

Forward-looking Projects

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Purpose of the action

Following the recent pandemic, **the need for innovation in our education and training systems, as well as youth, has never been so great.** Innovation in teaching and learning is crucial, at individual level as well as at institutional level. These innovative approaches should not only provide today's and tomorrow's workers with the appropriate skills for rapidly-changing labour markets, but should also arm today's and tomorrow's workforce with creativity and skills to confront the growing complexity of societal challenges that we all face such as climate change, the protection of bio-diversity, clean energy, public health, digitalization and automation, artificial intelligence, robotics and data analysis.

This action will aim to foster **innovation, creativity and participation**, as well as social entrepreneurship in different fields of education and training, within sectors or across sectors and disciplines.

Forward-Looking Projects are large-scale projects that aim to **identify, develop, test and/or assess innovative (policy) approaches** that have the potential of becoming mainstreamed, thus improving education and training systems. They will support forward-looking ideas responding to **key European priorities** and that have the potential of becoming mainstreamed and giving input for improving education, training and youth systems, as well as to bring a substantial innovative effect in terms of methods and practices to all types of learning and active participation settings for Europe's social cohesion.

The goal is to support transnational cooperation projects implementing a coherent and comprehensive set of **sectoral or cross-sectoral activities** that either:

- **foster innovation** in terms of scope, ground-breaking methods and practices, and/or
- ensure **a transfer of innovation** (across countries, policy sectors or target groups), thus ensuring at European level a sustainable exploitation of innovative project results and/or transferability into different contexts and audiences.

The partnerships should be composed of a mix of public and private organisations combining researchers, practitioners and partners with the capacity to reach policy-makers.

Forward-Looking Projects should therefore be implemented by a mixed partnership of organisations:

- based on excellence and state of the art knowledge,
- having the capacity to innovate,
- able to generate systemic impact through their activities and the potential to drive the policy agenda in the fields of education and training.

Supported projects will aim at achieving systemic impact at European level by having the capacity to deploy their innovative outcomes on a European scale and/or by being able to transfer them into different thematic or geographical contexts.

Lot 1: Cross-sectoral priorities

Projects under Lot 1 can address different educational sectors or bridge educational sectors.

Proposals submitted under Lot 1 must address one of the two following priorities that are detailed under 'Setting up a project':

- Priority 1: Supporting high **quality and inclusive digital education**, in line with the Digital Education Action Plan
- Priority 2: Supporting education and training systems to adapt for the **green transition**

Lot 2: Vocational Education and Training (VET)

Projects under Lot 2 address the VET sector.

These projects support the implementation of the principles and objectives of the **European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan**¹ the **European Skills Agenda**², the Council Recommendation on vocational education and training for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience³ and the **Osnabrück Declaration** on vocational education and training⁴ as an enabler of recovery and just transitions to digital and green economies.

Proposals submitted under Lot 2 must address one of the three following priorities that are detailed under 'Setting up a project':

- Priority 3: Supporting the **Pact for Skills**;
- Priority 4: Structures and mechanisms for **Applied research in VET**;
- Priority 5: **Green skills in the VET sector**.

Lot 3: Adult education (AE)

These projects support the implementation of the principles and objectives of the **European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan**, the **European Skills Agenda**, and the **Council Recommendation on Upskilling Pathways**⁵ : New Opportunities for Adults.

Projects under Lot 3 address the adult education sector. Proposals submitted under Lot 3 must address the priority 6 that is detailed under 'Setting up a project':

- Priority 6: **Upskilling Pathways**: New Opportunities for Adults

Objectives of the Action

The **general objectives** are as follows:

- Innovative initiatives with a strong impact on education and training reforms in specific

strategic policy areas;

- Contributing to the **strengthening of Europe's innovation capacity** by promoting innovation in education and training;
- **Creating systemic change** through fostering innovation at both practice and policy-level;
- **Support forward-looking ideas** focusing on key topics and priorities at EU level, with a clear potential to be mainstreamed in one or more sectors;
- As fully innovative, ground-breaking educational methods and practices and/or transfer of innovation: ensuring at EU level a **sustainable exploitation** of innovative project results and/or **transferability** into different contexts and audiences.

The **specific objectives** include:

- **Identifying, developing, testing and/or assessing** innovative approaches that have the potential to be mainstreamed in order to improve education and training systems and improve the effectiveness of policies and practices in the field of education and training;
- **Launching pilot actions** to test solutions to present and future challenges with a view to kick-starting sustainable and systemic impact;
- **Supporting transnational cooperation and mutual learning** on forward-looking issues amongst key stakeholders and empowering them to develop innovative solutions and promote the transfer of those solutions in new settings, including capacity-building of relevant stakeholders.

Activities under Forward-Looking Projects should contribute to the following:

- Improve quality, efficiency and equity of education and training systems;
- Improve effectiveness of policies in the field of education and training;
- Support the implementation of EU Frameworks and legal initiatives as well as country-specific recommendations from the European Semester;
- Improved evidence and understanding on target group(s), learning and teaching situations and effective methodologies and tools that can inspire and stimulate innovation at system level;
- Develop knowledge to support evidence-based policy;
- Trigger behavioural shifts at EU level.

Main activities under these Priorities could involve (non-exhaustive list):

- Action research, mapping work, producing large-scale sectoral or cross-sectoral outputs;
- Transnational capacity-building activities such as training, the analysis of policy contexts, policy-research, institutional adjustments;
- Pilot activities to test innovative solutions;
- Large-scale transnational events or networking activities, either sectoral or cross-sectoral;
- Exploitation activities to spread results to the educational community or sector;
- Think-tank activities, researching and experimenting with innovative ideas.

Forward-Looking Projects are required to apply EU wide instruments and tools whenever relevant.

Projects should include the design of a long-term action plan (beyond the duration of the Erasmus+ funded project) for the progressive take-up and mainstreaming of the innovations developed to be able to impact on education and training systems, in collaboration with the relevant authorities and institutions. They should also ensure the appropriate visibility and wide dissemination of the work, including at EU and national political level.

Forward-Looking Projects could also indicate how other EU funding opportunities (e.g. European

Structural Funds, European Fund for Strategic Investment, Recover and Resilience Facility, Just Transition Fund), national and regional funding (as well as private funding), can support the implementation of the project. They could take into account national and regional smart specialisation strategies and developments in the European Industrial Ecosystems.

Criteria to be met to apply for Forward-Looking Projects

Eligibility criteria

In order to be eligible for an Erasmus+ grant, project proposals for Forward-looking Projects must comply with the following criteria:

Who can apply?

Any full partner legally established in an **EU Member State or third country associated to the Programme** can be the applicant. This organisation applies on behalf of all participating organisations involved in the project.

What types of organisations are eligible to participate in the project?

- The following organisations can be involved as full partner, affiliated entity or associated partner: Any public or private organisations that are active in the fields of education and training, that are key drivers of innovation and established in an EU Member State or third country associated to the Programme (see section “Eligible countries” in Part A of this Guide).

For Lot 1 and Lot 2: Such organisations can be (non-exhaustive list):

- Education and training organisations (e.g. education and training providers such as schools, Higher Education Institutions, VET and Adult education providers, associations, NGOs);
- Public or private companies that offer training to their employees or partners in the value/supply chain.
- Drivers of innovation and territorial development (e.g. eco-innovation labs, research centres, innovation agencies, regional development authorities, SMEs, large companies);
- Policy-makers and public authorities at national, regional and local level (e.g. Ministries of Innovation, Education, Labour, Economy, public and private employment services, qualification authorities, etc.);
- Organisations carrying out cross-sector activities and other labour market actors (e.g. social partners, sectoral organisations, chambers of industry/commerce/crafts and other intermediary bodies, trade organisations, civil society, sports and cultural organisations, teachers and trainers associations, youth and parents associations, labour market actors);
- Public or private entities in charge of, or having a degree of responsibility for (or influence over), the organisation and/or financing and/or provision of educational services to adults (e.g. skills assessment, validation of competences, education and training, orientation and guidance).
- National, International, regional and sectorial skills competition organizations.

Higher education institutions established in an EU Member State or third country associated to the Programme must hold a valid Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE).

Number and profile of participating organisations

For all Lots:

- The partnership must include at least **3 full partners** from a minimum of **3 EU Member States and third countries associated to the Programme** (including at least 2 EU Member States).

For Lot 2:

- For **at least three of the participating countries**, the partnerships must include both **employers** (or their representatives), as well as **education and training organisations** (or their representatives).

For Lot 3:

- For **at least three of the participating countries**, the partnership must include public or private entities in charge of, or having a high degree of responsibility for (or influence over), the organisation and/or financing and/or provision of educational services to adults (e.g. skills assessment, validation of competences, education and training, orientation and guidance), as full or associated partners.

Venue of activities

The activities must take place in EU Member States or third countries associated to the Programme.

Duration of project

For Lot 1 - Cross-sectoral priorities, the duration of the project is:

- 24 to 48 months;

For Lot 2 and Lot 3 the duration of the project is:

- 24 months.

The duration has to be chosen at application stage, based on the objective of the project, on the type of activities planned over time, the budget and the ambitions set for the project.

Project start dates

Projects will start on 1 November 2022, 1 December 2022 or 1 January 2023

Where to apply?

To the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA).

Call ID Lot 1: ERASMUS-EDU-2022-PI-FORWARD-LOT1

Call ID Lot 2: ERASMUS-EDU-2022-PI-FORWARD-LOT2

Call ID Lot 3: ERASMUS-EDU-2022-PI-FORWARD-LOT3

When to apply?

Applicants have to submit their grant application by **15 March at 17:00** (Brussels time)

Applicant organisations will be assessed against the relevant exclusion and selection criteria. For

more information please consult Part C of this Guide.

Setting up a project

Forward-Looking Projects should always have in mind the following cross-cutting policy contexts:

1. The European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan.
2. The European Commission's Green Deal⁶, the UN's Sustainable Development Goals⁷;
3. The European Skills Agenda⁸ - in particular action 1 on the Pact for Skills, action 6 on Skills to support the twin transitions, and action 8 on Skills for life.
4. The Council Recommendation on vocational education and training (VET) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience⁹
5. The Council Recommendation on Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults¹⁰
6. Digital Transformation in our education and training systems, as well as in youth, as encompassed in the European Commission's Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027¹¹

Lot 1: Cross-sectoral priorities

Proposals submitted under Lot 1 must address one of the following 2 priorities:

Priority 1: Supporting high quality and inclusive digital education, in line with the Digital Education Action Plan

Education and training systems are currently undergoing a deep digital transformation, which is being driven by advances in connectivity; the widespread use of devices and digital applications; the need for individual flexibility, the wider availability of and need for high-quality digital education content and the ever-increasing demand for digital skills. The COVID-19 pandemic, which has heavily impacted education and training, has accelerated the change and provided multiple new learning experiences and perspectives. The Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027 sets the EU policy for the digital transformation in education and training over the next programming period. The Digital Education Action Plan has two strategic priorities:

- Supporting the development of a high-performing digital education ecosystem (1)
- Addressing the need to enhance digital competences for the digital transformation (2)

There is a need to equip all learners with digital competences (knowledge, skills and attitudes) to live, work, learn and thrive in a world increasingly mediated by digital technologies. Digital technology, when deployed skilfully and effectively by educators, can fully support the agenda of high quality and inclusive education and training for all learners. Technology can be a powerful and engaging tool for collaborative and creative learning. It can help learners and educators access, create and share digital content. Effective digital capacity planning and development is vital for education and training systems. This requires the development and ongoing review and updating of digital strategies addressing technology gaps in infrastructure, devices and developing relevant organisational capabilities in education, including the capacity to deliver hybrid modes of learning and teaching (remote and on-site). In this context, increasing our knowledge and understanding of emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its ethical educational deployment also becomes important. Capacity should be developed to ensure accessibility to assistive technologies and accessible digital content and more generally address unequal access, e.g. on socio-economic or rural-urban grounds. High-quality digital education content, user-friendly tools, value-adding services and secure platforms that maintain privacy and uphold ethical standards are essential for high quality and inclusive digital education.

In addition to the two strategic priorities outlined above, the Digital Education Action Plan sets out to support more effective cooperation on digital education and training at EU level through the set-up of a European Digital Education Hub. The Hub will promote cross-sectoral collaboration, identify and share good practice and support Member States and the education and training sector with tools, frameworks, guidance, technical expertise and research in the domain of digital education. The Hub should link national and regional digital education initiatives and actors and support new models for exchange of digital education content, addressing issues such as common standards, interoperability, accessibility and quality-assurance. The Hub should thus also be taken into account in the scope of the areas set out below.

Forward-Looking Projects will address specifically **at least one of the three following areas** under Priority 1:

A) Key success factors for inclusive and high-quality digital education and training.

Projects will:

- Identify and/or assess enabling factors or obstacles for effective and performing digital education and training ecosystems. These enabling factors and obstacles may be addressed at systemic (national/regional/local level) or at organisational level;
- Examine the interplay between these factors/obstacles and produce recommendations that may be disseminated and exploited at organisational and systemic level;

Note: Factors like education and training systems' structure and organisation, national curriculum approaches, national assessment of educational performance, teacher/trainer training strategies as well as infrastructure and connectivity are expected to be examined, but also the possibility for other hidden factors as well.

B) Artificial Intelligence in education

Projects will:

- Identify, develop and pilot use cases of artificial intelligence in education and training including considering their impact on data, privacy, ethics and EU values;
- Produce recommendations, toolkits and implementation guidelines on the role and use of artificial intelligence in education and training that may be disseminated and exploited at organisational and systemic level.

C) High-quality digital education content

Projects will:

- Identify, develop and pilot use cases for the development and adoption of high-quality digital education content (taking into account the need for high-quality instructional design, accessibility, recognition and multilingualism and reflecting the need for interoperability, certification, verification and transferability of digital education content);
- Produce recommendations, toolkits and implementation guidelines on the development and adoption of high-quality digital education content that may be disseminated and exploited at organisational and systemic level.

Priority 2: Supporting education and training systems to adapt for the green transition

The European Green Deal highlights the importance of mobilising the education and training sector

to support the transition to a greener and more sustainable Europe. There is a need to support collective and individual action level through the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes related to sustainability and empowering learners to become agents of change. Education and training systems and institutions can be catalysts for achieving this change.

One of the six dimensions of the European Education Area¹² and the sixth flagship action of the European Skills Agenda¹³ focuses specifically on supporting the green transition. In addition, the Education for Climate Coalition, launched by the European Commission on 10 December 2020, aims to mobilise expertise, provide resources for networking and support creative approaches to climate action and sustainability, involving teachers, pupils and students. The goal of the Coalition is to link bottom-up initiatives and EU level action and to support pledges and concrete actions to change sustainability behaviour across the EU.

In addition, the Commission is set to propose end 2021 a Council Recommendation on education for environmental sustainability. This will aim to support Member States to embed sustainability in education and training systems and boost cooperation and exchange of experiences at European level on learning for sustainability. The Commission is also developing a European Competence Framework to help develop and assess knowledge, skills and attitudes on sustainability.

All these actions aim at helping people acquire knowledge, abilities, values and attitudes needed to live in, develop and support a sustainable and resource-efficient economy and society.

Forward-Looking Projects will address **at least one of the three following areas** under Priority 2:

A) Promoting whole institution approaches to sustainability

Projects will focus on:

- Designing, implementing and monitoring whole-institution sustainability plans, including through the use of self-assessment tools;
- Supporting education leaders (e.g. through professional development, mentoring schemes, networking initiatives) to embed sustainability into all aspects of the institutions' operations;
- Supporting student and staff involvement in sustainability initiatives, e.g. through sustainability champions/ambassadors, developing links with local community groups and other partners beyond the education institution;
- Designing, implementing and monitoring approaches related to sustainable operations on the school/campus site, e.g. energy and water consumption; mobility and transport; greening of teaching and learning environment and infrastructure.

B) Developing the skills and competences of learners and educators related to sustainability

Projects will focus on:

- Designing, implementing and monitoring innovative approaches to teaching and training on sustainability, which could include the effective use of digital technologies to support learning for sustainability;
- Building the capacity of educators (teachers, training and all educational staff) to integrate sustainability through professional development, including supporting educators with innovative teaching practices and bridging subjects in different disciplines;
- Connecting different education sectors on sustainability competence development, including formal and non-formal education;

- Awareness-raising activities, including activities targeted at the fight against disinformation (related to, e.g., green washing) and fostering critical-thinking through for example hands-on learning in ‘makerspaces’ and/or ‘STEAM’ learning approaches.

C) Empowering citizens to act on sustainability, the environment and climate change, including in the context of the new Education for Climate Coalition

Projects will focus on:

- Designing concrete and replicable “climate action plans” at local level, involving learners, teachers, trainers, education leaders, local business, museums, art and science bodies and sport centres;
- Designing project-based, experiential learning led by schools with parents, local businesses, the wider community, e.g.: promoting healthy eating; promoting schools as green, sustainable, interactive buildings, in line with the New European Bauhaus priorities; promoting cross-fertilisation between green schools, as physical structures, and all the other elements of a learning environment such as innovative pedagogies, project-based learning and cross-subject teacher teams;
- Supporting innovative partnerships between formal education (e.g. schools, higher education institutions etc.) and non-formal actors (e.g. NGOs, environmental centres, libraries, museums, etc.).

Applications can target one or more sectors of education, from Early Childhood Education and Care through to adult learning as well as formal, non-formal and informal education. Applications that address more than one area within a priority will not receive extra points during evaluation.

Lot 2: Vocational Education and Training (VET)

Proposals submitted under Lot 2 must address one of the following 3 priorities:

Priority 3: Supporting the Pact for Skills

The Pact for Skills is the first flagship action of the 2020 European Skills Agenda. It is a new engagement model for addressing skills challenges and deliver on the recovery path, the EU Industrial Strategy and the green and digital transitions. It mobilises and incentivises all relevant stakeholders to take concrete actions for the upskilling and reskilling of people of working age, in particular by pooling efforts in wide partnerships. The Pact is firmly anchored in the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights and supports the goals of the Green Deal and the digital transformation, as set out in the Commission communication “A strong Social Europe for Just Transitions”¹⁴.

Among others, the Pact aims to mobilise and incentivise large companies, in cooperation with other stakeholders to support (in the context of upskilling and reskilling) micro-, small and medium-sized companies.

The purpose of this priority is to identify, test, develop or assess tools or structures focused on brokering and building cooperation between large companies and micro, small and medium companies (SMEs) along a value chain in the same industrial ecosystem¹⁵ with the involvement of other players relevant for up- and reskilling. The objective of this cooperation must be the upskilling and reskilling of people at working age in a particular value chain or industrial ecosystem. The projects could also serve the purpose of laying the ground for large-scale skills partnerships in industrial ecosystems.

The tools or structures should have potential of becoming mainstreamed and giving input for improving education and training systems and other opportunities for skills anticipation, development and validation. Project should involve relevant stakeholders, such as, VET providers, higher education institutions, public and private employment services, innovative hubs, social partners, companies and public authorities.

The cooperation tools or structures should improve quality, efficiency and equity of upskilling and reskilling opportunities for people at working age and adapt them for the changing tasks in micro-, small or medium-sized enterprises.

The tools or structures could include cooperation with public authorities (e.g. regional or national), VET providers, social partners and other stakeholders to improve the sustainability of the solutions and include impact on education and training systems.

Priority 4: Structures and mechanisms for Applied research in VET

Applied research is usually defined ¹⁶ as original investigation undertaken in order to acquire new knowledge. It is, directed primarily towards a specific, practical aim or objective. The results of applied research are intended primarily to be valid for possible applications to products, operations, methods or systems. Applied research gives operational form to ideas. It is very closely related to the concept of “Experimental development” which is defined as systematic work, drawing on knowledge gained from research and practical experience and producing additional knowledge, which is directed to producing new products or processes or to improving existing products or processes.

Applied research has a strong focus on solving real-world problems in industry. A distinguishing characteristic of applied research in VET is the sector’s potential to bring together research and innovation, with the dual aims of understanding industry’s problems and bringing about change in the workplace. The skills required to create and diffuse knowledge overlap. Both call for inquiry, reflective practice, communication and collaboration.

Another feature of VET applied research is the close link between research and efforts to improve VET pedagogy. These endeavours can lead to innovative thinking, new teaching practices and training products, and ultimately more creative graduates¹⁷ .

The Council Recommendation on vocational education and training (VET) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience, calls for the establishment of Centres of Vocational Excellence, acting “...as catalysts for local business investment, supporting recovery, green and digital transitions, European and regional innovation and smart specialisation strategies, development of vocational education and training, including at higher qualification levels (EQF levels 5-8) in line with national context and provide innovative services such as clusters and business incubators for start-ups and technology innovation for SMEs, as well as innovative reskilling solutions ...”;

Among their key activities Centres of VET excellence aim at:

- Working together with local SME's through innovation hubs, technology diffusion centres, prototyping and **applied research projects**, with the involvement of VET learners and staff;
- Contributing to creation and dissemination of **new knowledge** in partnership with other stakeholders, e.g. through open innovation, joint research and development (R&D) with universities, companies, and other research institutes, etc.

The Osnabrück Declaration on vocational education and training as an enabler of recovery and just

transitions to digital and green economies¹⁸, calls for support at EU level to “*Develop and strengthen centres of vocational excellence as innovative incubators and skills ecosystems encompassing learning, training and research activities...*”.

In many countries applied research has led to stimulate innovation in companies, in particular in micro and small and medium enterprises (SMEs), as well as the continuous improvement and innovation in VET teaching and training practices. By being actively engaged in applied research with local companies, VET providers become co-creators of local innovation eco-systems. They do so by contributing to the generation of new and improved products, services and processes, but also through the supply of skilled, innovative and entrepreneurial VET graduates.

The projects will:

- Identify, assess, test, and develop structures and mechanisms for applied research in VET, to broaden its engagement in R&D and innovation systems;
- Build the capacity of VET systems with the close involvement of teachers and trainers, as well as VET learners, to undertake applied research and manage innovation projects together with other organisations, and in particular SMEs;
- Based on its experience and outcomes, the project will propose a reference framework (operational and financial) aimed at mainstreaming applied research and experimental development in VET provision, making use of private as well as public (national and EU) funding instruments.

The results of these projects should have the potential to be mainstreamed, and contribute to the modernisation of VET systems and their engagement in applied research and experimental development, while providing learners with opportunities for challenge/project based learning.

Priority 5: Green skills in the VET sector

The European Green Deal is Europe’s new growth strategy aiming to transform its economy and society and to put them on a more sustainable path. As stipulated in Action 6 of the European Skills Agenda, the Commission will support the acquisition of skills for the green transition.

A fair and successful green transition requires investments in skills of people to increase the number of professionals who (i) build and master green technologies, including digital ones, (ii) develop green products, services and business models, (iii) create innovative nature-based solutions and (iv) help minimise the environmental footprint of activities. It also requires retraining and upskilling of the workforce to accompany labour market transitions and mobility. This is necessary because job creation and job losses will not necessarily happen in the same sectors, and across the economy task profiles and skill requirements will change fundamentally. In addition, Europe will only become a climate neutral continent, a resource efficient society and a circular economy with an informed population and workforce that understands how to think and act green.

VET institutions are well placed to provide the skills needed for a successful green transition, both through initial and continuing VET programmes. The Council Recommendation on vocational education and training for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience also aims to make VET a driver for innovation and growth preparing people with the skills for the digital and green transitions and occupations in high demand. This includes expansion of the training offer fostering the acquisition of entrepreneurial, digital and green skills.

The Osnabrück Declaration on vocational education and training as an enabler of recovery and just transitions to digital and green economies calls for:

- Promoting initiatives to support cooperation and knowledge-sharing between VET institutions and providers on learning methods, curricula, guidelines, work-based learning, and quality assurance of **education and training offer on green skills**, by using European programmes like Erasmus+
- Defining **labour-market-relevant skills for the green transition** that are to be incorporated in curricula and VET provision, including basic skills across all sectors and occupations and sector specific skills in cooperation with the social partners

The projects will address both of the following two areas under Priority 5:

A) Set of core green skills for the labour market

- Develop a set of core green skills for the labour market across different economic sectors to guide training with a view to creating a generation of climate, environment and health conscious professionals and green economic operators.

B) Integrating this set into VET

- Projects will help integrate this set of core green skills into VET curricula.
- Projects will also help integrate this set into the training of teachers, trainers and other staff undertaking initial and continuing professional development.

Lot 3: Adult education (AE)

Proposals submitted under Lot 3 must address the following priority:

Priority 6: Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults

Upskilling Pathways as defined in the Council Recommendation on Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults¹⁹, targets adults with a low level of skills, knowledge and competences who have at best completed lower secondary education. It aims to provide adults with flexible opportunities to improve their literacy, numeracy and digital skills (including ability to use digital technologies) and to progress towards higher qualification levels relevant for the labour market and for active participation in society.

Upskilling Pathways contribute to ensure that everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and life-long learning, as defined in Principle 1 of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

Upskilling Pathways comprises three steps:

1. skills assessment (i.e. skills identification or screening);
2. provision of a tailored, flexible and quality learning offer; and
3. validation and recognition of skills acquired.

Through the actions proposed, the projects will support the implementation of the Council Recommendation on Upskilling Pathways, the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan, as well as to the European Skills Agenda (action 8 'Skills for life').

The projects will:

- Contribute to increase the supply of upskilling opportunities and their take up by low skilled adults.

- Contribute to practical and integrated delivery of the Upskilling Pathways steps supported by outreach and guidance measures
- Contribute to increase the coherence among existing measures for low skilled adults
- Ensure that all relevant actors are mobilised and engaged in the delivery of the Upskilling Pathways Recommendation.

A partnership approach should be ensured, which promotes effective coordination and long-term collaboration between the stakeholders involved in planning, implementing and monitoring Upskilling Pathways.

The projects shall include a plan for the roll-out of its outcomes/results in the participating countries, and include proposals for the further development of tailored support and learning for this specific target group.

Actors involved in Upskilling Pathways may include: national, regional or local entities involved in planning, organising or promoting adult learning, employer organisations, employers, trade unions, chambers of industry, trade, commerce and crafts, employment services, education and training providers, intermediary and sectoral organisations, civil society organisations, local and regional economic actors, libraries and community services.

Expected impact

Forward-Looking Projects intend to provide innovative solutions that can be mainstreamed at regional, national and European level and ideally with the potential to be developed further either by EU funding or else through national and regional support.

The bottom-up practices should correctly address the fixed priorities set to strengthen Europe's innovation capacity, make a strong impact on education and training reforms and initiate systemic change.

Through the wide dissemination of project outcomes at transnational, national and/or regional levels, also taking national, European Industrial Ecosystems and regional smart specialisation strategies into account, Forward-Looking Projects are expected to make cathartic impact at system level to help education and training systems better meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

Award criteria

Relevance of the project - (maximum 30 points/ threshold minimum 15 points)

- **Link to EU policy and initiatives:** the proposal establishes and develops a project that supports a forward-looking idea at EU level, taking into account and fostering existing EU tools and initiatives (if relevant). The proposal also supports the implementation of EU policies (e.g. European Skills Agenda), EU Frameworks and EU initiatives such as country specific recommendations from the European Semester;
- **Purpose:** the proposal is relevant to the objective of the Action, as well as the general and specific objectives of the Action (see section 'Objectives of the action' above);
- **Scope:** the proposal addresses one of the 6 priorities of the Action (see section 'Setting up a project' above);
- **Innovation:** the proposal considers state-of-the-art methods and techniques, and leads to innovative results and solutions that can be mainstreamed into one or more economic or educational sectors;

- **Consistency:** the objectives are based on a sound needs analysis; they are clearly defined, realistic and address issues relevant to the participating organisations and to the Action;
- **European added value:** the proposal demonstrates clearly the added value at systemic EU level, generated through its trans-nationality and potential transferability;
- **Depending on the addressed priority:**
 - **Priority 1 - Digital education and skills:** the extent to which the proposal consistently plans and integrates activities, research and events that contribute clearly to the Digital Transformation;
 - **Priority 2 - Green education and skills:** the extent to which the proposal consistently plans and integrates activities, research and events that boosts the transition to a circular and greener economy, thus contributing to the Commission's Green Deal, the Paris Climate Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals;
 - **Priority 3 - Pact for Skills:** the extent to which the proposal consistently plans and integrates activities, research, **as well as tools and structures** that strengthen skills development **in value chains in an industrial ecosystem**;
 - **Priority 4 - Applied research in VET:** the extent to which the proposal develops a coherent plan to set-up structures and mechanisms for applied research in VET, which is designed to interact and benefit the teaching and learning process, while responding to the external organisations needs for innovation and development;
 - **Priority 5 - Green skills in the VET sector:** the extent to which the proposal develops a meaningful set of core green skills and showcases how to integrate this set of core green skills into VET curricula, as well as for the training of teachers, trainers and other staff;
 - **Priority 6 - Upskilling Pathways:** the extent to which the proposal contributes to the practical and integrated delivery of the Upskilling Pathways steps supported by outreach and guidance measures.
- **Post-pandemic setting:** the extent to which the proposal integrates measures fostering new policies and practices at systemic level in order to face new challenges posed by the recent pandemic.

Quality of the project design and implementation - (maximum 30 points/ threshold minimum 15 points)

- **Coherence:** the overall project design ensures consistency between project objectives, methodology, activities, duration and the budget proposed. The proposal presents a coherent and comprehensive set of appropriate activities to meet the identified needs and lead to the expected results;
- **Structure:** the work programme is clear and complete (covering appropriate project phases: preparation, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, dissemination and exploitation). It comprises an *ex ante* and *ex post* (both within the project duration) analysis of the introduced innovation in education;
- **Methodology:** the quality and feasibility of the methodology proposed and its appropriateness for producing the expected results, using EU instruments whenever relevant to the project;
- **Management:** solid management arrangements are foreseen. Timelines, organisation, tasks and responsibilities are well defined and realistic. The proposal allocates appropriate resources to each activity;
- **Improving quality and effectiveness:** the proposal clearly embeds its innovation into activities and results which improve the quality, efficiency and equity of education and training systems;

- **Budget:** the budget provides for appropriate resources necessary for success, it is neither overestimated nor underestimated;
- **Financial and quality control:** control measures (continuous quality evaluation and training, peer reviews, benchmarking activities, etc.) and quality indicators ensure that the project implementation is of high quality and cost-efficient. Challenges/risks of the project are clearly identified and mitigating actions properly addressed. Expert review processes are planned as an integral part of the project. The work programme includes an independent external quality assessment at mid-term and a few months before the project end in order to enable potential project adjustments.

Quality of the partnership and the cooperation arrangements - (maximum 20 points/threshold minimum 10 points)

- **Configuration:** the composition of the partnership is in line with the action and project objectives. It brings together an appropriate mix of relevant organisations with the necessary profiles, skills, experience, expertise and management support required for the successful delivery of the whole project. The proposal includes partners that adequately represent the sector or cross-sectoral approach concerned. In particular, under Priority 4, the extent to which the partnership organises tandems of VET providers and company representatives or associations in each participating country. In particular, under Priority 5, the extent to which the partnership organises tandems of VET providers and labour market representatives in each participating country.
- **Commitment:** the contributions from partners are significant, pertinent and complementary. The distribution of responsibilities and tasks is clear, appropriate, and demonstrates the commitment and active contribution of all participating organisations in relation to their specific expertise and capacity;
- **Tasks:** the coordinator shows high quality management and coordination of transnational networks and leadership in complex environment. Individual tasks are allocated on the basis of the specific know-how of each partner;
- **Collaboration/Team spirit:** an effective mechanism is proposed to ensure an efficient coordination, decision-making, communication and conflict resolution between the participating organisations, participants and any other relevant stakeholder;
- **Geographical dimension and involvement of third countries not associated to the Programme:** the partnership includes relevant partners from different geographical areas and this geographical composition is motivated. If applicable, the involvement of participating organisations from third countries not associated to the Programme brings an essential added value to the achievement of the objectives of the Forward-Looking Project.

Impact, dissemination and sustainability - (maximum 20 points/ threshold minimum 10 points)

- **Exploitation:** the proposal demonstrates how the outcomes of the project will be mainstreamed at system level in one or more sectors. It provides means to measure exploitation within the project lifetime and after;
- **Dissemination:** the proposal provides a clear plan for the dissemination of results, and includes appropriate targets, activities, relevant timing, tools and channels to ensure that the results and benefits will be spread effectively to the right stakeholders, policy makers and drivers of innovation within and after the project's lifetime. The proposal also indicates which partners will be responsible for dissemination and demonstrates the relevant experience that they have in dissemination activities. Dissemination also takes into account national and regional smart-specialisation strategies to impact to the maximum at these levels;

- **Open access:** as a general rule, and within the limits of existing national and European legal frameworks, results should be made available as **open educational resources** (OER) as well as on relevant professional, sectorial or competent authorities’ platforms. The proposal will describe how data, materials, documents and audio-visual and social media activity produced will be made freely available and promoted through open licences, and does not contain disproportionate limitations;
- **Impact:** the proposal demonstrates the potential impact of the project:
 - On the targeted groups and sector(s);
 - On policy-makers at system level;
 - Outside of the policy-makers and authorities directly targeted in the project, on private or public innovation-drivers at local, regional, national and/or European levels. The proposal demonstrates the potential to be implemented by other key stakeholders in the sector or beyond.

The proposal includes measures as well as targets and indicators to monitor progress and assess the expected impact (short- and long-term);

- **Sustainability:** the proposal explains how the Forward-Looking Project will be rolled out and further developed at different levels (local, regional, national). The proposal includes the design of a long-term action plan for the progressive roll-out of project deliverables after the project has finished and their incorporation into the mainstream. This plan shall be based on sustained partnerships between policy-makers, education and training providers and key industry stakeholders at the appropriate level. It should include the identification of appropriate governance structures, as well as plans for scalability and financial sustainability, including the potential identification of financial resources (European, national and private) to ensure that the results and benefits achieved will have a long-term sustainability.

To be considered for funding, applications must score at least **70 points** (out of 100 points in total), taking into account the necessary minimum threshold for each of the four award criteria.

The ex aequo proposals under the same priority will be prioritised according to the scores they have been awarded for the award criterion “Relevance” and then “Impact”.

The Evaluation Committee will, if possible, aim at ensuring a balanced coverage of priorities.

Deadline and indicative timetable for evaluation and grant agreements

Stages	Date and time or indicative period
Deadline for submitting applications	15 March at 17:00 (Brussels time)
Evaluation period	April - July 2022
Information to applicants	August 2022
Signature of grant agreement	October - December 2022
Starting date of the action	1/11/2022 or 1/12/2022 or 1/01/2023

What are the funding rules?

This action follows a lump sum funding model. The amount of the single lump sum contribution will be determined for each grant based on the estimated budget of the action proposed by the applicant. The granting authority will fix the lump sum of each grant based on the proposal, evaluation result, funding rates and the maximum grant amount set in the call.

The **maximum EU grant** per project is as follows:

- For **Lot 1** - Cross-sectoral priorities: EUR 800,000
- For **Lot 2** - Vocational Education and Training (VET) : EUR 700,000
- For **Lot 3** - Adult education (AE): EUR 1,000,000

The **maximum number of projects** to be funded is:

For **Lots 1 and 3**: there is no maximum set except the budgetary constraints

For **Lot 2**: there is an indicative target of 7 projects per priority (for priorities 3, 4 and 5 respectively)

How is the project lump sum determined?

Applicants must fill in a detailed budget table according to the application form, taking into account the following points:

1. The budget should be detailed as necessary by beneficiary/-ies and organized in coherent work packages (for example divided into 'project management', 'analysis', 'training', 'organization of events', 'model implementation', 'long-term action plan', 'communication and dissemination', 'quality assurance', etc.);
2. The proposal must describe the activities covered by each work package;
3. Applicants must provide in their proposal a breakdown of the estimated costs showing the share per work package (and, within each work package, the share assigned to each beneficiary and affiliated entity);
4. Costs described can cover staff costs, travel and subsistence costs, equipment costs and subcontracting as well as other costs (such as dissemination of information, publishing or translation).

Proposals will be evaluated according to the standard evaluation procedures with the help of internal and/or external experts. The experts will assess the quality of the proposals against the requirements defined in the call and the expected impact, quality and efficiency of the action. The lump sum value will be limited to a maximum of 80% of the estimated budget determined after evaluation.

Following the proposal evaluation, the authorising officer will establish the amount of the lump sum, taking into account the findings of the assessment carried out.

The grant parameters (maximum grant amount, funding rate, total eligible costs, etc.) will be fixed in the Grant Agreement.

The project achievements will be evaluated on the outcomes completed. The funding scheme would allow putting focus on the outputs rather than the inputs, thereby placing emphasis on the quality and level of achievement of measurable objectives.

More details are described in the model Grant Agreement available in the Funding and Tender Opportunities Portal (FTOP).

[llar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-action-plan_en](#)

2 <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1223&langId=en>

3 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32020H1202%2801%29>

4 https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/osnabrueck_declaration_eu2020.pdf

5 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A32016H1224%2801%29>

6 https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/european-green-deal-communication_en.pdf

7 <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/> and the Paris Declaration on Climate Change https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/international/negotiations/paris_en

8 <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1223&langId=en>

9 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/txt/?uri=celex%3a32020h1202%2801%29>

10 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A32016H1224%2801%29>

11 https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/digital-education-action-plan_en

12 https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/european-education-area_en

13 <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1223>

14 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0014>

15 as presented in the Annual Single Market Economy Report 2021: https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/staff-working-document-annual-single-market-report-2021_en

16 In Frascati Manual 2015, Guidelines for Collecting and Reporting Data on Research and Experimental Development <https://www.oecd.org/publications/frascati-manual-2015-9789264239012-en.htm>

<https://www.oecd.org/publications/frascati-manual-2015-9789264239012-en.htm>

17 Explaining the VET applied research developmental Framework:

<https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/explaining-the-vet-applied-research-developmental->

[framework](https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/explaining-the-vet-applied-research-developmental-framework) <https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/explaining-the-vet-applied-research-developmental-framework>

18 https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/osnabrueck_declaration_eu2020.pdf

19 EUR-Lex - 32016H1224(01) - EN - EUR-Lex (europa.eu)