COST Action CA24164

Sensing Europe's Court Spaces at the Crossroads of Past, Present and Future (SENSES)

Continuous call for applications for Virtual Mobility (VM) Grants

1. About SENSES

SENSES brings together researchers and professionals to combine knowledge and find novel ways of presenting the European court residence, seen as the locus of multiple sensorial experiences. At the crossroads of court studies, sensory history and digital humanities, SENSES focuses on the "court residence" of late mediaeval and early modern Europe. This means the material and spatial environment of the courts in Europe from 1300 to 1800 within their social context, at all spatial scales from the single building (or part) to the landscape created around it and the supra-territorial residence network it belongs to. We will explore the full gamut of sensory experiences linked with the court residence and its life throughout history until today: from essential human activities, such as preparing food and crafting things, to the grandest and most complex, such as perceiving performances of music and dance in dedicated spaces and dining rituals.

Our goal is to build a better understanding of this complex cultural phenomenon and thus to support its survival as European heritage. To achieve this, SENSES will be multi-disciplinary and trans-sectoral, building bridges between academic disciplines on the one hand, and between academia and the cultural heritage sector on the other. We want to offer a sound research-based platform for developing novel, sensory-based interactions between the public (consumer), and the heritage (art, architecture, music) of the past. By exploring new ways of making and keeping this artistic heritage relevant for audiences of the future, we will contribute actively to European identity-building.

SENSES brings together researchers, heritage professionals, and digital specialists to advance a shared understanding of the multisensory dimensions of Europe's court residences. Its objectives fall into three interconnected areas:

1. Aims to deepen knowledge of court residences as multisensory environments by studying how sight, sound, smell, touch, taste, and movement shaped palace life between 1300 and 1800. The Action supports innovative research that investigates sensory experience in relation to architecture, material culture, ritual, and daily practice. It also promotes the use and critical evaluation of digital tools — from 3D and acoustic modelling to VR/AR — to explore past environments and reconstruct sensory phenomena that are otherwise difficult to access.

2. The Action strengthens collaboration across disciplines and sectors by creating a shared platform for historians, art and architectural historians, musicologists, archaeologists, heritage curators, and digital experts. Through conferences, workshops, and joint activities, SENSES encourages dialogue on methods, sources, and best practices for studying and communicating sensory heritage. This includes developing a common language and clearer "academic specifications" for digital reconstructions, ensuring that new digital outputs are both historically grounded and publicly meaningful.

3. Works to reduce disparities in knowledge, access, and technical resources across Europe. It provides training opportunities for early-career researchers, supports the exchange of expertise between academia and the heritage sector, and fosters inclusive participation throughout the

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network. By encouraging collaborative projects and linking research with museum practice, the Action aims to strengthen the long-term preservation, interpretation, and public relevance of palace heritage. Ultimately, SENSES seeks to raise awareness of the rich sensory dimensions of court residences and to contribute to a stronger shared European cultural identity.

Four working groups (WG) focus on work as follows:

WG1 SACRED
Explores the multiple sensorial experiences involved in the religious acts taking place in medieval and early modern European court residences 1300-1800.

WG2 DINING
Addresses the multiple sensorial experiences involved in the dining ceremonies of the medieval and early modern European court residences 1300-1800.

WG3 FABRIC
Addresses all the sensory experiences linked with a particularly rich and varied range of objects in the medieval and early modern European court residences 1300-1800: textile fabrics.

WG4 BODY looks at the multiple bodily experiences which are part of daily life at the medieval and early modern European court residences 1300-1800.

2. What is a Virtual Mobility Grant

The COST Action Virtual Mobility (VM) Grants are designed to support remote collaboration and knowledge exchange among researchers and innovators involved in COST Actions, especially in cases where physical mobility is not feasible or necessary. Virtual Mobility consists of a collaboration in a virtual setting among researchers or innovators within the COST Action, to exchange knowledge, learn new techniques. They support work that contributes to the objectives of a specific COST Action. This work can include organizing online workshops, virtual meetings, webinars, or any other activities that promote knowledge sharing, training, and the advancement of the Action's goals.

VM grants are very flexible and inclusive networking activities crucial to establish new collaborations or reinforce existing collaborations across disciplines and different sectors (e.g., academia and industry / SMEs) with possible impact on career development. VM Grants can fund various types of remote activities, such as:

1. Organizing and hosting online training schools or workshops.

2. Developing and coordinating online content, such as tutorials or course materials.

3. Facilitating virtual networking and collaboration between COST Action members.

4. Producing reports or publications that summarize the outcomes of the virtual collaboration.

5. Data analysis, modelling, and preparation of articles.

6. Action webinars

7. Virtual mentoring activities, especially those that support capacity building, particularly for young researchers and investigators.

8. The implementation of research coordination related activities that do not necessarily require in-person presence.

These grants are particularly valuable for maintaining momentum in COST Actions. They help ensure that the collaborative work can continue effectively, leveraging digital tools to overcome geographical barriers.

Outcomes (e.g. spin-off publications and (funded) projects) contribute to the visibility and impact of the COST Actions, encouraging other researchers to join.

The amount of funding provided through VM Grants is typically modest, reflecting the lower costs associated with virtual activities compared to physical mobility grants. The grant covers expenses related to the execution of the virtual activity, such as software licenses, honoraria for speakers, or other related costs. The maximum grant is 1,500 Euros.

Since the financial support comes as a grant, no invoices or other justification of the expenses will be requested.

The VM Grants cannot be used to attend virtual conferences or to purchase software license or set up a database.

3. Application procedure

Applicants must have an e-COST profile and applications must be submitted online in e-COST. The applicant encodes a virtual mobility grant application by logging into e-COST and selecting the 'virtual mobility' type option.

Interested Action participants must also submit an application outlining the planned virtual activity, its relevance to the COST Action, and the expected outcomes. The application form can be downloaded here. The proposal set out in the application will be reviewed by a designated group of Action members guided by the Grant Coordinator. The group advises the Management Committee on the proposal's suitability for funding. Documents that cannot be uploaded via the e-COST interface should be sent directly to the Grant Awarding Coordinator (Bernardo J. García García bjgarcia@ucm.es) and the Chair of COST Action (Konrad Ottenheym k.a.ottenheym@uu.nl).

4. The grant awarding process

The supported activity must be carried out entirely within one grant period. Each grant period runs from the 1 November until the 31 October of the following year.

Applications will be evaluated for their quality and for their relevance to the objectives of SENSES and its Working Groups. To avoid time-wasting, each application will be first screened by the Grant Awarding Coordinator to check that it is complete and that it is relevant to the Action. Incomplete applications are rejected with the possibility to resubmit. Irrelevant applications are also rejected

and cannot be resubmitted.

Following the passing of the screen, each application is reviewed by two (or three in case the outcome is not consistent) relevant Action members who are guided by the Grant Awarding Coordinator. This assessment considers the relevance of the proposed activity to the Action. The Grant Awarding Coordinator advises the Action Chair who acts on the advice if the budget allows. Successful applicants receive a grant letter.

5. Submission of the reports and payment

After the completion of the virtual activity, grantees are required to submit a grant report and a public scientific report to the Management Committee within 30 days of the completion of the work or 15 days after the end of the grant period (i.e. 15 November 2025) whichever date comes first. [The template for the VM Grant report can be downloaded here.](#) The grant report provides:

- A detailed account of the activities carried out.
- An assessment of how the activity met its objectives and contributed to the COST Action's goals.
- A financial report detailing how the grant funds were used.

The template for the scientific report will be provided by the Grant Awarding Coordinator. Failure to submit the grant report within 30 days will effectively cancel the grant. The Action Chair or Grant Awarding Coordinator is responsible for approving the grant report and informing the Grant Holder that the VM Grant has been successfully accomplished. After receipt of the approval by email, the Grant Holder will execute the payment of the grant.

Notes:

Each publication produced with support of a dissemination conference support grant should acknowledge the support of the COST Action and whenever possible use the COST and SENSES logos (on slides and posters).

Acknowledgement text:

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