

## Trekking into Grant Holder success with Chiara Toldo

*Ms Chiara Toldo has been serving as the Research Manager Administrator at the University of Trento since 2017. She possesses a Master's degree in Mathematics and describes herself by saying, "I have a physicist's heart, which enables me to lead a curious and fulfilling life, both in my professional tasks and during my personal time."*



**COST: How would you compare your managerial experience of being a Grant Holder Manager before and after taking the role? Do you feel this experience enhanced your professional profile? If yes, how?**

I began my role as Grant Holder Manager (GHM) for the COST Action '[European Topology Interdisciplinary Action \(EUTOPIA\)](#)' in 2018. I was both excited and scared to be part of it. Fortunately, the COST trainings held in Brussels and the continuous support from the Administrative Officer (AO) through email and online meetings helped me learn the financial aspects of the Action from the start.

The most challenging aspect for me, as an Italian GHM, was to reconcile the COST rules with Italian laws and regulations, and to ensure prompt reimbursements to participants without being hindered by bureaucratic hurdles. It was an interesting challenge, not easy but certainly rewarding. Let's say it's like trekking in the mountains, the trail is not always easy, but it leads to peaks where you can take lots of nice photos.

I recommend taking on the GHM role, not only for the sense of fulfilment it brings but also for the opportunity to be a part of the research that the Action supports. Even if you're not directly involved in research activities, a positive synergy with the Action Chair and the Management Committee makes you feel like an essential part of the complex world of research that contributes to making our world a better place.

**COST: What tips can you give the newly appointed GHMs to enable them to succeed in the role?**

Dear future Grant Holders, I envy you as your trek is ready to be embarked upon, with all its challenges and achievements. In your backpack, pack patience, the ability to empathize, and the determination to find constructive solutions that harmonize rules with desires. Remember that beyond the numbers and reports, there are people attending meetings, engaging with each other, and sharing ideas that can lead to innovation.

Always keep the big picture in mind; it will guide you in finding optimal solutions to any issue. You are not alone; the GHM community and your COST colleagues are sharing this journey with you!

## **COST : What personal story can you tell, an anecdote to share?**

I would like to share the message I felt like writing to the Action AO at the end of the Action:

*"Here we are, after the five years of the Action, and it's time to say goodbye.  
I would like to steal a couple of minutes, which don't weigh much over five years, to thank you for the  
patience,  
for the time you spent trying to understand and, what is harder, to make me understand,  
for the promptness,  
for the collaboration,  
for the opportunity of growth,  
for the chocolates I had the opportunity to buy when coming in Brussels,  
for the waffles eaten at the 'Atomium' after the end of the Grant Holder trainings,  
for been always ready to listen to our suggestions,  
for making us feel active players in the complicated task of managing a COST Action,  
for the smiles,  
for the encouragements,  
for the view of Brussel from the window of COST offices,  
for the opportunity to meet so many interesting people,  
for never making me feel alone.  
I know I'll miss all of this!  
Just Thanks!"*

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