

## Step 2: Check the compliance with the programme criteria

When developing their project and before applying for EU funding, participants must verify that they and their project respect the following criteria: admissibility, eligibility, exclusion, selection and award.

### Admissibility criteria

Applications must be sent **no later than the deadline for submitting applications as indicated in the call**.

- **For actions managed by the Executive Agency**, applications must be submitted **electronically** via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home>. Applications (including annexes and supporting documents) must be submitted using the forms provided in the Submission System. Applications are limited to 40 pages for calls for low value grants (EUR 60 000 or below); 120 pages for calls with high value grants (EUR 4 000 000) and 70 for all other calls. Evaluators will not consider any additional pages.
- **For actions managed by the Erasmus+ National Agencies**, applications must be submitted electronically via the forms available in the Erasmus+ website and the websites of the Erasmus+ National Agencies.

The applications must be readable and accessible.

Applications must be complete containing all parts and mandatory annexes. Only clerical errors can be corrected after the submission deadline upon request of the managing agency.

### Eligibility criteria

The eligibility criteria are used to determine whether the applicant is allowed to participate in a call for proposals and to submit a proposal for an action. They apply to the applicants and to the activities for which the grant is requested: (e.g. type of project or/and activities, implementation period, profile and/or the number of participants involved).

To be eligible, the applicant and the project must meet all the eligibility criteria relating to the Action under which the proposal is submitted. If the project does not meet the eligibility criteria at application stage, it will be rejected without being further evaluated. If it appears at implementation or final report stage that these criteria have not been fulfilled, the activities may be considered ineligible with a consequent recovery of the EU grant initially awarded to the project.

The specific eligibility criteria applying to each of the Actions implemented through the Erasmus+ Programme Guide are described in Part B of the Guide.

## Exclusion criteria

An applicant will be excluded from participating in calls for proposals under the Erasmus+ Programme if it is found to be in one of the exclusion situations described below, in accordance with articles 136-141 of the Financial Regulation:

1. the applicant is bankrupt, subject to insolvency or winding-up procedures, its assets are being administered by a liquidator or by a court, it is in an arrangement with creditors, its business activities are suspended, or it is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for under Union or national law;
2. a final judgement or a final administrative decision has established that the applicant is in breach of its obligations relating to the payment of taxes or social security contributions in accordance with the applicable law;
3. a final judgement or a final administrative decision has established that the applicant is guilty of grave professional misconduct by having violated applicable laws or regulations or ethical standards of the profession to which the applicant belongs, or by having engaged in any wrongful conduct which has an impact on its professional credibility where such conduct denotes wrongful intent or gross negligence, including, in particular, any of the following:
  1. fraudulently or negligently misrepresenting information required for the verification of the absence of grounds for exclusion or the fulfilment of eligibility or selection criteria or in the performance of the legal commitment;
  2. entering into agreement with other persons or entities with the aim of distorting competition;
  3. violating intellectual property rights;
  4. attempting to influence the decision-making of the authorising officer responsible during the award procedure;
  5. attempting to obtain confidential information that may confer upon it undue advantages in the award procedure;
4. a final judgement has established that the applicant is guilty of any of the following:
  1. fraud, within the meaning of Article 3 of Directive (EU) 2017/1371 of the European Parliament and of the Council<sup>1</sup> and Article 1 of the Convention on the protection of the European Communities' financial interests, drawn up by the Council Act of 26 July 1995<sup>2</sup> ;
  2. corruption, as defined in Article 4(2) of Directive (EU) 2017/1371 or active corruption within the meaning of Article 3 of the Convention on the fight against corruption involving officials of the European Communities or officials of Member States of the European Union, drawn up by the Council Act of 26 May 1997<sup>3</sup> , or conduct referred to in Article 2(1) of Council Framework Decision 2003/568/JHA<sup>4</sup> , or corruption as defined in other applicable laws;
  3. conduct related to a criminal organisation as referred to in Article 2 of Council Framework Decision 2008/841/JHA<sup>5</sup> ;
  4. money laundering or terrorist financing within the meaning of Article 1(3), (4) and (5) of Directive (EU) 2015/849 of the European Parliament and of the Council<sup>6</sup> ;
  5. terrorist offences or offences linked to terrorist activities, as defined in Articles 1 and 3 of Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA<sup>7</sup> , respectively, or inciting, aiding, abetting or attempting to commit such offences, as referred to in Article 4 of that Decision;
  6. child labour or other **offences concerning** trafficking in human beings as **referred to** in Article 2 of Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council<sup>8</sup> ;

5. the applicant has shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations in the performance of a legal commitment financed by the budget which has:
  1. **led to the early termination of a legal commitment;**
  2. **led to the application of liquidated damages or other contractual penalties; or;**
  3. **been discovered by an authorising officer, OLAF, the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO), or the Court of Auditors following checks, audits or investigations;**
6. a final judgment or final administrative decision has established that the applicant has committed an irregularity within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2988/95<sup>9</sup> ;
7. a final judgment or final administrative decision has established that the applicant has created an entity in a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or any other legal obligations in the jurisdiction of its registered office, central administration or principal place of business;
8. a final judgment or final administrative decision has established that an entity has been created with the intent referred to in point (g);
9. in the absence of a final judgement or where applicable a final administrative decision, the applicant is in one of the cases provided in (c), (d), (f), (g) and (h) above based in particular on:
  1. facts established in the context of audits or investigations carried out by **EPPO, for those Member States participating in enhanced cooperation pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2017/1939**, the Court of Auditors, OLAF or **the internal auditor**, or any other check, audit or control performed under the responsibility of the authorising officer;
  2. non-final administrative decisions which may include disciplinary measures taken by the competent supervisory body responsible for the verification of the application of standards of professional ethics;
  3. facts **referred to in** decisions of persons and entities implementing Union funds pursuant to point (c) of the first subparagraph of Article 62(1);
  4. information **transmitted in accordance with point (d) of Article 142(2) of EU Financial Regulation** by entities implementing **Union funds** pursuant to **point (b) of the first subparagraph of Article 62(1) of EU Financial Regulation**.
  5. decisions of the Commission relating to the infringement of Union competition **law** or of a national competent authority relating to the infringement of Union or national competition law.

6. decisions of exclusion by an authorising officer of an EU institution, of a European office or of an EU agency or body.

10. an applicant referred to in Article 135(2) where:

1. a natural or legal person who is a member of the administrative, management or supervisory body of the applicant referred to in Article 135(2), or who has powers of representation, decision or control with regard to that applicant, is in one or more of the situations referred to in points (c) to (h) above;
2. a natural or legal person that assumes unlimited liability for the debts of the applicant referred to in Article 135(2) is in one or more of the situations referred to in point (a) or (b) above;
3. a natural person who is essential for the award or for the implementation of the legal commitment is in one or more of the situations referred to in points (c) to (h) above;

If an applicant is in one of the situations of exclusion listed above, it must indicate the measures it has taken to remedy the exclusion situation, thus demonstrating its reliability. They may include e.g. technical, organisational and personnel measures to prevent further occurrence, compensation of damage or payment of fines. This does not apply for the situations referred in point (d) of this section.

In the cases provided in (c) to (h) above, in the absence of a final judgement or where applicable a final administrative decision, the National or Executive Agency may exclude an applicant provisionally from participating in a call for proposals.

If the action is implemented by an applicant who has affiliated entities, they need to comply as well with the same exclusion criteria as the lead applicant. An applicant may be rejected from an award procedure if any of the declarations or information provided as a condition for participating in the procedure prove to be false.

The National or Executive Agency may publish on their internet site the following information related to the exclusion and, where applicable, the financial penalty in the cases referred to in points (c) to (h) above:

1. the name of the applicant concerned;
2. the exclusion situation;
3. the duration of the exclusion and/or the amount of the financial penalty.

These exclusion criteria apply to applicants under all Actions of the Erasmus+ Programme. To certify that they are not in one of the situations mentioned above, applicants for an EU grant must provide a declaration on their honour. This declaration of honour constitutes a specific section or an annex of the application form.

In case of proposals submitted on behalf of a consortium, the exclusion criteria described above apply to all participating members involved in the project.

In accordance with Articles 136(1)(e) and 138(1) of the Financial Regulation, financial penalties may

be imposed on a recipient of EU funds with whom a legal commitment has been entered into and who has shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations in the implementation of a legal commitment financed by the EU.

Furthermore, the Commission considers that for the implementation of Actions covered by the Programme Guide, the following entities are or could be in a situation of conflict of interest and therefore are or could be not eligible to participate:

- National Authorities in charge of supervising National Agencies and the implementation of the Erasmus+ Programme in their country cannot apply or participate in any Action managed by National Agencies in any country, but may apply for participation (as applicants or partners) in Actions managed by the Executive Agency or by DG EAC unless that is explicitly excluded for the Action concerned (as indicated in Part B of the Guide);
- National Agencies (sole activity of their legal entity) or National Agencies departments of legal entities dealing with activities outside the remit of National Agencies cannot apply or participate in any Action implemented through this Guide;
- Structures and networks identified or designated in the Erasmus+ Programme or in any Annual Commission Work programme adopted for the implementation of the Erasmus+ Programme for specifically receiving a financial contribution from the Commission under the implementation of the Erasmus Programme+, which are hosted by the legal entity that also hosts the National Agency, cannot apply or participate in any Action managed by Erasmus+ National Agencies in any country, but may apply for participation (as applicants or partners) in Actions managed by the Executive Agency or by DG EAC unless that is explicitly excluded for the Action concerned (as indicated in Part B of the Guide); they should be able to demonstrate, before being awarded a grant or a contract, that they are not in a conflict of interest either because precautionary measures are taken by them or because their internal organisation is such that there is a clear separation of interests. Furthermore, costs and revenues of each action or activity for which the EU funds are awarded must be identified. The decision for admitting there is sufficient assurance they are not in an actual conflict of interest is taken by the Executive Agency or by DG EAC, under their own responsibility and accountability, to which they apply;
- Legal entities hosting the Erasmus+ National Agencies but dealing with other activities inside or outside the remit of the Erasmus+ Programme, as well as entities affiliated to these legal entities, cannot apply or participate in any Action managed by National Agencies in any country, but may in principle apply for participation in Actions managed by the Executive Agency or DG EAC unless that is explicitly excluded for the Action concerned (as indicated in Part B of the Guide). However, they have to demonstrate, before being awarded a grant or a contract, that they are not in a conflict of interest either because precautionary measures are taken by them or because their internal organisation is such that there is a clear separation of interests (e.g. a minimum separation of accounts, separation of reporting and decision making lines, measures to prevent access to privileged information). Furthermore, costs and revenues of each action or activity for which the EU funds are awarded must be identified. The decision for admitting there is sufficient assurance they are not in an actual conflict of interest is taken by the Institution, under their own responsibility and accountability, to which they apply.

## **Selection criteria**

Through the selection criteria, the National or Executive Agency assesses the applicant's financial and operational capacity to complete the proposed project.

## Financial capacity

Financial capacity means that the applicant has stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain its activity throughout the period during which the project is being carried out or the year for which the grant is awarded and to participate in its funding.

The verification of the financial capacity does not apply to:

- public bodies, including Member States organisations<sup>10</sup> ;
- international organisations;
- if the individual requested grant amount is not more than EUR 60 000.

In case of EU grant requests **not exceeding 60 000 EUR** and submitted by other types of entities than those mentioned above, applicants must provide a declaration of honour certifying that they have the financial capacity to implement the project. This declaration of honour constitutes a specific section of the application form.

In case of EU grant requests **exceeding 60 000 EUR** and submitted by other types of entities than those mentioned above, the applicant must submit, in addition to the declaration of honour, the following documents through the Funding & tender opportunities portal / Organisation Registration System:

- The applicant's profit and loss account;
- The balance sheet for the last financial year for which accounts were closed.
- Other documents, if requested.

For the actions managed by the Executive Agency, for more information, see "Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment":

[https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/rules-lev-lear-fca\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/rules-lev-lear-fca_en.pdf)

Where the application concerns action grants for a project for which the amount exceeds 750 000 EUR, in addition to the above, an audit report produced by an approved external auditor may be requested. That report shall certify the accounts for the last financial year available.

For entities which cannot provide the above documents because they are newly created, a estimated financial data/financial declaration or an insurance declaration stating the applicant's financial risks may replace the above documents.

Applicants must upload these documents in the Funding & tender opportunities portal / Organisation Registration System either at the time of their registration (see section "Step1: Register the organisation" above) or when contacted by the EU validation services requesting the applicant to provide the necessary supporting documents. In case of centralised actions, this request will be sent via the messaging system embedded in the respective system.

In case of proposals submitted on behalf of a consortium of partners, should the National Agency or the Executive Agency have doubts on the financial capacity of the consortium, it should carry out a risk-assessment based on which the same documents as indicated above may be requested from all the participating organisations in the consortium. This is applicable regardless the granted amount.

If, following the analysis of these documents, the National or Executive Agency conclude that the required financial capacity is weak, then they may:

- request further information
- require an enhanced financial responsibility regime, i.e. joint and several responsibility for all co-beneficiaries or joint and several liability of affiliated entities
- decide to give pre-financing paid in instalments
- decide to give (one or more) pre-financing covered by a bank guarantee or
- decide not to give pre-financing

If the financial capacity is considered insufficient the corresponding proposal shall be rejected.

### **Operational capacity**

Operational capacity means that the applicant has the necessary professional competencies and qualifications to carry out the proposed project. Applicants must have the **know-how, qualifications and resources** to successfully implement the projects and contribute their share (including sufficient experience in projects of comparable size and nature). Public bodies, Member State organisations and international organisations are exempted from the operational capacity check.

### **For applications submitted to National Agencies:**

Applicants must provide a declaration of honour certifying that they have the operational capacity to implement the project. In addition, if required in the application form and if the grant exceeds 60 000 EUR, applicants may be asked to submit the CVs of the key persons involved in the project to demonstrate their relevant professional experience or other supporting documents such as:

- A list of relevant publications of the main team;
- An exhaustive list of previous projects and activities performed and connected to the policy field or to this specific action.

In addition, applicants for accreditation in the fields of adult education, vocational education and training, school education and youth must have at least two years of experience implementing activities making them eligible as applicants for the accreditation. Experience preceding mergers or similar structural changes of public entities (e.g. schools or education centres) will be taken into account as relevant experience in the meaning of this clause.

For mobility consortium coordinators: the applicant organisation must have the ability to coordinate the consortium according to the proposed Erasmus Plan, the purpose of the consortium, planned allocation of tasks, and Erasmus quality standards (presented on the Europa website: <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/sites/erasmusplus2/files/eac-a02-2020-quality-standards.pdf>).

The above conditions will be verified based on the application (including information about the applicant's past participation in the 2014-2020 Erasmus+ programme) and the documents submitted in the Organisation Registration System. Applicants that do not complete the information requested in the application form may be disqualified on this basis.

### **For applications submitted to the Executive Agency:**

The operational capacity will be assessed in parallel to the 'Quality' award criterion, on the basis of the competence and experience of the applicants and their project teams, including operational resources (human, technical and other).

The applicants are considered to have sufficient operational capacity when the requirements

referring to the operational capacity set in the call for proposals are met. Applicants will have to show their capacity via the following information in the Application Form (Part B):

- general profiles (qualifications and experiences) of the staff responsible for managing and implementing the project
- description of the consortium participants
- list of EU-funded projects for the last 4 years.

The National Agency or the Executive Agency may ask for additional supporting documents to verify the information included in the application.

## **Award criteria**

The award criteria allow the National or Executive Agency to evaluate the quality of the project proposals submitted in the framework of the Erasmus+ Programme.

Proposals that pass the individual thresholds and the overall quality threshold will be considered for funding, within the limits of the available call budget. The rest of proposals will be unsuccessful.

The full set of award criteria applying to each of the Actions implemented through the Erasmus+ Programme Guide are described in Part B of the Guide.

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**1** Directive (EU) 2017/1371 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2017 on the fight against fraud to the Union's financial interests by means of criminal law (OJ L 198, 28.7.2017, p. 29).

**2** OJ C 316, 27.11.1995, p. 48.

**3** OJ C 195, 25.6.1997, p. 1.

**4** Council Framework Decision 2003/568/JHA of 22 July 2003 on combating corruption in the private sector (OJ L 192, 31.7.2003, p. 54).

**5** Council Framework Decision 2008/841/JHA of 24 October 2008 on the fight against organised crime (OJ L 300, 11.11.2008, p. 42).

**6** Directive (EU) 2015/849 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2015 on the prevention of the use of the financial system for the purposes of money laundering or terrorist financing, amending Regulation (EU) No 648/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council, and repealing Directive 2005/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Commission Directive 2006/70/EC (OJ L 141, 5.6.2015, p. 73).

**7** Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA of 13 June 2002 on combating terrorism (OJ L 164, 22.6.2002, p.3).

**8** Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2011 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/629/JHA (OJ L 101, 15.4.2011, p. 1).

**9** Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2988/95 of 18 December 1995 on the protection of the European Communities financial interests (OJ L 312, 23.12.1995, p. 1).

**10** Including schools, higher education institutions and organisations in the fields of education, training, youth and sport that have received over 50 % of their annual revenue from public sources over the last two years shall be considered as having the necessary financial, professional and administrative capacity to carry out activities under the Programme.