



China in Europe Research Network (CHERN) – CA 18215

Virtual Mobility (VM) BASIC FACTS

What is a Virtual Mobility?

The Virtual Mobility (VM) Grant is a new kind of funding opportunity offered by CHERN. Adjusting to the intensification of online cooperations, COST has enabled us to define a Virtual Networking Strategy (VNS), and VM grants are an important part of that plan. VM aims to provide opportunities for collaboration between researchers based in Europe, China and the US in order to develop research partnerships, forge linkages between academics and stakeholders, and stimulate knowledge creation and virtual research mobility of Early Career Investigators, PhD students and young professionals. CHERN VMs should also specifically contribute to the Action's Capacity Building objectives (#1 and #4)¹ and Deliverables (#2 and #4).²

What kind of activity can I do during a VM?

All VMs entail online collaborations. We are currently offering funding for VM Grants focusing on:

1. **Joint publication** – we invite CHERN members to apply for funding to work together online on a joint publication. Papers can be in any phase – from the idea stage to completing drafts for submission. Preference will be given to topics focusing on communicating China research, but other topics within the scope of CHERN are also welcome.

¹ These objectives are:

1. Place network members in a position to be better able to: (a) advise businesses, national and local governments, and the EU, as well as labour unions, communities and NGOs on Chinese investment and its consequences; and (b) communicate with the general public about these issues.
2. Throughout the lifetime of the Action and beyond, use participants' personal networks and CHERN's public presence (website, publications, media, and conference participation) to identify and absorb additional researchers, policy and related personnel into the network, particularly from countries with high volumes or important instances of Chinese investments.

² These deliverables are:

1. Academic publications by individual Action members as well as joint publications (e.g. special issues and edited volumes) in leading international peer-reviewed journals and with national and international publishers
2. Input to best practices on valorisation, how to involve stakeholders, and apply relevant knowledge.

2. **CHERN expert overview** – we invite CHERN members to help us create a better position for our members to connect with relevant stakeholders and expand CHERN's visibility in local and global media outlets. Specifically, this VM should focus on identifying and reaching out to relevant stakeholders (Deliverable # 4) and making an overview of the expertise of all our CHERN members and a strategy to promote our members to relevant policymakers and media outlets where they can have a voice in the public debate around China's influence in Europe (Capacity Building Objective # 4).
3. **China research communication strategy** - we invite CHERN members to help us develop a communication toolkit for China scholars, which will help us present our research to peers, stakeholders and the wider public taking into consideration the complex socio-political context of China in Europe research. Initial scoping of this topic has been performed under CHERN, so in this phase, we primarily invite scholars to provide examples of best practices, but other relevant topics are also welcome.

What does the financial support include?

VM Grants are given under the following funding conditions (see also Annex 2 of the [COST Annotated Rules](#)):

- The maximum amount of the grant is € 1500, depending on the scope and complexity of the proposed tasks and activities
- VM activities must occur in their entirety (including finalizing the report) no later than October 8, 2022. Payment of the grant is subject to the approval of the submitted report (more information about the application and evaluation is given in the section 'How does it work?')

Financial support is paid as a lump-sum grant with no need to submit invoices, receipts, etc. The VM Committee (VNS Manager, CHERN's Chair or Vice Chair and relevant WG leaders) shall, on behalf of the MC, define the exact amount of each grant in line with the scope and complexity of the proposed tasks and activities. The grant does not necessarily cover all the expenses related to undertaking the VM. Payment of the grant is subject to the grant report (after the completion of the VM) being approved by the VM Committee.

The Grant Holder shall pay the approved grant to the grantee after the VM Committee has approved the grantee's report and no later than 15 days from the end of the Grant Period.

Note that the Grant holder or the COST Association cannot be considered the grantee's employer. Grantees must take care of their own health care, social security, safety provisions, taxation, etc. related to the VM. The grantee must also ensure they have the required technical material/equipment and infrastructure to carry out the activities proposed in their application.

Who is eligible to be a VM Applicant?

An applicant needs to be enrolled in an official research program (PhD, postdoc) or employed/affiliated with an entity that has a clear association with performing research. The proposed plan and the applicant's research field should be aligned with [CHERN's aims](#). The applicant's Home institution should be a legal entity in a participating full COST member or Cooperating member¹, a European RTD Organization², or a Near Neighboring country (NNC)³.

¹ COST Full or Cooperating Member that has accepted the CHERN MoU. For list of countries, see [CHERN Partner countrymembers](#).

² [List of RTD Organizations](#) (pp. 5-6)

³ [List of NNCs](#) (p.2)

In line with COST rules, we also aim to ensure geographical and gender balance and preferentially award VM Grants to Young Researchers (age < 40). However, this should not discourage more experienced researchers from applying.

How does it work?

1. All applicants must carefully read the funding rules detailed in section Annex 2 of the [COST Annotated Rules](#)).
2. For each of the two activities, CHERN members can directly submit an application (for the joint publication, a joint application of a minimum of 2 researchers is required). See section 2 of the [Grant Awarding Uses Guide](#).
3. Submit your application **before July 25**.
4. All applicants must register for an e-COST profile at <https://e-services.cost.eu/>, adding their bank account details to their profile.
5. All applicants must submit their VM application online at <https://e-services.cost.eu/>. Please use the provided template (you find this in E-COST) and upload any supporting documents (optional).
6. The applications are then assessed by the CHERN VM Committee. The selection is based on the alignment of the proposed work plan and the applicants' research background with the two outlined aimed activities.
7. The results will be announced in early August. The successful applicant(s) shall implement the work plan approved in their application, complete the report template (in E-COST), and upload and submit it in e- COST before October 8, 2021.
8. The report will be reviewed by the VM Committee. The evaluation will be based on the contribution of the output to the Action's Capacity Building objectives #1 and #4 and Deliverables #2 and #4.
9. In addition to the above requirements of the COST Association, the grantee is required to contribute one blog/vlog post to the CHERN blog with basic information on the VM for the CHERN website. The requirements for the blog/vlog will be outlined by CHERN's Science Communication Manager.
10. For joint publications resulting from CHERN VMs, funding should be acknowledged in line with [COST requirements](#). Please also note that you can additionally apply for a CHERN dissemination grant to cover publication costs after receiving a VM Grant.
11. Grant payment by: October 15.

MORE INFORMATION

More information on VMs is available in Annex 2 of the [COST Annotated Rules](#) and by contacting the VNS Manager Alexandra Filius (a.filius@vu.nl).