

**Virtual Networking Support Grant  
- APPLICATION FORM<sup>1</sup> -**

**Action number: CA 21123**

**Applicant name: Vladimir Trajkovski**

**Virtual Networking Support Details- supporting the operation of the CUPID Virtual Networking Strategy as approved by the Management Committee and organisation of Conferences, including the upcoming Second Annual COST Action CUPID Conference**

Start date: 01.08.2024

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<sup>1</sup> This form is part of the application for a grant for Virtual Networking Support. It is submitted to the COST Action MC via-e-COST. The Grant Awarding Coordinator coordinates the evaluation on behalf of the Action MC and informs the Grant Holder of the result of the evaluation for issuing the Grant Letter.

### **Description of expected Action benefits from virtual and hybrid networking activities**

The CUPID Project makes full use of online and information technology capabilities to support the communication/ dissemination activities of the project.

The CUPID COST action uses the benefits of virtual and hybrid meetings to full effectiveness, to ensure the large audience of the CUPID membership is reached and able to participate to the project meetings and dissemination events and that the network is also supported by beneficial use of social media and other networking platforms.

In the summary this virtual networking support grant, to support hybrid meetings and organize the COST Action CUPID Annual conference will benefit the project as follows:

**Increasing Attendance:** hybrid events provide an opportunity to reach larger and more geographically diverse audiences. By removing the need to travel, the CUPID Project can effectively be able to increase the number attendees registrations and appeal to a broader audience.

**Increasing Diverse Audience:** This needs to ensure CUPID meetings and events can be accessed easily is particularly important in CUPID where the stakeholders and members are very diverse. We need to ensure the inclusion of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, intellectual disability services, health professionals and academics. Hybrid and virtual meetings can support this. For some of these groups, attendance at in person meetings could be challenging due to time or other constraints, and the option of hybrid/ virtual meetings can be of help in facilitating their involvement.

**Financial Considerations:** Hybrid and virtual meetings can help in increasing the numbers participating in the Cost Action while staying within the project budget.

**Access to Expertise:** CUPID Cost Action plan to hold events linking with experts in the area, who may not be members of the Cost Action. Offering them the option to attend either in person or online, may help the action to access world-renowned expertise in the area to help inform the Cost Action.

**Networking:** Interactive virtual platforms are designed to facilitate engagement and networking online.

### **Outline of the strategy on virtual and hybrid networking**

The CUPID Cost Action Communication Strategy includes the following objective

Objective 7: To ensure CUPID COST Action activities, including meetings utilises virtual and hybrid communication effectively.

- **Rationale:** Online communication mechanisms can be very useful to the CUPID Cost Activities but need to be used to best effectiveness,
- **Timeline:** Duration of Project
- **Evaluation:** Oversight by the MC and reviewed annually.

The strategy on virtual and hybrid networking used as a complement to traditional face to face means of collaboration will include the following:

1. Selection of optimum platform - There are a range of supportive platforms available for virtual and hybrid event. The CUPID Cost Action will be using Zoom. This platform offers a range of features. Use of one identified platform ensures that those attending will develop a familiarity and sense of comfort and competence from using the same platform for all events.
2. Offer training and support to CUPID Cost Action event organisers on the use of Zoom and its' features for their specific event. This will be organised by Working Group 4.
3. Offer training and support to the Cupid Cost Action event organisers on use of virtual/ hybrid events to ensure that all relevant data protection legislation is adhered to. This will be organised by Working Group 4.
4. For every event, the organisers will need to consider who needs to be involved, why they need to be involved, and how they can be supported to get involved either in person or online.
5. Follow up and follow through after meetings will be important to continue and build engagement through the CUPID network. Therefore, reports and outcomes of meetings/events should be circulated to those who attended, thanking them for the contributions, signposting towards resources and building towards future engagements.
6. Evaluation of virtual/ hybrid meetings. The Cupid Cost Action event organisers will evaluate all events in terms of the effectiveness of the platform used and event undertaken. This evaluation will be fed back through the working group leads to the Management Committee. Learnings from these can then be disseminated through the working groups leads so as to inform future events.
7. Virtual and hybrid networking can also be supported by and through use of social media and other networking channels, such as X, LinkedIn, Research Gate etc. Use of these platforms can help raise awareness of the CUPID Cost action with appropriate and approved use of the COST Action and CUPID logo.

#### **Plan of activities to be performed by the VNS grantee in support to the COST Action**

The Virtual COST Action CUPID conference is an annual meeting, where members of the project gather to

- present the achievements of the project to date
- discuss topics relevant to the CUPID project,
- share knowledge,
- network, and
- participate to the conference as a professional development activity.

This conference is being planned will include keynote speeches, panel discussions, workshops, and networking opportunities.

At this year conference, the project team will

- Showcase the achievements of the project to date
- Present on WG activities,
- Focus on the achievements of the September 2024 training school with testimonials from attendees
- Review of the dissemination activities
- Identify and invite Guest Speakers of relevance to year 2-3 of the project

In preparation to the event The VNS Grantee will ensure that the following tasks are undertaken. These include but are not limited to:

- Developing the agenda for virtual networking event including the conference
- Developing promotional materials for the events
- Promoting the events through the project website and other social media channels
- Issuing invites to speakers
- Managing registrations for the events
- Issuing certificates to the attendees.