Guidelines for Applicants

Call for proposals EACEA/38/2019

Key Action 3: Support for policy reform
Initiatives for policy innovation

European Policy Experimentations
in the fields of Education and Training led by high-level public authorities
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1. INTRODUCTION – BACKGROUND

European policy experimentations under Erasmus+ Key Action 3 (Support for policy reform) - Initiatives for policy innovation are transnational cooperation projects supporting the implementation of the European Union policy agendas on Education and Training, including sector-specific agendas such as the Bologna and Copenhagen processes.

European policy experimentations involve mutual learning, exchanges of experience and good practice, evidence building and cooperation among European countries, which are essential elements of the Strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET2020)². They are therefore a highly relevant tool to support the implementation of the strategic priorities agreed in this context. Proposals under the present call should therefore demonstrate appropriate links with the work carried out under this framework (such as Council Conclusions and Recommendations, Commission Communications and Staff Working Documents, policy handbooks and guidelines, quality frameworks and tools, collections of good practice, etc.). Where relevant, applicants are strongly encouraged to anchor their proposals to the work carried out in Working Groups under ET 2020, explaining how the proposal relates to such work. Proposals should be consistent with the broader policy agenda at EU level³.

Where appropriate, proposals should also refer to work carried out under EU programmes and funds such as the Erasmus+, Lifelong Learning and Youth in Action programmes, the 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7) and Horizon 2020, Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), the European Fund for Strategic Investment, etc., as well as by international organisations such as the Council of Europe or the OECD.

By combining strong institutional leadership, sound evidence and a clear European dimension, European policy experimentations pursue sustainable systemic improvement and innovation. They therefore need to be placed in a well-defined and consistent policy perspective, under the leadership of public authorities at the highest institutional level (Ministry or equivalent, hereafter referred to as "the responsible public authorities").

The submission and selection of proposals is divided in two stages: pre-proposal stage and full proposal stage (see section 3).

The management of this call is delegated by the European Commission to the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, hereinafter referred to as "the Agency".

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¹ Regulation 1288/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing 'Erasmus+': the Union Programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport, in particular Articles 9 and 15 - Support for policy reform - constitutes the legal basis for the present call.
POLICY CONTEXT

Supporting evidence-informed policy in education and training

The European Union pursues an ambitious political, social and economic agenda which involves promoting effective reforms and efficient investment to best meet the needs of countries and stakeholders. In particular, the European Commission’s Agenda for Jobs, Growth, Fairness and Democratic Change\(^4\) addresses long-term political and socio-economic challenges such as economic recovery, migratory pressures, transformations linked to technological development and global competition or demographic ageing, as well as new emerging challenges such as terrorism or threats to the European Union’s fundamental values, which increase the need for the Union to become more resilient.

Education and training play a key role in enhancing personal, cognitive and social development, laying the foundations for tolerant and inclusive societies and providing skills for employability. By reaching out to all citizens - in particular to the disadvantaged - education and training policies are crucial to prevent and tackle poverty, inequality and discrimination, to enhance active participation in society, but also to contribute to innovation, productivity, competitiveness, sustainable growth and upward convergence.

The Joint Report\(^5\) of the Council and the Commission on the Implementation of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020) of 2015 introduced six new priorities for European cooperation until 2020 to address the specific challenges that education and training systems are facing in Europe: improving skills for employability, especially for young people; creating open, innovative and digital learning environments, cultivating fundamental values, equality, non-discrimination and active citizenship; supporting educators; ensuring the transparency and recognition of skills and qualifications; ensuring sustainable investment as well as high performance and efficiency.

A number of major initiatives adopted by the European Commission in the fields of education and training support these priorities and are drivers for concrete action:

- A New Skills Agenda for Europe\(^6\) outlining actions to improve the quality and relevance of skills formation, make skills more visible and comparable and improve skills intelligence and information.

- A Communication on Improving and modernising education\(^7\), which emphasises the strategic of importance of education, acknowledges the improvements in education systems achieved in the European Union but also unresolved challenges.

- A Communication and subsequent Council Conclusions on school development and excellent teaching\(^8\) highlighted the need for contemporary approaches to teaching and learning. Based on these documents, as well as those on the establishment of a European Education Area, the mandate of the 2018-2020 ET2020 Working Group on Schools is supporting quality and

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professionalism in the teaching professions, in particular by ensuring attractive careers and by supporting professional development.

- A Digital Education Action Plan\(^9\)
- A Council Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong learning\(^{10}\)

The priorities of the present call are consistent with these initiatives and aim at supporting them.

As relevant and reliable evidence is essential to underpin policy action, experimentation projects in the context of this call should aim at supporting evidence-informed policy by testing theoretical assumptions in real life situations and assessing the potential for promising measures to be implemented, replicated or scaled up.

The steering role of the responsible public authorities in European policy experimentation projects is therefore essential:

- to ensure consistency between the higher political goals – including the priorities agreed at EU level - and the specific objectives of the projects;
- to ensure adequate project follow-up, scalability and sustainability;
- to feed the results back into the policy process at country and EU level.

2. **OBJECTIVES, PRIORITY THEMES AND EXPECTED RESULTS**

2.1 **Objectives**

The objectives of this call are to:

- Promote trans-national cooperation and mutual learning among public authorities at the highest institutional level of the eligible countries in order to foster systemic improvement and innovation in the education and training fields,
- Enhance the collection and analysis of substantive evidence to ensure the successful implementation of innovative measures,
- Facilitate the transferability and scalability of effective innovative measures.

2.2 **Priority themes**

Proposals submitted under the present call should tackle **only one** of the following priority themes.

These themes are exclusive: proposals focusing on other themes will not be considered for funding.

Applicants are free to consider any specific aspect or measure within a priority theme.


\(^{10}\) [https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/council-recommendation-on-key-competences-for-lifelong-learning_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/council-recommendation-on-key-competences-for-lifelong-learning_en)
Lot 1

Priority 1 - Digital education and competences

In an economy and society increasingly mediated by digital technologies, all citizens in Europe need to acquire a wide range of digital skills and competences for life, learning and work. The use of digital technologies is widespread but without a solid grounding in digital literacy, this usage can remain passive, unreflective, and centred on a consumerist approach. This can hinder the benefits and opportunities that digital technologies can bring.

Digital transformation is causing unprecedented changes to our society and economy. User generated content and data and advanced Artificial Intelligence, raise complex questions about human computer interaction and ethics. These trends, moreover, highlight the need for all learners to acquire a deep and critical understanding of digital technologies and the implications for everyday life.

Innovative digital education and learning can play an important role in enhancing digital competences. EU citizens need digital competences and skills or they risk becoming economically and socially excluded. Significant digital skills gaps exist, however, with 43% of EU citizens still with low levels of digital skills and little progress being made over the past few years. Moreover, there is a certain ‘digital skills divide’ in Europe with large differences between countries.

Digital tools and digital competences may support and enhance guaranteeing equal access to quality education and training in remote areas and/or regions having incomplete educational structures, in particular by linking up with other schools, classes, teachers and pupils around common projects that stimulate learning in a creative environment.

There is a need for all citizens to understand and deal critically with digital technology and to develop a wide spectrum of knowledge, skills and attitudes that refer to digital competences, ranging from general digital literacy to the understanding of computing. This priority will tackle the development of digital competences in its wider definition.

Supporting high quality and inclusive computing education

There is a growing recognition worldwide that computer science education is increasingly necessary for economic opportunity and social mobility as well as for participation in society more widely. Computer science and computational thinking can support citizens in developing the skills they need to be creators in the digital economy, not just consumers, and to be active citizens in our technology-driven world.

Across Europe there is a growing awareness of the importance of offering students the opportunity of computing education. There is, however, a huge variety in the ways that computer science/informatics is promoted, experienced and taught throughout Europe. Many recent reforms have led to the introduction of computing or programming from primary school, however,

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11 Digital competence involves the confident, critical and responsible use of, and engagement with, digital technologies for learning, at work, and for participation in society. It includes information and data literacy, communication and collaboration, digital content creation (including programming), safety (including digital well-being and competences related to cybersecurity) and problem solving (European Commission 2018).
Computer Science continues to be an optional subject in several countries/regions in Europe. Moreover, many young people and adults never had the opportunity to develop an understanding of computing and are today at risk of being marginalised or unable to fully grasp the implications of digital transformation.

There are several challenges that education systems currently face when regarding computing education. The experimentation will consider some of these challenges and address them:

- **Recruiting, training and retaining teachers.** There is the need to address teacher shortages in computer science education, to train current teachers (including primary school teachers) or re-train teachers of other disciplines. How to ensure teachers receive training and peer-to-peer support (eg through communities of practice) for their own professional development.

- There is a pressing need for more **pedagogical knowledge** on how to teach and assess computer science, which is a relatively new discipline in school education. How to face the challenge of a rapidly changing body of knowledge and reflect changes and advances in digital technology itself?

- **Inclusive CS education.** When Computer Science is presented as an elective subject, there is a strong risk of having imbalances among students – including socio-economic, gender imbalances as fewer female students choose to opt for computer science as an elective subject. Making computer science compulsory from an early age could potentially close gender and socio-economic gaps.

- **Perceptions of the subject.** There is in addition the challenge of addressing the reputation and perceptions of the subject and encouraging uptake by students. Computer Science as a subject is perceived by some as academically demanding and potentially uninspiring. There is a risk that the subject does not engage or attract students.

- **Partnerships.** The role of non-formal education is an important aspect of computer science education. Currently, many countries have an extensive offer of non-formal computer science education (eg extracurricular activities, weekend clubs). How can formal and non-formal education work in partnership to improve the quality of computer science education. Similarly how can industry support formal education in providing teacher training or other support measure to enhance the quality of computer science education?

The policy experimentation should help decision makers at different levels of education to design programmes and activities that support high-quality computing education from an early age. The overall aim should be to **pilot excellence in computing education** to help develop more specialised digital skills, as a way to empower citizens and improve the pipeline of digital professionals. Activities could, for example, promote the creation of school networks and links with non-formal education and industry. Activities could also cover more than one educational sectors (for instance, projects linking pre-primary and secondary, or formal and informal sectors, or secondary and higher education, or VET and Higher education. Engagement and cooperation with industry partners is also welcomed.

The policy experimentation will build on the tradition of computer science that is strong in several European countries and propose experimental approaches in offering high quality computing education in different phases of education.
**Priority 2 - Teaching and teachers**

Today's complex societal challenges do not only require new subjects to be taught but also ask for innovative and effective pedagogies and effective learning and teaching environments, geared to deliver creative thinking and forward-looking competences. Creative skills and the ability to work in cross-disciplinary teams are vital for the new jobs that will emerge in this digital age.

Governments call for more engaged citizens and a fairer society, in addition to a flourishing economy. Hence the demand for more informed and engaged citizens and better skilled workforces is greater than ever. We should help equip youngsters with the knowledge and competences required in the global society and fast-changing world of work, regardless of their socio-economic background and their age.

The priority will focus on compulsory general education (i.e. from the first year of primary education until the end of post-secondary non-tertiary education for all kind of learners).

A) **School education**

For the School education sector, the focus will be on the issue of improving teachers’ careers, in terms of rethinking career structure and guidance and also of how to empower teachers to better navigate the career system.

Knowing that there is an opportunity to develop and advance during one’s career, as well as the possibility to gain varied experience, is an important factor in helping teachers remain motivated. This motivation includes a feeling of empowerment and autonomy: avoiding a feeling of being isolated or locked into one position, and able to recognise one’s own strengths and/or further develop new competences and enrich one’s professional experience. It also requires the sense of passion for the role of the teacher to be kept alive. Nevertheless, if a career is mainly characterised by becoming “better” at “teaching”, this might not be enough to satisfy all teachers. Wider opportunities might be needed to help satisfy the needs of all teachers and for maintaining a more diverse workforce.

*The project should aim to respond to the following policy challenges:*

- In times of teacher shortages in many Member States, how to create an attractive profession, which is considered to be challenging by young people who stand in front of making their career choice;
- In times of teachers leaving the profession prematurely, how to keep teachers motivated during a longer period of up to 30 years;
- How to avoid that, after a number of years, teachers fall into disillusioned routines (this is essential from the perspective of the quality of pupil learning) or leave the profession concerned about the lack of - or sometimes ‘hidden’ - opportunities or challenges.

Career advancement can be considered an important issue, both in terms of progression through the various levels of a career structure and of progression in terms of experience gained through undertaking additional roles and responsibilities. Such roles could add to the teaching duties, e.g. mentoring, non-classroom pedagogical/ management roles, or through moving through different levels of the education system, e.g. ministry, city council, education agencies, etc.
Strategies for teacher career advancement could explore the following strands, and/or identify other areas of work that could advance the priority:

- career guidance for teachers in order to better take ownership for their career and learning and development needs;
- strategies to develop teachers’ competences, with a focus on leadership, for better managing both their professional learning and their careers;
- ‘secondments’ schemes for teachers into public authorities or other public or private structures.

Important note: The scope of this priority is not limited to education systems with formal career structures for teachers only. Developing different teacher career paths, and helping teachers navigate them successfully as they move along their career, may involve moves in different directions. Some of these career paths may be formalised but that may not be necessary. However, each path ought to offer opportunities for teachers to experience new perspectives, new challenges or new inspiration. This, in turn will demand different forms of leadership to encourage and support teachers along the way.

B) Vocational education and training (VET)

Preparing young people for specific occupations from the outset as well for upgrading skills of the workforces and their retraining are among the countries’ main objectives.

Highly qualified and motivated VET teachers and in-company trainers, including mentors are crucial to ensure that learners of all ages in initial and continuing vocational education and training (IVET and CVET) acquire the right knowledge, skills and competences to enter employment and to develop them throughout their working life. They are key when it comes to putting in place an accessible, attractive, valued and quality assured learning provision.

At the same time, teachers and trainers in VET work in the context of innovation, globalisation, and rapid technological and societal changes that challenge education and training systems across Europe. They can be agents for innovation and quality in VET, yet they can face challenges in adapting. What is needed are teams of skilled staff who have strong pedagogical skills, as well as relevant, in-depth knowledge of specific economic sectors and the cutting-edge technologies that are driving them. Some concrete examples here are the emergence of hybrid professionals, as well as ‘I-coaches, or blended coaches, media coaches’, who can facilitate the deployment of ICT in teaching and learning thus teachers build bridge between ICT and education.

At the same time such teams must deliver basic skills and key competences, which are necessary to develop vocational skills and for lifelong learning.

The policy experimentation will seek to identify, test and transfer approaches related to the policy challenges specified. It could take up in particular issues raised by the ET2020 VET Working Group on teachers and trainers.

They should help decision makers find ways to best mainstream successful practices, the projects should aim to respond to the following policy challenges:
• Supporting staff in VET to further develop their skills in line with their changing role in view of the challenges outlined above.

• Co-creation of knowledge and expertise

• Addressing new tasks and challenges and developing new learning environments and formats

• Developing hybrid professionals, whereby teachers and trainers work both in VET institutions and companies.

Policy experimentation could test pedagogical methods to be introduced as part of initial training or continuing professional development of teachers, trainers and related staff in the field of VET. This might be around the development of their ability to offer and facilitate flexible learning and individualised pathways that embed basic skills and key competences with vocational or technical skills where necessary. It might also explore how professionals will include green skills in their teaching and training. The experimentation could also explore new and innovative adaptations of the EU reference frameworks, DigComp and DigCompEdu.

LOT 2

Priority 3 - Funding mechanisms for upskilling and reskilling, including schemes similar to Individual Learning Accounts

As upskilling and reskilling become a perquisite throughout life, to improve skills, to gain new skills and remain agile and job ready in the face of changing jobs and careers, individuals will have to pursue learning on a regular basis. Current financing of education and training strives to secure adequate funding for initial education at all levels but is not adapted to funding lifelong learning.

The purpose of the Call is to give a small group of Member States the opportunity to test the feasibility of funding mechanisms that would make funds available to adults on an equitable basis, to enable them continue their learning throughout life.

In a typical experiment, a country which has developed such an instrument, for example individual learning accounts, might coach two other countries with varying labour markets and work structures to test how the model could be transferred and adapted to their situation.

The experimentation should cover issues such as:

• Equitable, sustainable cost-sharing arrangements between the State, employers and individuals (whose participation might also be in terms of time)


This report on Teachers and Trainers in WBL suggests that hybrid-models could provide a solution to closing gaps between VET institutions and companies but are associated with many governance and institutional issues (such as wages, pensions, labour agreements).
• Redirecting part of the existing public/private funding sources into a common “purse”

• Possibility left for individuals to add top-ups, including through deployment of targeted financial instruments supporting individual loans, income sharing agreements, etc.

• Links to taxation, state aid and public procurement policies.

Priority 4 - Policy and processes to support the validation of non-formal and informal learning, including through effective guidance

The 2012 Recommendation on validation of non-formal and informal learning has stimulated Member States to take action to provide people with more and better opportunities to validate the skills they develop throughout their life in a variety of settings, from work experience to volunteering. The 208 update of the Inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning has taken stock of the national efforts, showing that progress has been made throughout Europe. However, it has made clear that there remain huge gaps between countries and the majority of people do not have access to opportunities for validation or have access to them but do not have any form of support or incentive – from information to guidance and practical and financial assistance.

Even in countries where validation arrangement are well established, their take-up by people that could benefit from them is often insufficient, because people are not well informed about these opportunities, don’t know what steps to take, or are little motivated because they fail to see the link to formal programmes and qualifications. In fact validation arrangements are usually not integrated in a comprehensive skills strategy implementing a proper lifelong learning approach. This makes them less effective and less attractive for potential beneficiaries.

Delivering on the objectives of the European Education Area by 2025 requires a leap forward in Europe’s higher education so that it can serve a changing society and economy. This will call for a more flexible, competence-, work- and research based higher education.

Higher education in the coming years will need to ensure that students (including mature students) can be in the driving seat to plan their education journey. Continuous or life-long learning will become more an increasing need. Higher education institutions will have to be prepared to offer relevant options for the continuous learner – especially through short learning courses which can be bundled for further degrees and recognised through “micro-credentials”. Authorities can facilitate the development and quality framework for such courses by creating relevant frameworks.

The call would therefore support a grouping of Member States ready to bring their validation policies to the next step and test their integration in a coherent strategic approach to skills development and recognition, coordinated with formal education and training systems, involving business and civil society, and envisaging the related outreach, information and guidance measures.

Policy experimentation in this area could cover issues such as:
• Measures and methods to stimulate participation in validation opportunities, in particular by low qualified people;

• Linking validation of skills, use of micro-credentials (such as badges) and qualification policy;

• Support for the development of flexible learning opportunities and structures in higher education which enable individual approaches for continuous learning

• Developing and piloting frameworks to embed short learning courses leading to “micro-credentials” of 3-5 ECTS at higher education level in European education systems

• Setting up reliable quality assurance processes for flexible learning contents in European perspective

• Mainstreaming skills reviews/profiling/audits in sectoral or regional development policies.

2.3 Expected results

The proposed projects should lead to significant results in the following areas:

• Support to the priorities for policy cooperation at EU level set out in the ET 2020 Framework, as appropriate.

• Improved knowledge and evidence base for reforms with potentially high systemic impact in the sectors concerned in the eligible countries.

• European added value by jointly identifying best practice and lessons on ‘what works’ and ‘what does not work’.

• Scalability and transferability of innovative measures. Scaling up does not necessarily only mean duplicating the tested measures on a larger number of beneficiaries. It should rather be understood as creating the best conditions for making the successfully tested measures part of a policy or a system.

• Sound consistency and complementarity between theory and practice; between EU policies and funding programmes; between European, national and regional measures; between the roles of policy makers, stakeholders and researchers.

Planning and conducting a policy experimentation project

Policy experimentations are based on the collection and evaluation of evidence through large scale field trials relying on robust and widely recognised methodologies. Ideally, such methodologies are expected to provide more representative findings than observation or conceptual analysis.

The attention of the applicants is drawn to the fact that, in the context of this call, policy experimentations are not research projects led by experts and addressing other experts, with the aim of generically advancing knowledge. They are rather “action-research” projects involving
cooperation between researchers, decision-makers and stakeholders in order to try out concrete measures that have the potential to be concretely translated into policy or practice in education and training systems in the short/medium term.

Policy experimentations help to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, potential impact and scalability of innovative policy measures through experimental or semi-experimental approaches. They seek to identify and evaluate a causality link between a measure and a change (or lack of change) that has occurred through that measure, and to determine the logic behind the change (counterfactual analysis). They take place in a controlled environment, through measurable direct interventions and comparisons (e.g. "before/after", or "treated"/"non-treated" groups).

Policy experimentation can be cost-effective, secure stakeholder consensus and a smooth implementation of policy when it is used to test substantial measures at the appropriate stage. In an ex-ante evaluation process involving progressive steps towards implementation, it can be one of the final steps, confirming already robust assumptions and identifying and testing scalable approaches.

In the context of the priority themes of the present call, applicants are encouraged to include - when relevant and appropriate - efficiency evaluations, e.g. based on cost-benefit analysis and cost-effectiveness analysis.

Please read carefully ANNEX to the guidelines, which is integral part of this call for proposals.

It provides more information on how to plan and conduct a European policy experimentation project:


**Project evaluation**

Applicants should distinguish between:

- the evaluation of the project as a whole, basically covering all the aspects of standard project management, and

- the analysis and interpretation of the findings of the field trials (which are only one – albeit essential - element of the project).

Applicants are requested to draw up a project quality assurance plan to evaluate the implementation of the project as a whole, which can take the form of:

- an external evaluation, devolved to a "critical friend" within the partnership ("peer review") or subcontracted to an independent expert, and/or

- a self-evaluation by each partner.

Regarding the analysis and interpretation of the results of the field trials please refer to Annex “Planning and conducting a policy experimentation project” of this call for proposals:

**Project follow-up**

Applicants are requested to describe the type of follow-up they would envisage both in case of conclusive and of inconclusive findings, suggesting different options, where appropriate. They may draw on the following hints for inspiration.

In case of *conclusive* findings (field trials corroborating the testing hypothesis), they should explain how they would concretely use the results for systemic improvement, in particular:

- anticipating and weighing up the advantages and disadvantages that the upscaling of the tested measure would involve for the target groups;
- estimating the resources required for upscaling the measure and mainstreaming it in the system;
- considering various upscaling options, in particular EU funds such as the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) and the European Fund for Strategic Investment (EFSI);
- considering further exploratory work under Erasmus+ or other EU programmes.

*Inconclusive* findings (eg. findings of the field trials disproving the testing hypothesis) should not necessarily be seen as a failure, but as an opportunity to draw lessons for future policy development and further research. The results of inconclusive experimentations should be carefully scrutinized to identify possible causes (insufficient preliminary evidence, methodological flaws, etc.),

**Sustainability of impact**

Applicants should be aware that immediate positive impacts of successful experimentations may be contingent on externalities and may not necessarily persist over time. They are therefore encouraged to consider long-term monitoring of the cohorts that participated in successful experimentations and provide an indication of the strategy for long-term monitoring beyond the end of the project.

3. **INDICATIVE TIMETABLE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Date and time or indicative period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>Publication of the call</td>
<td>December 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b)</td>
<td>Deadline for submitting pre-proposal applications</td>
<td>21 April 2020 at 17:00 (CET/Brussels time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c)</td>
<td>Evaluation period</td>
<td>April - May 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d)</td>
<td>Information to applicants</td>
<td>June 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>(e)</td>
<td>Deadline for submitting full proposal applications</td>
<td>24 September 2020 at 17:00 (CET/Brussels time)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(f)</td>
<td>Evaluation period</td>
<td>October 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(g)</td>
<td>Information to applicants</td>
<td>November 2020</td>
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</table>
Procedure

Proposals will be submitted and evaluated in two stages, involving a pre-proposal (Stage I) and a full proposal (Stage II).

This approach intends to simplify the application process by requesting in the first phase only basic information on the proposal.

➢ Pre-proposal stage:

Pre-proposal applications will contain information on the following:

(a) Relevance of the project (maximum 20 points)
(b) Indicative total budget and requested EU grant

Pre-proposals will be assessed on the basis of the eligibility criteria described in section 6 and the award criterion Relevance of the project (see section 9).

Eligible applicants reaching the minimum threshold of 12 points on the score for the award criterion Relevance of the project will be invited to submit a full proposal and to elaborate further on their proposal.

All applicants having submitted pre-proposals will be notified in written about the pre-selection results and will receive a summary evaluation of their pre-proposal.

➢ Full proposal stage:

Applicants invited to the full proposal stage will be requested to provide information on the following:

1) Remaining three award criteria:
   (a) Quality of the project design and implementation (maximum 30 points)
   (b) Quality of the partnership and cooperation arrangements (maximum 20 points)
   (c) Impact, dissemination, and sustainability (maximum 30 points)

2) Detailed budget

Full proposals will be assessed on the basis of the eligibility criteria (see section 6), exclusion criteria (section 7), selection criteria (section 8), and the three remaining award criteria (section 9).

As a result, those full proposals considered compliant with all the eligibility, exclusion, and selection criteria will be ranked in order of merit according to the total score obtained. The total score for a full proposal will be the total of the scores obtained at the pre-proposal stage and at the full proposal stage (by applying the weighting indicated).
Only eligible full proposals having reached at least the threshold of 60 points on the total score will be considered for EU funding.

All applicants having submitted full proposal applications will be notified in written about the final selection results and receive an evaluation report.

4. BUDGET AVAILABLE

The total budget earmarked for the co-financing of projects under this call is **EUR 14,000,000** and it is divided between Lot 1 and Lot 2 as following:

- Lot 1: EUR 12,000,000
- Lot 2: EUR 2,000,000

The financial contribution from the EU cannot exceed **75%** of the total eligible costs.

The maximum EU grant per project will be EUR **2,000,000**.

The Agency reserves the right not to distribute all the funds available.

5. ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

In order to be admissible, applications must be:

- sent no later than the deadline for submitting applications referred to in section 3;
- submitted in writing (see section 14 of the present guidelines), using the application form (eForm) and electronic submission system available at:
  
  https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/funding_en

  using the Call reference **EACEA/38/2019** and
  - drafted in one of the EU official languages, preferably in English.

Failure to comply with those requirements will lead to rejection of the application.

If you encounter technical issues that are not addressed in the user guide available at:


you may contact the EACEA Helpdesk to request assistance. The contact details and hours of operation are as follows:

Email address: EACEA-HELPDESK@ec.europa.eu
Telephone: +32 229 90705

The EACEA Helpdesk service is available from 08:30 to 17:30 Monday to Thursday and from 08:30 to 17:00 on Fridays (all times are Brussels time). The service is not available on Belgian public holidays or on official Commission holidays.

When contacting the Helpdesk, please have the following information to hand or include it in your email message:
Your telephone number and your email address; The programme and funding opportunity you are applying under; The following details for the computer that you are using to complete and submit your application: The version of Adobe Reader (or Adobe Acrobat) that is installed; The internet browser and version you are using; The operating system and version installed on the computer; Details of any error messages / error codes that you encountered; Screenshots of the problem (if contacting the Helpdesk by email)
6. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applications which comply with the following criteria will be the subject of an in-depth evaluation. The eligibility criteria will be assessed at the pre-proposal stage and at the full proposal stage on the basis of the information provided in the application form at both stages.

6.1 Eligible applicants

Applicants considered eligible to respond to this call are:

a) Public authorities (Ministry or equivalent) responsible for education and training at the highest level in the relevant context (national or decentralised). Responsible public authorities for sectors other than education and training (e.g. employment, youth, finance, social affairs, home affairs, justice, health, etc.) are considered eligible as long as they demonstrate that they have a specific competence in the area in which the experimentation is to be carried out.

b) Public or private organisations active in the fields of education or training or other relevant fields.

c) Public or private organisations or institutions carrying out cross-sector activities linked to education and training in other socio-economic sectors (e.g. NGOs, information or guidance services, public authorities, agencies or services responsible for: education, training, youth, employment, social affairs, home affairs, justice, quality assurance, recognition and/or validation; career guidance, chambers of commerce, business and social partners, trade organisations, civil society, cultural or sport organisations, evaluation or research entities, media etc.).

National Agencies or other structures and networks of the Erasmus+ Programme, receiving a direct grant from the Commission in accordance with the legal basis of the Programme are not eligible to participate. Nevertheless, the legal entities hosting the Erasmus+ National Agencies or the structures and networks mentioned above are considered eligible applicants. However, they have to demonstrate, before being awarded a grant, 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 project or activity for which the EU funds are awarded must be identified.

Entities affiliated to the applicants and natural persons are not eligible to receive funding under this Call for proposals.

Only applications from legal entities established in the following programme countries are eligible:
- the 28 Member States of the European Union,
- the EFTA/EEA countries: Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway,
- EU candidate countries: North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey.

For British applicants: Please be aware that eligibility criteria must be complied with for the entire duration of the grant. If the United Kingdom withdraws from the EU during the grant
period without concluding an agreement with the EU ensuring in particular that British applicants continue to be eligible, you will cease to receive EU funding (while continuing, where possible, to participate) or be required to leave the project on the basis of Article II.17 of the grant agreement.

Proposals from applicants in candidate countries may be selected, if on the date of award, agreements have entered into force setting out the arrangements for the participation of those countries in the programme.

**Partnership composition requirement**

The minimum partnership composition requirement for this call is **4 entities** representing **3 different programme countries**. Specifically:

- At least **three public authorities** (Ministries or equivalent) each from a different Programme country, while at least **one** of the three public authorities must be from a Member State of the European Union and

- At least **one** public or private entity with expertise in analysis and policy impact evaluation (**"researcher"**). Such entity shall be responsible for the methodological aspects and the field trial protocols. The partnership can involve more than one such entity, as long as the work is coordinated and consistent.

**Coordination requirement**

A project proposal can only be **coordinated and submitted**, on behalf of all applicants, by one of the following:

- A public authority (Ministry or equivalent) as described under section 6.1.a);

- A public or private entity delegated by a public authority. Delegated entities must have an explicit endorsement in writing (a delegation letter) by a public authority to submit and coordinate the project proposal on their behalf. Only delegated entities that are in a position to demonstrate their existence as a legal person for at least 3 years on the date of the deadline for submission of pre-proposals referred to in section 3 are considered eligible as "coordinator" for the purpose of this call.

Applications must be submitted by the legal representative of the coordinator on behalf of all applicants.

**Supporting documents**

In order to assess the applicants' eligibility, the following supporting documents are requested - via the **Funding and Tender Opportunities Portal (FTOP)**:

- **private entity**: extract from the official journal, copy of articles of association, extract of trade or association register, certificate of liability to VAT (if, as in

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14 "Date main registration" in the legal entity form: [http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/legal_entities/legal_entities_en.cfm#en](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/legal_entities/legal_entities_en.cfm#en)
certain countries, the trade register number and VAT number are identical, only one of these documents is required);

- **public entity**: copy of the resolution, decision or other official document establishing the public-law entity;

- **entities without legal personality**: documents providing evidence that their representative(s) have the capacity to undertake legal obligations on their behalf.

- **annexed to the application**:
  - **consortium**: in addition to the supporting documents referring to their legal status, consortium members (partners) will submit mandate letters confirming their participation to the project,
  - **delegated entity**: if a public authority/Ministry delegates its coordination role in the project to a private or public entity, the public authority/Ministry must submit a delegation letter endorsing the private or public entity to submit and coordinate the project on their (Ministry) behalf.

**Associated partners**: Additionally, the project may benefit from the involvement of associated partners. These organisations can contribute to the implementation of specific tasks/activities and/or support the dissemination and sustainability of the project. They will not benefit financially from the EU grant and associated partners can be established in either Programme or partner countries. For that purpose, applicants shall identify such associated partners in the 'Detailed Project Description' which is part of the Application Package.

### 6.2 Eligible activities

Eligible activities must be in line with Annex to the guidelines for applicants “Planning and conducting a policy experimentation project”: [https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/funding_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/funding_en) - Call reference EACEA/38/2019).

The field trials must take place **at least in three countries** whose public authorities/Ministries are involved in the project.

Only activities taking place in the Programme countries (see section 6.1) will be considered eligible for funding. Any costs relating to activities undertaken outside these countries or by organisations that are not registered in the Programme countries are not eligible unless they are necessary for the completion of the project and duly explained and justified in the application form. Any amendment to the activities that involves other countries than the Programme countries must have the prior specific authorization from the Executive Agency.

**Implementation period**

- Activities must start between 1 January 2021 and 28 February 2021.

- Project's duration must be between 24 and 36 months.
7. **EXCLUSION CRITERIA**

The exclusion criteria will be assessed at full-proposal stage.

7.1 **Exclusion**

The authorising officer shall exclude an applicant from participating in call for proposals procedures where:

(a) 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 EU or national laws or regulations;

(b) it has been established by a final judgment or a final administrative decision 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;

(c) it has been established by a final judgment or a final administrative decision 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 intent or gross negligence, including, in particular, any of the following:
   
   (i) 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 a contract, a grant agreement or a grant decision;
   
   (ii) entering into agreement with other applicants with the aim of distorting competition;
   
   (iii) violating intellectual property rights;
   
   (iv) attempting to influence the decision-making process of the Agency during the award procedure;
   
   (v) attempting to obtain confidential information that may confer upon it undue advantages in the award procedure;

(d) it has been established by a final judgment that the applicant is guilty of any of the following:
   
   
   (ii) corruption, as defined in Article 4(2) of Directive (EU) 2017/1371 or 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, or conduct referred to in Article 2(1) of Council Framework Decision 2003/568/JHA, or corruption as defined in the applicable law;
   
   (iii) conduct related to a criminal organisation, as referred to in Article 2 of Council Framework Decision 2008/841/JHA;
   
   (iv) 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;
(v) terrorist offences or offences linked to terrorist activities, as defined in Articles 1 and 3 of Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA, respectively, or inciting, aiding, abetting or attempting to commit such offences, as referred to in Article 4 of that Decision;

(vi) 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;

(e) the applicant has shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations in the performance of a contract, a grant agreement or a grant decision financed by the Union's budget, which has led to its early termination or to the application of liquidated damages or other contractual penalties, or which has been discovered following checks, audits or investigations by an authorising officer, OLAF or the Court of Auditors;

(f) it has been established by a final judgment or final administrative decision that the applicant has committed an irregularity within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2988/95;

(g) It has been established by a final judgement or final administrative decision that the applicant has created an entity in a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or any other legal obligations of mandatory application in the jurisdiction of its registered office, central administration or principal place of business;

(h) it has been established by a final judgement or final administrative decision that an entity has been created with the intent referred to in point (g);

(i) for the situations referred to in points (c) to (h) above, the applicant is subject to:

   (i) facts established in the context of audits or investigations carried out by European Public Prosecutor's Office after its establishment, the Court of Auditors, the European Anti-Fraud Office or the internal auditor, or any other check, audit or control performed under the responsibility of an authorising officer of an EU institution, of a European office or of an EU agency or body;

   (ii) non-final judgments or 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;

   (iii) facts referred to in decisions of persons or entities being entrusted with EU budget implementation tasks;

   (iv) information transmitted by Member States implementing Union funds;

   (v) 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; or

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

7.2 Remedial measures

If an applicant declares one of the situations of exclusion listed above (see section 7.1), it must indicate the measures it has taken to remedy the exclusion situation, thus demonstrating its reliability. This may include e.g. technical, organisational and personnel measures to correct the conduct and prevent further occurrence, compensation of damage or payment of fines or of any taxes or social security contributions. The relevant documentary evidence which illustrates the remedial measures taken must be provided in annex to the declaration on honour. This does not
apply for situations referred in point (d) of section 7.1.

7.3 Rejection from the call for proposals

The authorising officer shall not award a grant to an applicant who:

(a) is in an exclusion situation established in accordance with section 7.1; or

(b) has misrepresented the information required as a condition for participating in the procedure or has failed to supply that information; or

(c) was previously involved in the preparation of documents used in the award procedure where this entails a breach of the principle of equal treatment, including distortion of competition, that cannot be remedied otherwise.

Administrative sanctions (exclusion) may be imposed on applicants if any of the declarations or information provided as a condition for participating in this procedure prove to be false.

7.4 Supporting documents

Applicants must provide a declaration on their honour certifying that they are not in one of the situations referred to in Articles 136(1) and 141 FR, by filling in the relevant form attached to the application form accompanying the call for proposals.

This obligation may be fulfilled by the coordinator of a consortium by signing a declaration on behalf of all applicants. This declaration is part of the Application Package (see Section 14.3).

8. SELECTION CRITERIA

The selection criteria will be assessed at the full-proposal stage.

Applicants must submit a declaration on their honour, completed and signed, attesting to their financial and operational capacity to complete the proposed activities.

8.1 Financial capacity

Applicants must have stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain their activity throughout the duration of the grant and to participate in its funding. The applicants' financial capacity will be assessed on the basis of the following supporting documents that will be requested from selected applicants by Research Executive Agency Validation Services:

a) Grants > EUR 60.000 and ≤ EUR 750.000
   - a declaration on their honour, and
   - the profit and loss account as well as the balance sheet for the last 2 financial years for which the accounts were closed;
   - for newly created entities: the business plan might replace the above documents;

b) Grants for an action > EUR 750.000
   - the information and supporting documents mentioned in point a) and
- **an audit report** produced by an approved external auditor certifying the accounts for the last 2 financial year available, where such an audit report is available or whenever a statutory report is required by law.

If the audit report is not available AND a statutory report is not required by law, a self-declaration signed by the applicant's authorised representative certifying the validity of its accounts for the last 2 financial years available must be provided.

In the event of an application grouping several applicants (consortium), the above thresholds apply to each applicant.

On the basis of the documents submitted, if the Responsible Authorising Officer (hereinafter "RAO") considers that financial capacity is weak, s/he may:

- request further information;
- decide not to give pre-financing;
- decide to give pre-financing paid in instalments;
- decide to give pre-financing covered by a bank guarantee (see section 11.4 below);
- where applicable, require the joint and several financial liability of all the co-beneficiaries.

If the RAO considered that the financial capacity is insufficient s/he will reject the application.

**The verification of financial capacity shall not apply to public bodies, or to international organisations.**

For the purpose of this call, public bodies, as well as schools, higher education institutions and organisations in the fields of education and training, youth or 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 Call for proposals. They shall not be required to present further documentation to demonstrate that capacity. Such organisations are required to declare (at the stage of the notification of the selection results) that their organisation complies with the above-mentioned definition of public body. The Agency reserves the right to request documentation to prove the veracity of this declaration.

### 8.2 Operational capacity

Applicants must have the professional competencies as well as appropriate qualifications necessary to complete the proposed action. In this respect, applicants have to submit a declaration on their honour, and the following supporting documents:

- a description of the profile of the people primarily responsible for managing and implementing the operation (accompanied, where appropriate, by a list of relevant publications) within each partner organisation showing all their relevant professional experience;
- an exhausted list of past or current projects and activities connected to the selected
priority theme of the call implemented by the applicants in the three last years and a short description of the projects’ impact and achievements.

9. AWARD CRITERIA

Eligible proposals will be assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE I (Pre-proposal)</th>
<th>Max. Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criteria</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Relevance of the project</td>
<td>20 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE II (Full proposal)</th>
<th>Max. Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criteria</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Quality of the project design and implementation</td>
<td>30 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Quality of the partnership and the cooperation arrangements</td>
<td>20 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Impact, dissemination, and sustainability</td>
<td>30 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

STAGE I: Pre-proposal

1) Relevance of the project (20 points)

- The need to be addressed by the proposed policy experimentation is relevant to European and country-specific objectives and priorities in education and training, and to the objectives and priority themes of the call.
- The measure to be tested is consistent with European and country-specific objectives and priorities in education and training, is suitable to the target groups and stakeholders involved, and innovative.
- The target groups addressed by the measure are clearly identified and the benefits they are expected to enjoy through the measure to be tested are clearly described.
- The project has a clear European added value based on transnational cooperation which allows achieving results that would not be achieved at country level alone, and there is potential for transferring results to countries not involved in the project or other sectors.
- The experimentation methodology is consistent with the objectives of the measure to be tested and with the characteristics of the target groups.
- The leading role of the responsible public authorities in the project is adequately described. The way in which the expertise available in the partnership will contribute to the project is adequately described.
- The envisaged outcomes are relevant to the objectives of the call and have the potential to lead to systemic change.

STAGE II: Full proposal

2) Quality of the project design and implementation (30 points):

- The potential for effective results of the measure to be tested relies on valid, credible
and convincing evidence.

- The proposed experimentation methodology is based on a sound theoretical approach and is defined in a clear and structured way; its rationale and implications - including success/failure criteria - are explicitly described.
- The experimentation methodology is consistent with the measure to be tested; it is suitable for the target groups and in particular for the potential participants in the field trials.
- The experimentation protocol is clear, comprehensive and rigorous.
- The project design is clear and structured, with appropriate milestones and pertinent deliverables(outputs/results).
- The project management plan is sound with adequate resources allocated to different tasks, clear cooperation and decision-making processes, allowing leadership by the responsible public authorities.
- The quality assurance plan adequately covers both the overall project management and the field trials. There is a clear monitoring strategy and methodology for identifying risks and introducing mitigating actions.
- The budget shows cost effectiveness and value for money. There is coherence between tasks, roles and financial resources allocated to partners. The financial management arrangements are clear and appropriate for the partnership and the design of the proposal.

3) Quality of the partnership and the cooperation arrangements (20 points):

- The partners show the potential to ensure full achievement of the objectives of the project, of the priority theme and of the call.
- The roles of the partners in the project are comprehensive and complementary and cover all the main operational needs of the project.
- The allocation of time and input among the partners is adequate and balanced.
- The planned coordination and communication mechanisms among the partners and with the relevant stakeholders are effective.

4) Impact, dissemination, and sustainability (30 points):

- The impact envisaged by applicants is relevant, consistent, systemic, significant, scalable and sustainable.
- A clear awareness-raising, dissemination and communication strategy targets partners, stakeholders - in particular the participants in the field trials – and the general public throughout the lifetime of the project, before, during and after the field trials. This strategy includes how to make educational materials\textsuperscript{15} produced in the experimentation freely accessible through open licences.
- The exploitation approach is clearly described and involves up-scaling of positive results through concrete measures for which potential funding sources are identified; the way in which the approach is expected to generate long-term impact on systems and policies is clearly explained.
- A strategy for long-term monitoring beyond the end of the project, and follow up activities is envisaged and explained.
- The way in which the project results will contribute to peer-learning at European level

\textsuperscript{15}For this purpose, educational materials should be understood as any materials meant to provide support to teaching and learning processes, such as course syllabi, class notes, presentations, exercises, textbooks, interactive materials or other Open licenses for these materials should guarantee, as a minimum, free access for any individual or organisation. Applicants are allowed to include limitations in the open licenses as appropriate.
and feed into the ET 2020 process is clearly described.

The calculation of the total score for the full proposal will include the score obtained for "Relevance of the project" at the pre-proposal stage. Only full proposals having reached at least the threshold of 60 points of the total score (i.e. score on the award criterion "Relevance of the project" assessed in the first stage plus scores on the other three award criteria assessed in the second stage) will be considered for EU funding. Applicants falling below this threshold shall be rejected.

10. LEGAL COMMITMENTS

In the event of a grant awarded by the Agency, a grant agreement drawn up in euro and detailing the conditions and level of funding, will be sent to the coordinator representing all project partners (other applicants), as well as the information on the procedure to formalize the agreement of the parties.

Two copies of the original agreement must be first signed by the legal representative of the coordinator on behalf of the consortium and returned to the Agency immediately. The Agency will sign them last.

11. FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

11.1 Form of the grant

11.1.1 Reimbursement of costs actually incurred

The grant will be defined by applying a maximum co-financing rate of 75 % to the eligible costs actually incurred and declared by the beneficiary.

Supporting documents

The final amount of the grant to be awarded to the beneficiary is established after completion of the action, upon approval of the request for payment containing the following documents:

- a final report providing details of the implementation and results of the action (eReport);
- the final financial statement of costs actually incurred;

In case of:

- Grants for an action of more than EUR 60.000, but less than EUR 750.000

The beneficiary is required to submit, in support of the final payment, a “Report of Factual Findings on the Final Financial Report - Type I” produced by an approved auditor or in case of public bodies, by a competent and independent public officer.

The procedure and the format to be followed by an approved auditor or, in case of public bodies, by a competent and independent public officer, are detailed in the following “Guidance Notes”:

https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/annex_iii_guidance_notes_audit_type_i_03-

-27-
The use of the report format set by the “Guidance Notes” is compulsory.

**In case of:**

- Grants for an action of EUR 750,000 or more, when the cumulative amounts of request for payment is at least EUR 325,000

The beneficiary is required to submit, in support of the final payment, a “Report of Factual Findings on the Final Financial Report - Type II” produced by an approved auditor or in case of public bodies, by a competent and independent public officer. The certificate shall certify, in accordance with a methodology approved by the Agency, that the costs declared by the beneficiary in the financial statements on which the request for payment is based are real, accurately recorded and eligible in accordance with the grant agreement.

The procedure and the format to be followed by an approved auditor or in case of public bodies, by a competent and independent public officer, are detailed in the following “Guidance Notes”:


The use of the report format set by the “Guidance Notes” is compulsory.

If the eligible costs actually incurred by the beneficiary are lower than anticipated, the Agency will apply the rate of co-financing stated in the grant agreement to the expenditure actually incurred.

In the event of non-execution or clearly inadequate execution of an activity planned in the application attached to the funding decision, the final grant will be reduced accordingly.

For details on eligibility of costs, please refer to section 11.2.

**11.1.2 Reimbursement of eligible costs declared on the basis of flat-rate**

The grant will be defined by applying a maximum co-financing rate of 75% to the eligible costs declared by the beneficiary on the basis of:

- a flat rate of maximum 7% of the eligible direct costs (‘reimbursement of flat-rate costs’)

The flat rate will be paid following acceptance of the costs to which the flat rate is to be applied.

**11.1.3 Payment conditions, checks and audits for flat-rate**

Contribution based on flat-rate will be paid in full provided the action is implemented properly (with the required quality, fully and on time. If the action is not properly implemented the amount of the grant will be reduced proportionately. See also Step 4 in section 11.5.

The fulfilment of the above conditions and/or results triggering the payment of the flat rate as specified in section 11.1.2, including where required the achievement of outputs and/or results will be checked at the latest before the payment of the balance. In addition, the fulfilment of those conditions and/or results may be subject to ex post controls.
For this purpose, in case of verifications, checks and audits, the beneficiary will be required to provide the requested contribution to which the flat rate applies.

Where the grant takes the form specified in section 11.1.2, the beneficiary will not be required to report on the costs actually incurred for the implementation.

The amount of flat rates as specified in section 11.1.2 will not be challenged by ex-post controls. This does not affect the possibility to reduce the grant as specified above or in the case of irregularity, fraud or a breach of other obligations.

Payment of the grant on the basis of flat-rates as specified in section 11.1.2 does not affect the right of access to the statutory records of the beneficiaries for the purpose of:

- reviewing them for future grants, or
- protecting the Union financial interests, e.g. detection of fraud, irregularities or breach of obligations.

### 11.2 Eligible costs

Eligible costs shall meet all the following criteria:

- they are incurred by the beneficiary.
- they are incurred during the duration of the action, with the exception of costs relating to final reports and audit certificates;
  - The period of eligibility of costs will start as specified in the grant agreement.
  - If a beneficiary can demonstrate the need to start the action before the agreement is signed, the costs eligibility period may start before that signature. Under no circumstances can the eligibility period start before the date of submission of the grant application.
- they are indicated in the estimated budget of the action;
- they are necessary for the implementation of the action which is the subject of the grant;
- they are identifiable and verifiable, in particular being recorded in the accounting records of the beneficiary and determined according to the applicable accounting standards of the country where the beneficiary is established and according to the usual cost accounting practices of the beneficiary;
- they comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation;
- they are reasonable, justified, and comply with the principle of sound financial management, in particular regarding economy and efficiency.

The beneficiary's internal accounting and auditing procedures must permit direct reconciliation of the costs and revenues declared in respect of the action with the corresponding accounting statements and supporting documents.

Eligible costs may be direct or indirect.

#### 11.2.1 Eligible direct costs

The eligible direct costs for the action are those costs which:

*with due regard to the conditions of eligibility set out above*, are identifiable as specific costs...
directly linked to the performance of the action and which can therefore be booked to it directly, such as:

(a) the costs of personnel working under an employment contract with the beneficiary or an equivalent appointing act and assigned to the action, provided that these costs are in line with the beneficiary’s usual policy on remuneration.

Those costs include actual salaries plus social security contributions and other statutory costs included in the remuneration. They may also comprise additional remunerations, including payments on the basis of supplementary contracts regardless of the nature of those contracts, provided that they are paid in a consistent manner whenever the same kind of work or expertise is required, independently from the source of funding used;

The costs of natural persons working under a contract with the beneficiary other than an employment contract or who are seconded to the beneficiary by a third party against payment may also be included under such personnel costs, provided that the following conditions are fulfilled:

(i) the person works under conditions similar to those of an employee (in particular regarding the way the work is organised, the tasks that are performed and the premises where they are performed);
(ii) the result of the work belongs to the beneficiary (unless exceptionally agreed otherwise); and
(iii) the costs are not significantly different from the costs of staff performing similar tasks under an employment contract with the beneficiary;

(b) costs of travel and related subsistence allowances, provided that these costs are in line with the beneficiary’s usual practices on travel;
(c) the depreciation costs of equipment or other assets (new or second-hand) as recorded in the beneficiary’s accounting statements, provided that the asset:

(i) is written off in accordance with the international accounting standards and the beneficiary’s usual accounting practices; and
(ii) has been purchased in accordance with the rules on implementation contracts laid down in the grant agreement, if the purchase occurred within the implementation period;

The costs of renting or leasing equipment or other assets are also eligible, provided that these costs do not exceed the depreciation costs of similar equipment or assets and are exclusive of any finance fee;

Only the portion of the equipment’s depreciation, rental or lease costs corresponding to the implementation period and the rate of actual use for the purposes of the action may be taken into account when determining the eligible costs. By way of exception, the full cost of purchase of equipment may be eligible under the Special Conditions, if this is justified by the nature of the action and the context of the use of the equipment or assets;

(d) costs of consumables and supplies, provided that they:
(i) are purchased in accordance with the rules on implementation contracts laid down in the grant agreement; and
(ii) are directly assigned to the action;

(e) costs arising directly from requirements imposed by the Agreement (dissemination of information, specific evaluation of the action, audits, translations, reproduction), including the costs of requested financial guarantees, provided that the corresponding services are purchased in accordance with the rules on implementation contracts laid down in the grant agreement;

(f) costs derived from subcontracts, provided that specific conditions on subcontracting as laid down in the grant agreement are met;

(g) duties, taxes and charges paid by the beneficiary, notably value added tax (VAT), provided that they are included in eligible direct costs, and unless specified otherwise in the grant agreement.

11.2.2 Eligible indirect costs (overheads)

Indirect costs are costs that are not directly linked to the action implementation and therefore cannot be attributed directly to it.

A flat-rate amount of maximum 7% of the total eligible direct costs of the action is eligible as indirect costs, representing the beneficiary's general administrative costs which can be regarded as chargeable to the action/project.

Indirect costs may not include costs entered under another budget heading.

Applicants' attention is drawn to the fact that if they are receiving an operating grant financed by the EU or Euratom budget, they may not declare indirect costs for the period(s) covered by the operating grant, unless they can demonstrate that the operating grant does not cover any costs of the action.

In order to demonstrate this, in principle, the beneficiary should:

a. use analytical cost accounting that allows to separate all costs (including overheads) attributable to the operating grant and the action grant. For that purpose the beneficiary should use reliable accounting codes and allocation keys ensuring that the allocation of the costs is done in a fair, objective and realistic way.

b. record separately:
   – all costs incurred for the operating grants (i.e. personnel, general running costs and other operating costs linked to the part of its usual annual activities), and
   – all costs incurred for the action grants (including the actual indirect costs linked to the action)

If the operating grant covers the entire usual annual activity and budget of the beneficiary, the latter is not entitled to receive any indirect costs under the action grant.

11.3 Ineligible costs
The following items are not considered as eligible costs:

a) return on capital and dividends paid by a beneficiary;
b) debt and debt service charges;
c) provisions for losses or debts;
d) interest owed;
e) doubtful debts;
f) exchange losses;
g) costs of transfers from the Agency charged by the bank of a beneficiary;
h) costs declared by the beneficiary under another action receiving a grant financed from the Union budget. Such grants include grants awarded by a Member State and financed from the Union budget and grants awarded by bodies other than the Agency for the purpose of implementing the Union budget. In particular, beneficiaries receiving an operating grant financed by the EU or Euratom budget cannot declare indirect costs for the period(s) covered by the operating grant, unless they can demonstrate that the operating grant does not cover any costs of the action.
i) contributions in kind from third parties;
j) excessive or reckless expenditure;
k) deductible VAT
l) expenses for travel to or from countries other than those participating in the project/programme, unless explicit prior authorisation is granted by the Agency.

11.4 Balanced budget

The estimated budget of the action must be attached to the application form. It must have revenue and expenditure in balance.

The budget must be drawn up in euros.

Applicants for whom costs will not be incurred in euros should use the exchange rate published on the Inforeuro website at:


The applicant must ensure that the resources which are necessary to carry out action are not entirely provided by the EU grant.

Co-financing of the action may take the form of:

– the beneficiary's own resources,
– income generated by the action,
– financial contributions from third parties.

11.5 Calculation of the final grant amount

The final amount of the grant is calculated by the Agency at the time of the payment of the balance. The calculation involves the following steps:

Step 1 — Application of the reimbursement rate to the eligible costs and flat rate
contributions

The amount under step 1 is obtained by applying the reimbursement rate specified in section 11.1.1 to the eligible costs actually incurred and accepted by the Agency, including costs declared in the form of flat rate contributions to which the co-financing rate applies in accordance with section 11.1.2.

Step 2 — Limit to the maximum amount of the grant

The total amount paid to the beneficiaries by the Agency may in no circumstances exceed the maximum amount of the grant as indicated in the grant agreement. If the amount obtained following Step 1 is higher than this maximum amount, the final amount of the grant is limited to the latter.

Step 3 — Reduction due to the no-profit rule

‘Profit’ means the surplus of receipts over the total eligible costs of the action, where receipts are the amount obtained following Steps 1 and 2 plus the revenue generated by the action for beneficiaries other than non-profit organisations.

In-kind and financial contributions by third parties are not considered receipts.

The total eligible costs of the action are the consolidated total eligible costs approved by the Agency. The revenue generated by the action is the consolidated revenue established, generated or confirmed for beneficiaries other than non-profit organisations on the date on which the request for payment of the balance is drawn up.

If there is a profit, it will be deducted in proportion to the final rate of reimbursement of the actual eligible costs of the action approved by the Agency.

Step 4 — Reduction due to improper implementation or breach of other obligations

The Agency may reduce the maximum amount of the grant if the action has not been implemented properly (i.e. if it has not been implemented or has been implemented poorly, partially or late), or if another obligation under the Agreement has been breached.

The amount of the reduction will be proportionate to the degree to which the action has been implemented improperly or to the seriousness of the breach.

11.6 Reporting and payment arrangements

11.6.1 Payment arrangements

The beneficiary may request the following payments provided that the conditions of the grant agreement are fulfilled (e.g. payment deadlines, ceilings, etc.). The payment requests shall be accompanied by the documents provided below and detailed in the grant agreement:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Payment request</th>
<th>Accompanying documents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

-33-
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A pre-financing payment corresponding to 30% of the maximum grant amount</th>
<th>A financial guarantee (if needed, see section 11.6.2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| A second pre-financing payment corresponding to 40% of the maximum grant amount. | (a) technical report on progress  
(b) statement on the use of the previous pre-financing instalment  
(c) financial guarantee (see section 11.6.2) |

**Payment of the balance**

The Agency will establish the amount of this payment on the basis of the calculation of the final grant amount (see section 11.5 (calculation of the final grant) and section 11.1.1. (supporting documents) above). If the total of earlier payments is higher than the final grant amount, the beneficiary will be required to reimburse the amount paid in excess through a recovery order.

(a) a final technical report  
(b) a final financial statement  
(c) a certificate on the financial statements and underlying accounts

In case of a weak financial capacity, section 8.1 above applies.

**11.6.2 Pre-financing guarantee**

A pre-financing guarantee for up to the same amount as the pre-financing may be requested in order to limit the financial risks linked to the pre-financing payment.

The financial guarantee, in euro, shall be provided by an approved bank or financial institution established in one of the EU Member States. When the beneficiary is established in a third country, the Agency may agree that a bank or financial institution established in that third country may provide the guarantee if it considers that the bank or financial institution offers equivalent security and characteristics as those offered by a bank or financial institution established in a Member State. Amounts blocked in bank accounts shall not be accepted as financial guarantees.

The guarantee may be replaced by:

- a joint and several guarantee by a third party or,

- a joint guarantee of the beneficiaries of an action who are parties to the same grant agreement.

The guarantee shall be released as the pre-financing is gradually cleared against interim payments or the payment of the balance, in accordance with the conditions laid down in the grant agreement.

As an alternative to requesting a guarantee on pre-financing, the Agency may decide to split the payment of pre-financing into several instalments.
11.7 Other financial conditions

a) Non-cumulative award

An action may only receive one grant from the EU budget.

Under no circumstances shall the same costs be financed twice by the Union budget. To ensure this, applicants shall indicate in the grant application the sources and amounts of Union funding received or applied for the same action or part of the action or for its (the applicant’s) functioning during the same financial year as well as any other funding received or applied for the same action.

b) Non-retroactivity

No grant may be awarded retrospectively for actions already completed.

A grant may be awarded for an action which has already begun only where the applicant can demonstrate in the grant application the need to start the action before the grant agreement is signed.

In such cases, costs eligible for financing may not have been incurred prior to the date of submission of the grant application.

c) Implementation contracts/subcontracting

Where the implementation of the action requires the award of procurement contracts (implementation contracts), the beneficiary may award the contract in accordance with its usual purchasing practices provided that the contract is awarded to the tender offering best value for money or the lowest price (as appropriate), avoiding conflicts of interest.

In the event of implementation contracts exceeding €60 000, the beneficiary must abide by following additional rules: informing the Agency before proceeding in order to get the approval and national rules on awarding contracts shall apply.

The beneficiary is expected to clearly document the tendering procedure and retain the documentation in the event of an audit.

Entities acting in their capacity as contracting authorities within the meaning of Directive 2014/24/EU16 or contracting entities within the meaning of Directive 2014/25/EU17 must comply with the applicable national public procurement rules.

Beneficiaries may subcontract tasks forming part of the action. If they do so, they must ensure that, in addition to the above-mentioned conditions of best value for money and absence of conflicts of interests, the following conditions are also complied with:

a) subcontracting does not cover core tasks of the action;

b) recourse to subcontracting is justified because of the nature of the action and what is necessary for its implementation;

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c) the estimated costs of the subcontracting are clearly identifiable in the estimated budget;

d) any recourse to subcontracting, if not provided for in description of the action, is communicated by the beneficiary and approved by the Agency. The Agency may grant approval:

   (i) before any recourse to subcontracting, if the beneficiaries requests an amendment

   (ii) after recourse to subcontracting if the subcontracting:

      – is specifically justified in the interim or final technical report and

      – does not entail changes to the grant agreement which would call into question the decision awarding the grant or be contrary to the equal treatment of applicants;

e) the beneficiaries ensure that certain conditions applicable to beneficiaries, enumerated in the grant agreement (e.g. visibility, confidentiality, etc.), are also applicable to the subcontractors.

d) Financial support to third parties

The applications may not envisage provision of financial support to third parties.

12. PUBLICITY

12.1 By the beneficiaries

Beneficiaries must clearly acknowledge the European Union’s contribution in all publications or in conjunction with activities for which the grant is used.

In this respect, beneficiaries are required to give prominence to the name and emblem of the European Commission on all their publications, posters, programmes and other products realised under the co-financed project.

To do this they must use the text, the emblem and the disclaimer must be used and are available at https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/about-eacea/visual-identity_en.

If this requirement is not fully complied with, the beneficiary’s grant may be reduced in accordance with the provisions of the grant agreement.

12.2 By the Agency and/or the Commission

With the exception of scholarships paid to natural persons and other direct support paid to natural persons in most need, all information relating to grants awarded in the course of a financial year shall be published on an internet site of the European Union institutions no later than the 30 June of the year following the financial year in which the grants were awarded.

The Agency and/or the Commission will publish the following information:

   – name of the beneficiary;
– address of the beneficiary when the latter is a legal person, region when the beneficiary is a natural person, as defined on NUTS 2 level\(^{18}\) if he/she is domiciled within the EU or equivalent if domiciled outside the EU;
– subject of the grant;
– nature and amount awarded.

Upon a reasoned and duly substantiated request by the beneficiary, the publication shall be waived if such disclosure risks threatening the rights and freedoms of individuals concerned as protected by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union or harm the commercial interests of the beneficiaries.

12.3 Dissemination and exploitation

Raising awareness of the project’s aims, concept and activities, disseminating its interim or final results (including details on the field trials) and exploitation of the project results at regional/national and European level, throughout the project duration and beyond, are essential for European policy experimentations. Given the focus on the systemic exploitation of the results, the role of the responsible public authorities is key in this context. Please refer to Annex of the call for proposals for further details.

Activities serving the dissemination and exploitation of results are a way to showcase the work that has been done as part of the Erasmus+ project: sharing results, lessons learned, outcomes and findings beyond the participating organisations will enable a wider community to benefit from a work that has received EU funding, as well as to promote the organisation's efforts towards the objectives of Erasmus+, which attaches fundamental importance to the link between the Programme and policies.

Beneficiaries may be required to attend and to participate in events organised by the European Commission or the Agency to share their experience with other participants and/or policy makers.

For more information on dissemination and exploitation of project result requirements, please refer to the Erasmus+ Programme guide (Annex II – Dissemination and Exploitation of Results) available under this link: [http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/resources_en](http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/resources_en).

13. PROCESSING OF PERSONAL DATA

The reply to any call for proposals involves the recording and processing of personal data (such as name, address and CV). Such data will be processed pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC\(^{19}\).


\(^{19}\) OJ L 295, 21.11.2018, p. 39–98, date of entry into force 11/12/2018
Unless indicated otherwise, the questions and any personal data requested that are required to evaluate the application in accordance with the call for proposal will be processed solely for that purpose by the Educational and Audiovisual Executive Agency (EACEA).

Personal data may be registered in the Early Detection and Exclusion System by the Commission, should the beneficiary be in one of the situations mentioned in Articles 136 and 141 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046. For more information see the Privacy Statement on: https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/privacy_statement-eacea_grants.pdf

14. **PROCEDURE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS**

14.1 **Publication**

The call for proposals is published in the Official Journal of the European Union and on the EACEA website on the programme funding page:


14.2 **Registration in the Participant Portal/ Funding & Tender Portal**

Before submitting an electronic application, all applicants (a coordinator and all partners) will have to register their organisation in the Participant hosted in the Funding & Tender Opportunities Portal and receive a Participant Identification Code (PIC9-digit number), serving as the unique identifier of their organisation in the Participant Register. The PIC will be requested in the electronic application form.

The Participant Register hosted in the Funding & Tender Opportunities Portal is the tool through which all legal and financial information related to organisations will be managed. Information on how to register can be found in the portal under the following address:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/how-to-participate/participant-register

The tool also allows applicants to upload all relevant documents related to their organisation (such as: registration documents, legal status, annual accounts).

Details on the supporting document that need to be uploaded in the portal can be found at


14.3 **Submission of the grant application**

The submission and selection of proposals will take place in two stages: pre-proposal stage and full proposal stage.

Proposals must be submitted in accordance with the admissibility requirements set out under section 5 and by the deadline set out under section 3.

No modification to the application is allowed once the deadline for submission has elapsed. However, if there is a need to clarify certain aspects or to correct clerical mistakes, the Agency may contact the applicant during the evaluation process.

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Applicants will be informed in writing about the results of the selection process.

Applicants are requested to log in at https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/PPMT/ and follow the procedure for submitting an application.

**Applications sent by fax or e-mail will not be accepted.**

Applicants are requested to read carefully all information about the call for proposals, the submission procedure and to use the documents forming part of the application ('Application Package') which are available from the Agency's Funding pages:


Applicants must use the online application form (eForm) and its attachments. Please take note of the technical requirements for the application form (eForm) as explained in the specific eForm User Guide that is aimed at providing guidance on the technical aspects of completing and submitting the eForm. It is available at:


Should you be blocked by any technical issue described in the User Guide during submission, this will not be considered as a technical failure of the eForm. In consequence, if the submission of your eForm fails and you do not meet the deadline, your application will be rendered ineligible.

Should you have technical problems with the online submission of your eForm, you must contact the helpdesk (eacea-helpdesk@ec.europa.eu) by email before the submission deadline, explaining your problem. If you are close to the deadline, you have to include a screen shot of any error message together with a proof of time of occurrence.

**14.4 Notification and publication of the evaluation results**

Applicants shall be notified individually of the outcome of the evaluation procedure by a letter signed by the Authorising Officer sent as a registered document to the Legal Representative of the coordinator through the Funding & Tender Opportunities Portal 21 at the latest six months after the application deadline. During these six months assessment and selection of applications take place, followed by the adoption of the award decision. Only when these procedures are completed, the lists of selected projects will be published on the Agency website: https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/selection-results_en and FTOP according to the process for migration to eGrant.

The Legal Representative of the coordinator (applicant organisation) will receive an email explaining when the notification letter is available in the Funding & Tender Opportunities Portal and how to access it.

It is responsibility of the applicant to submit in the application the correct email address of the Legal Representative.

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21 https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/how-to-participate/participant-register
If the formal notification in the Funding & Tender Opportunities Portal isn't opened for a period of more than 10 days (for projects), the Agency will consider the formal notification acknowledged.

14.5 Rules applicable


Contacts

EACEA-Policy-Support@ec.europa.eu

Annexes: