

Cooperation partnerships

The primary goal of Cooperation Partnerships is to allow organisations to increase the quality and relevance of their activities, to develop and reinforce their networks of partners, to increase their capacity to operate jointly at transnational level, boosting internationalisation of their activities and through exchanging or developing new practices and methods as well as sharing and confronting ideas. They aim to support the development, transfer and/or implementation of innovative practices as well as the implementation of joint initiatives promoting cooperation, peer learning and exchanges of experience at European level. Results should be re-usable, transferable, up-scalable and, if possible, have a strong transdisciplinary dimension. Selected projects will be expected to share the results of their activities at local, regional, national level and transnational level.

Cooperation Partnerships are anchored to the priorities and policy frameworks of each Erasmus+ sector, both at European and national level, while aiming at producing incentives for cross-sectoral and horizontal cooperation in thematic areas.

Depending on the field of the project proposed or on the type of applicant, Cooperation Partnerships are managed either by the National Agencies or by the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). For more information in this respect, please refer to the section “where to apply” under the **eligibility criteria**.

Objectives of the Action

Cooperation Partnerships aim at:

- Increasing quality in the work, activities and practices of organisations and institutions involved, opening up to new actors, not naturally included within one sector;
- Building capacity of organisations to work transnationally and across sectors;
- Addressing common needs and priorities in the fields of education, training, youth and sport;
- Enabling transformation and change (at individual, organisational or sectoral level), leading to improvements and new approaches, in proportion to the context of each organisation.

Which are the criteria to be met to apply for a cooperation partnership?

In order to be eligible for an Erasmus grant, project proposals for Cooperation Partnerships must comply with the following criteria:

Eligibility criteria

Who can apply?

Any participating organisation 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.

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

Any public or private organisation, established in an EU Member State or third country associated to the Programme or in any third country not associated to the Programme of the world (see section “Eligible Countries” in Part A of this Guide) can participate in a Cooperation Partnership¹ .

Exception: organisations from Belarus (Region 2) are not eligible to participate in this action.

Organisations established in EU Member States and third countries associated to the Programme can either participate as the coordinator of the project or as a partner organisation.

Organisations in third countries not associated to the Programme cannot participate as project coordinators.

Irrespective of the field impacted by the project, Cooperation Partnerships are open to any type of organisation active in any field of education, training, youth, sport or other socio-economic sectors as well as to organisations carrying out activities that are transversal to different fields (e.g. local, regional and national authorities, recognition and validation centres, chambers of commerce, trade organisations, guidance centres, cultural and sport organisations).

Depending on the priority and the objectives addressed by the project, Cooperation Partnerships should involve the most appropriate and diverse range of partners in order to benefit from their different experiences, profiles and specific expertise and to produce relevant and high quality project results.

Participation of associated partner organisations

In addition to the organisations formally participating in the project (the coordinator and partner organisations), Cooperation Partnerships may also involve other partners from the public or private sector that contribute to the implementation of specific project tasks/activities or support the promotion and sustainability of the project.

Within an Erasmus+ project, these partners will be called “**associated partners**”. For eligibility and contractual management aspects they are not considered to be project partners, and they do not receive any funding from the Programme as part of the project. However, in order to understand their role within the partnership and have a global picture about the proposal, their involvement in the project and in the different activities needs to be clearly described.

Number and profile of participating organisations

A Cooperation Partnership is a transnational project and involves minimum three organisations from three different EU Member States and third countries associated to the Programme.

There is no maximum number of participating organisations in one partnership.

All participating organisations must be identified at the time of applying for a grant.

As a general rule, Cooperation Partnerships target the cooperation between organisations established in EU Member States and third countries associated to the Programme.

However, organisations from third countries not associated to the Programme can be involved as partners (not as applicants), if their participation brings an essential added value to the project and as long as the minimum participation from three organisations from three different EU Member

States and third countries associated to the Programme is fulfilled.

Priorities addressed

To be considered for funding, Cooperation Partnerships must address either:

- at least one horizontal priority

and/or

- at least one specific priority relevant to the field of education, training, youth and sport that is mostly impacted.

For projects in the field of education, training and youth managed by the Erasmus+ National Agencies at decentralised level, National Agencies may, among these priorities, give more consideration to those that are particularly relevant in their national context (called "European priorities in the national context").

National Agencies must duly inform potential applicants through their official websites.

For projects in the field of sport only one priority (horizontal or specific) can be addressed.

Venue of the activities

All the activities of a Cooperation Partnership must take place in the countries of the organisations participating in the project, either as full or as associated partners.

In addition, if duly justified in relation to the objectives or implementation of the project:

- Activities can also take place at the seat of an Institution of the European Union², even if in the project there are no participating organisations from the country that hosts the Institution.
- Activities involving sharing and promotion of results can also take place at relevant thematic transnational events/conferences in EU Member States or third countries associated to the Programme or third countries not associated to the Programme.

Duration of project

Between 12 and 36 months.

The duration has to be chosen at application stage, based on the objectives of the project and on the type of activities planned over time.

The duration of a Cooperation Partnership may be extended, upon justified request by the beneficiary and with the agreement of the National or Executive Agency, provided that the total duration does not exceed 36 months. In such a case, the total grant will not change.

Where to apply?

For Partnerships in the fields of education, training and youth submitted by any organisation in these fields, with the exception of European NGOs³:

- To the National Agency of the country in which the applicant organisation is established.

For Partnerships in the field of sport and for Partnerships in the fields of education, training and

youth submitted by European NGOs:

- To the Education, Audiovisual and Cultural Executive Agency, based in Brussels
 - European NGOs - Call ID:
 - ERASMUS-EDU-2022-PCOOP-ENGO
 - ERASMUS-YOUTH-2022-PCOOP-ENGO

For Partnerships in the field of sport:

- To the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), based in Brussels
 - Sport - Call ID: ERASMUS-SPORT-2022-SCP

In all cases, the same consortium of partners can submit only one application and to one Agency only per deadline⁴.

When to apply?

For Partnerships in the fields of education, training and youth submitted by any organisation in these fields, with the exception of European NGOs:

- Applicants have to submit their grant application by **23 March at 12:00:00 (midday Brussels time)** for projects starting between 1 September and 31 December of the same year.

For Partnerships in the field of youth submitted by any organisation in this field, with the exception of European NGOs:

- Applicants have to submit their grant application by **4 October at 12:00:00 (midday Brussels time)** for projects starting between 1 January and 31 August of the following year.

Possible additional deadline:

National Agencies in the field of education and training may organise a second round of applications, for which the rules set out in this Guide will also apply. National Agencies will inform of this possibility via their website.

If a second round is organised applicants have to submit their grant application by **4 October at 12:00:00 (midday Brussels time)** for projects starting between 1 January and 31 August of the following year.

For Partnerships in the fields of education, training and youth submitted by European NGOs:

- Applicants have to submit their grant application by **23 March at 17:00:00 (Brussels time)**, for projects starting from 1st of February of the following year.

For Partnerships in the field of sport:

- Applicants have to submit their grant application by **23 March at 17:00:00 (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

A Cooperation Partnership project consists of four stages, which start even before the project proposal is selected for funding: planning, preparation, implementation and follow-up. Participating organisations and participants involved in the activities should take an active role in all those stages and thus enhancing their learning experience.

- Planning (define the needs, objectives, project and learning outcomes, activity formats, schedule etc.);
- preparation (planning of the activities, development of work programme, practical arrangements, confirmation of the target group(s) of envisaged activities, set up of agreements with partners etc.);
- implementation of activities;
- follow-up (evaluation of the activities and their impact at different levels, sharing and use of the project's results).

Cooperation Partnerships may include the organisation of transnational learning, teaching and training activities of individuals and groups of individuals, in so far as they bring added value in the achievement of the project's objectives. The format, purpose and the type and number of participants in the proposed activities will be described and justified as part of the project application.

Horizontal aspects to be considered when designing your project

In addition to complying with the formal criteria and setting up sustainable cooperation arrangement with all project partners, the following elements can contribute to increasing the impact and qualitative implementation of Cooperation Partnerships throughout the different project phases. Applicants are encouraged to take these opportunities and dimensions into account when designing Cooperation Partnership projects.

Environmental sustainability

Projects should be designed in an eco-friendly way and should incorporate green practices in all its facets. Organisations and participants should have an environmental-friendly approach when designing the project, which will encourage everyone involved in the project to discuss and learn about environmental issues, reflecting about what can be done at different levels and help organisations and participants come up with alternative, greener ways of implementing project activities.

Inclusion and Diversity

The Erasmus+ Programme seeks to promote equal opportunities and access, inclusion and fairness across all its actions. To implement these principles, an Inclusion and Diversity Strategy has been devised to support a better outreach to participants from more diverse backgrounds, in particular those with fewer opportunities facing obstacles to participate in European Projects. Organisations should design accessible and inclusive project activities, taking into account the views of participants with fewer opportunities and involving them in decision making throughout the whole process.

Digital dimension

Virtual cooperation and experimentation with virtual and blended learning opportunities are key to

successful Cooperation Partnerships. In particular, projects in the field of school education and adult education are strongly encouraged to use the eTwinning, the School Education Gateway, eTwinning, or the adult learning platform EPAL to work together before, during and after the project activities. Projects in the field of youth are strongly encouraged to use the European Youth Portal and the European Youth Strategy Platform to work together before, during and after the project activities.

Award criteria

Relevance of the project (maximum score 25 points)

The extent to which:

- the proposal is relevant for objectives and priorities of the Action. In addition the proposal will be considered as highly relevant if:
 - it addresses the priority "inclusion and diversity";
 - In case of projects managed by the Erasmus+ National Agencies at decentralised level: if it addresses one or more "European Priorities in the national context", as announced by the National Agency;
 - In case of projects submitted by ENGOs in the fields of education, training, and youth to the European Education and Culture Executive Agency: the extent to which the applicant runs activities that support the implementation of EU policies in one of these sectors.
- the profile, experience and activities of the participating organisations are relevant for the field of the application;
- the proposal is based on a genuine and adequate needs analysis;
- the proposal is suitable for creating synergies between different fields of education, training, youth and sport or it has potentially a strong impact on one or more of those fields;
- the proposal is innovative;
- The proposal is complementary to other initiatives already carried out by the participating organisations;
- the proposal brings added value at EU level through results that would not be attained by activities carried out in a single country.

Quality of the project design and implementation (maximum score 30 points)

The extent to which:

- the project objectives are clearly defined, realistic and address needs and goals of the participating organisations and the needs of their target groups;
- the proposed methodology is clear, adequate and feasible:
 - the project work plan is clear, complete and effective, including appropriate phases for preparation, implementation and sharing project results;
 - the project is cost-effective and allocates appropriate resources to each activity;
 - the project proposes appropriate quality control, monitoring and evaluation measures to ensure that the project implementation is of high quality, completed in time and on budget;
- the activities are designed in an accessible and inclusive way and are open to people with fewer opportunities.
- the project incorporates the use of digital tools and learning methods to complement their physical activities, and to improve the cooperation between partner organisations.
 - If Erasmus+ online platforms are available in the field(s) of the participating organisations: the extent to which the project makes use of Erasmus+ online platforms (eTwinning, EPAL, School Education Gateway, European Youth Portal, EU Youth

Strategy Platform) as tools for preparation, implementation and follow-up of the project activities.

- The project is designed in an eco-friendly way and incorporates green practices in different project phases

If the project plans training, teaching or learning activities:

- the extent to which these activities are appropriate for the project's objectives and involve the appropriate profile and number of participants;
- the quality of practical arrangements, management and support modalities in learning, teaching and training activities;
- the quality of arrangements for the recognition and validation of participants' learning outcomes, in line with European transparency and recognition tools and principles.

Quality of the partnership and the cooperation arrangements (maximum score 20 points)

The extent to which:

- the project involves an appropriate mix of participating organisations in terms of profile, including grassroots organisations, past experience in the Programme and expertise to successfully complete all project objectives;
- the project involves newcomers and less experienced organisations to the Action;
- the proposed allocation of tasks demonstrates the commitment and active contribution of all participating organisations;
- the proposal includes effective mechanisms for coordination and communication between the participating organisations, as well as with other relevant stakeholders.
- If applicable, the extent to which the involvement of a participating organisation from a third country not associated to the Programme brings an essential added value to the project (if this condition is not fulfilled, the participating organisation from a third country not associated to the Programme will be excluded from the project proposal at assessment stage).

Impact (maximum score 25 points)

The extent to which:

- the project proposal includes concrete and logical steps to integrate the project results in the regular work of participating organisations;
- the project has the potential to positively impact its participants and participating organisations, as well as their wider communities;
- the expected project results have the potential to be used outside the organisations participating in the project during and after the project lifetime, and at local, regional, national or European level;
- the project proposal includes concrete and effective steps to make the results of the project known within the participating organisations, to share the results with other organisations and the public, and to publicly acknowledge the European Union funding;
 - if relevant, the extent to which the proposal describes how the materials, documents and media produced will be made freely available and promoted through open licences, and does not contain disproportionate limitations;
- the project proposal includes concrete and effective steps to ensure the sustainability of the project, its capacity to continue having an impact and producing results after the EU grant has been used up.

To be considered for funding, proposals must score at least 60 points. Furthermore, they must score at least half of the maximum points in each of the categories of award criteria mentioned above (i.e. minimum 12 points⁵ for the categories "relevance of the project" and "impact"; 10 points for the category "quality of the project design and implementation" and 15 points for the category "quality of the partnership and the cooperation arrangements").

In cases where two or more applications have received the same total score (ex aequo cases), priority will be given to highest scores for "relevance of the project" and then "impact".

What are the funding rules?

The proposed funding model consists of a menu of 3 single lump sums, corresponding to the total grant amount for the project: **120 000 EUR, 250 000 EUR and 400 000 EUR**. Applicants will choose between the 3 pre-defined amounts according to the activities they want to undertake and the results they want to achieve.

When planning their projects, the applicant organisations - together with their project partners - will need to choose the single lump sum amount more appropriate to cover the costs of their projects, based on their needs and objectives. If the project is selected for funding, the requested lump sum amount becomes the overall grant amount.

Proposals must describe the activities that applicants commit to carry out with the lump sum amount requested and must satisfy the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

The choice of the lump sum amount to be requested should be based on the applicant's own estimate for the overall cost of the project. Starting from this estimate, applicants must choose the single lump sum amount that suits best their needs while ensuring an efficient use of the funds and the respect of the co-financing principle (i.e. project budgets are expected to be complemented with other funding sources, therefore the expected overall cost of the project shall be higher than the fixed lump sum amount requested).

In case of doubts between two amounts, applicants can: a) reduce the cost of their project, for instance by finding more cost-effective ways to achieve similar results or by adapting the number/scale of the project activities to the budget; b) increase the scale of their project, for instance by aiming to reaching more participants with their activities, increasing the number of activities or producing additional project outputs.

The adequacy of the number, scope and complexity of the proposed project activities to the amount requested, together with their relevance for the project objectives, will be important elements of the quality assessment, in line with the award criteria described above.

Requirements

The description of the project shall include a detailed project methodology with a clear distribution of tasks and the financial arrangements among partners, a detailed timeline with the main deliverables/results, the monitoring and control system and the tools put in place to ensure a timely implementation of the project activities.

The project methodology shall show the analysis leading to the identification of needs, the setting of objectives, the system put in place to monitor the project, a quality assurance mechanism and an evaluation strategy. As part of the evaluation strategy, applicants must identify a set of quantitative and qualitative indicators allowing to assess the contribution of the deliverables/results produced to

the achievement of the project objectives.

The project description shall make a distinction between project management and work packages for implementation. Applicants must split the project activities in “work packages”.

A work package is defined as a set of activities contributing to the achievement of common specific objectives.

The link to specific objectives and deliverables shall be clearly described for each work package. Applicants are recommended to split their projects in a maximum of 5 work packages, including the one on project management. The project management work package is intended to cover the horizontal activities that are necessary for the implementation of the project, such as monitoring, coordination, communication, evaluation and risk management. The portion of the lump sum allocated to project management shall be maximum 20% of the total.

The assessment of these requirements shall follow the principle of proportionality: the higher the amount requested, the more the project methodology will be expected to be accurate and comprehensive.

Subcontracting of services is allowed as long as it does not cover core activities on which the achievement of the objectives of the action directly depends. In such cases, the amount budgeted for subcontracting must be included in the description of the activities covered by the subcontract.

In addition, subcontracting shall be justified by the nature of the action and the amount shall not exceed 20% of the total grant amount.

Payment of the Grant

The condition for the full payment of the grant is the completion of all the activities in line with the quality criteria described in the application. In case one or more activities are not completed, partially completed or assessed as unsatisfactory in the quality assessment, appropriate reductions of the grant amount may be applied at final report stage in cases of poor, partial or late implementation by not accepting single work-packages or activities, or by reducing the overall amount by a flat-rate percentage.

The final report assessment is based on the detailed descriptions of each activity carried out, quantitative and qualitative information showing the level of achievement of the project objectives stated in the application, the quality of project results uploaded in the Erasmus+ Project Results Platform and a self-assessment of the partner organisations.

1 Any higher education institution (HEI) established in a EU Member State or third country associated to the Programme and wanting to participate in a Cooperation Partnership must hold a valid Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE). An ECHE is not required for participating HEIs in third countries not associated to the Programme, but they will have to sign up to its principles.

2 Seats of the Institutions of the European Union are Brussels, Frankfurt, Luxembourg, Strasbourg, and The Hague

3 For a definition of what is considered a European NGO for the purpose of the Erasmus+ Programme, please see “Part D - Glossary” of this Guide.

4 This includes both the Erasmus+ National Agencies and the Education, Audiovisual and Cultural Executive Agency (EACEA), based in Brussels.

5 As decimal points are not applicable in the assessment of this action, the minimum score for these criteria is rounded down to 12 points.