



COST Action – CA24135

**European Atmospheric Research Lidar COoperation on Science
and Technology (EARLICOST)**

Open Call for Virtual Mobility (VM)

Important Dates:

Application deadline: 19th September 2026

Notification of Results: 21st September 2026

VM dates: must take place before October 10th, 2026

After the VM: The successful applicant must submit a scientific report and relevant documentation before October 12th, 2026.

About EARLICOST:

The Action aims to deepen our understanding on atmospheric composition and improve the capabilities of atmospheric lidars to address critical gaps in aerosol characterization, temperature, and water vapor profiling. The vertical distribution of these key atmospheric variables provides crucial insights on air quality, public health, weather, and climate. In particular, aerosols are among the most significant drivers of climate change, and one of the largest sources of uncertainty in climate models which stems from their complex interactions with radiation and clouds. Thus, it is widely recognized that the spatiotemporal variability of aerosol properties plays a major role in numerous atmospheric processes that affect our lives. Despite breakthroughs in atmospheric lidar design and capabilities, achieved by independent research groups and the industry, there is still a need to facilitate knowledge-sharing and collaboration between the different communities. The Action aspires to address this gap by fostering a collaborative network that brings together academic researchers, industry experts, policymakers, commercial and scientific end-users. Through this multidisciplinary approach, the Action builds on and extends the current state of the art in lidar technology, seeks to harmonize methodologies across measurement networks, standardize aerosol, water vapor, and temperature lidar retrievals, and develop new techniques to improve the accuracy of atmospheric profiling monitoring. The Action will play a pivotal role in advancing lidar technologies, fostering technological innovation and improved data-sharing practices, and will enhance the understanding of atmospheric processes, ultimately delivering broad societal benefits through more accurate climate predictions, environmental policies and enhanced air quality monitoring.

To learn more about **EARLICOST**, please look at the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) here: https://e-services.cost.eu/files/domain_files/CA/Action_CA24135/mou/CA24135-e.pdf

OBJECTIVES / DESCRIPTION:

Virtual Mobility (VM) consists of a collaboration in an online setting among researchers or innovators within the COST Action to exchange knowledge and carry out specific work for a determined period. A VM should specifically contribute to the Earlicost objectives. VMs can have a minimum duration of 5 days and need to be carried out entirely within a single Grant Period.

Relevant dates:

- **Deadline for applications:** opens on 14th September 2026 and remains open until 19th September 2026
- **Outcomes:** 21st September 2026
- **VM dates:** must take place before October 10th, 2026
- **After the VM:** The successful applicant must submit a scientific report and relevant documentation before October 12th, 2026.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:

VM applicants must be researchers or innovators. The institution, organisation or legal entity where applicants pursue their main strand of research is considered a Home institution. The Host institution is the institution/organisation that will host the successful applicant. Eligibility can be determined by adhering to the stipulations in the following 3 categories depending on the applicant in a Home Institution:

- Researchers holding their primary affiliation at an institution located in a Participating COST Country (i.e. COST Full Member and COST Cooperating Member countries) that signed the Action's Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) are eligible.
- Researchers holding their primary affiliation in a Near Neighbour Country (NNC) institution formally approved on the Action are eligible.
- Researchers holding their primary affiliation at a European RTD Organisation formally approved onto the Action are eligible.

A list of COST Countries and approved NNC and European RTD institutions within Earlicost can be found at <https://www.cost.eu/actions/CA24135/>.

SELECTION OF APPLICANTS:

The evaluation of each received VM application is performed by one of the Working Group (WG) leaders of one of the relevant WGs linked to the application, the Chair or Vice Chair, and the Grant Awarding Coordinator, on behalf of the Management Committee. The selection of applicants is based on the following criteria:

- The scientific scope of the proposed contribution must be coherent and contribute to the overall objectives of EARLICOST, as well as linked to specific deliverables or WGs of the Action.
- Strategy used and plan for the virtual collaborative initiative to be undertaken.
- Outputs and benefits foreseen for EARLICOST as a result of the VM (e.g. scientific publication, conference presentation).
- There should be special considerations with respect to supporting COST policies on promoting gender balance, enabling Young Researchers and Innovators, broadening geographical inclusiveness, and involving ITC countries.
- In case of even scoring, the number of applications from each institution will be considered to ensure a fair spread across the network.

The resolution of the call will be communicated to the applicants after the final decision.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT:

The financial support on offer provides a contribution to the overall effort, and it should reflect the duration, scope and complexity of the task and activities to be covered via the VM grant. It takes into consideration the budget request of the applicant and the outcome of the evaluation of the application. The following funding conditions apply and must be respected:

Up to a maximum of EUR 1500 in total can be attributed to each successful applicant.

For this call, the EARLICOST Management Committee has allocated a budget of approximately 23000 EUR aiming to fund ~17 VM proposals. The amount granted will be determined during the evaluation process. Annotated rules for COST actions

(<https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2025/11/COST-094-21-Annotated-Rules-for-COST-Actions-Level-C-V3.0-25-IX-2025.pdf>).

HOW TO APPLY:

Eligible applicants must:

- Submit their VM applications online at the following web address: <https://e-services.cost.eu/activity/grants>
- Must fill in the information also at the following link: <https://res.inoe.ro/apps/forms/s/J89WzMmGPPRkZ2dbQ8FLHN8W>
- Carefully read the funding rules detailed in the annotated rules for COST actions (<https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2025/11/COST-094-21-Annotated-Rules-for-COST-Actions-Level-C-V3.0-25-IX-2025.pdf>) and Grant Awarding User guide (<https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2025/01/COST-Grant-Awarding-user-guide.pdf>).
- To complete the application, applicants are required to upload in the online system the following documents:
- Application form (including contact details; proposed start and end of the VM; contribution to the objectives/WGs of EARLICOST COST Action, working plan, expected outputs and contribution to the Action MoU objectives and deliverables, and clear justification for choosing the participating institution(s), using the e-COST template);
- CV (1-page), including publications and previous visiting fellowships.

NOTE: Remember that VM dates must take place **before the 10th of October, 2026**.

BEFORE THE VM:

Please note that you can start your VM after:

- The VM coordinators assessed your request,
- The VM coordinator informed the Grant Holder that the proposed VM has been approved,
- The Grant Holder sent you a formal Grant Notification letter.

AFTER THE VM:

The Grantee must submit the supporting documentation through the e-COST system (<https://e-services.cost.eu/>) **before October 12th, 2026**. Two reports are expected:

1. e-cost template-based report,
2. internal EARLICOST report (an extended version of the e-cost report, 5-10 pages, with detailed info and linkage to deliverables).

The report, based on the e-cost template, should include the following:

- Aims of the VM; work undertaken; main results; future plans (e.g. further cooperation with the host-institution, potential future publications etc.), how are the results linked to EARLICOST specific deliverables;
- Outputs (e.g. academic paper, funding application, new dataset etc.);

Payment of the Grant is subject to the submitted scientific report being approved by the Action Chair and Vice-Chair.

If the results from a VM are published in a journal or conference, please add the following acknowledgement in your paper/presentation:

“This article/publication is based upon work from COST Action EARLICOST, supported by COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology).” It would be highly appreciated that a copy of the paper/article, abstract, or other flyer is sent to the Contact persons listed in the section below, for archiving, reporting, and dissemination purposes.

CONTACT PERSONS

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COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) is a funding agency for research and innovation networks. Our Actions help connect research initiatives across Europe and enable scientists to grow their ideas by sharing them with their peers. This boosts their research, career and innovation.

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