

# Small-scale partnerships

Small-scale Partnerships are designed to widen access to the programme to small-scale actors and individuals who are hard to reach in the fields of school education, adult education, vocational education and training, youth and sport. With lower grant amounts awarded to organisations, shorter duration and simpler administrative requirements compared to the Cooperation Partnerships, this action aims at reaching out to grassroots organisations, less experienced organisations and newcomers to the Programme, reducing entry barriers to the programme for organisations with smaller organisational capacity. This action will also support flexible formats – mixing activities with transnational and national character although with a European dimension – allowing organisations to have more means to reach out to people with fewer opportunities. Small-scale Partnerships can also contribute to the creation and development of transnational networks and to fostering synergies with, and between, local, regional, national and international policies.

## Objectives of the Action

- **Attract and widen access for newcomers, less experienced organisations and small-scale actors to the programme.** These partnerships should act as a first step for organisations into cooperation at European level.
- **Support the inclusion of target groups with fewer opportunities**
- **Support active European citizenship and bring the European dimension to the local level**

In addition, the main objectives of Cooperation Partnerships also apply to Small-scale Partnerships, proportionally to the scope and volume of each project:

- **Increasing quality in the work and practices of the 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, in proportion to the context of each organisation

## Eligibility criteria

### What are the criteria to be met to apply for a small-scale partnership?

Small-scale Partnerships must respect the following criteria in order to be eligible for an Erasmus+ grant:

#### 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<sup>1</sup>, established in an EU Member State or third country associated to the Programme (see section "Eligible Countries" in Part A of this Guide) can participate in a Small-scale Partnership.

Irrespective of the field impacted by the project, Small-scale 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, Small-scale Partnerships should involve the most appropriate and diverse range of partners in order to benefit from their different experiences, profiles and specific expertise.

### **Number and profile of participating organisations**

A Small-scale Partnership is transnational and involves minimum two organisations from two 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.

### **Priorities addressed**

To be considered for funding, Small-scale 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 fields of vocational education and training, school education, adult education 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(s) of the activities**

All the activities of a Small-scale Partnership must take place in the countries of the organisations participating in the project.

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 Union<sup>2</sup>, even if in the project there are no participating organisations from the country that hosts the Institution.

## Duration of project

Between 6 and 24 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.

In exceptional cases, the duration of a Small-scale Partnership may be extended, upon request of the beneficiary and with the agreement of the National Agency, with up to 6 months. In this case, the total grant will not change. In all cases, projects must end not later than 31 August 2024.

## Where to apply?

### **For Small-scale Partnerships in the fields of vocational education and training, school education, adult education and youth submitted by any organisation in these fields:**

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

### **For Small-scale Partnerships in the field of sport:**

- To the European Education and Culture Executive Agency, based in Brussels.

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In both cases, the same consortium of partners can submit only one application and to one Agency per deadline<sup>3</sup>.

## When to apply?

### **For Small-scale Partnerships in the fields of vocational education and training, school education, adult education and youth submitted by any organisation in these fields:**

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.
- **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 for Small scale Partnerships in the field of youth:**

National Agencies may organise an additional round for applications for projects in the field of youth, for which the rules set out in this Guide will also apply. National Agencies will inform of this possibility via their website.

If the additional round is organised, applicants have to submit their grant application by **4 May at 12:00:00 (midday Brussels time)**, for projects starting between 1 August and 31 December of the same year.

### **For Small-scale Partnerships in the field of sport:**

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

# Setting up a project

A Small-scale 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 enhancing thus 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).

Small-scale 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.

For Small-scale Partnerships in the field of sport, it is recommended to include in the proposals at least one local or regional sport club.

## **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. Applicants are encouraged to take these opportunities and dimensions into account when designing Small-scale Partnerships 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 Small-scale Partnerships. In particular, projects in the field of school education and adult education are strongly encouraged to use the School Education Gateway, eTwinning and Adult learning platform (EPALE) 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 30 points)**

The extent to which:

- the project proposal is relevant to the objectives and the 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;
- the profile, experience and activities of the participating organisations are relevant for the field of the application;
- the proposal brings added value at EU level by building capacity of organisations to engage in cross-border cooperation and networking.

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

The extent to which:

- the project objectives are clearly defined, realistic and address the needs and goals of the participating organisations and the needs of their target groups;
- the activities are designed in an accessible and inclusive way and are open to people with fewer opportunities.
- 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 incorporates the use of digital tools and learning methods to complement their physical activities, and to improve the cooperation with partner organisations
  - If applicable: the extent to which the project makes use of Erasmus+ online platforms (School Education Gateway, eTwinning, EPALÉ, 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.

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

The extent to which:

- the project involves an appropriate mix of participating organisations in terms of profile.;

- 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;

### **Impact (maximum score 20 points)**

The extent to which:

- the project proposal includes concrete and logical steps to integrate the project results in the regular work of participating organisation;
- the project has the potential to positively impact its participants and participating organisations, as well as the wider community;
- the project proposal includes an appropriate way to evaluate the project outcomes;
- 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.

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

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 two possible lump sums, corresponding to the total grant amount for the project. Applicants will choose between the two pre-defined amounts according to the activities they want to undertake and the results they want to achieve:

### **Single lump sum amounts:**

- 30 000 EUR
- 60 000 EUR

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 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**

Considering that small-scale partnerships are an instrument for inclusion and access of newcomers and less experienced organisations to the programme, the level of information required to apply for a grant under this action will be simple, while ensuring compliance with EU Financial Regulation rules. Therefore, the project description shall include:

- Objectives
- Proposed activities
- Expected results

Objectives, activities and intended results must be clearly linked to each other and presented in a coherent way. Applications shall also include a general project timeline with the expected date for completion of the main activities.

Applicants should provide sufficient information on the budget plan so that evaluators can assess the appropriateness of each activity, as well as the coherence of each activity with the other ones.

The **project budget** must list the planned project activities and indicate the portion of the grant allocated to each activity.

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 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, 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.

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**1** For the purpose of this Action, informal groups of young people are not to be considered as an organisation, and are therefore not eligible to participate (neither as applicants nor as partners).

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

**3** This includes both the Erasmus+ National Agencies and the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), based in Brussels.