the fulfilment of requisites to the Chair of the Action.

Proposals with high scores (≥ 16 points) will be considered for funding, but only when all other evaluation criteria are acceptable, and the available budget suffices. The outcome will be communicated to the applicant by email.

Summary grid of the evaluation criteria

Category	Notes	Scoring
Requisites	Yes/Not	
Being member of BIOAQUA		Y/N
Being directly related to the aim of the VMG		
Evaluation		
Motivation Letter	Not Convincing or Convincing	Y/N
Relevant past contributions	Scores	1-6
Future planned contributions - proposal clarity	Scores	1-6
Future planned contributions - expected outputs	Scores	1-6
Budget Request	Acceptable or Not	
Best value for money	Scores	1-6

VMG Template Summary of the Report

The formal report should be written after the WG meeting in which the VM is focused (2 pages max.)

SCIENTIFIC REPORT	
Reference	Virtual Mobility Grant COST CA22160
Beneficiary	Put your Name PUT YOUR AFFILIATION Your email Address
Date	DD/MM/YYYY
VMG Reference Code	COST-VMG - CA22160-xxxxx
VMG Title	

1. Description of the work carried out in the past in relation to the topic
2. Possible future contributions to BIOAQUA as a result of this activity
3. Description of the expected outcomes from this activity