



EUROPEAN VOLUNTARY SERVICE

Accreditation guidelines

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1. Introduction

The European Voluntary Service (EVS) strand of the European Union's Erasmus+ Programme (2014-2020) aims to support young people taking part in voluntary activities abroad. Any organisation in a Programme Country, in a country in neighbouring Partner Countries in Western Balkans or the Eastern Partnership and the Russian Federation which wishes to send or host EVS volunteers or to coordinate an EVS project must be accredited. For organisations located in the Southern Mediterranean region accreditation is possible from 2014 and becomes compulsory from 2015. Participating organisations from other countries may be partners in EVS projects without accreditation.

This guide is intended to help interested organisations to obtain EVS accreditation.

2. What is accreditation?

Accreditation is a procedure to support organisations that want to take part in EVS. It is designed to ensure consistently high standards in EVS and to help organisations find partners. Accreditation is a quality assurance process facilitating communication between the organisation and programme structures, so that all parties involved are aware of the values, objectives and rules of EVS. All accredited organisations must show they are able to implement EVS projects according to the rules of the Erasmus+ Programme.

Accreditation is an organisation's entry ticket for EVS, and proves that it complies with the programme's quality standards.

The accreditation is a prerequisite for participation, but does not automatically lead to an EVS project grant. The future project grant applications will be assessed based on the criteria presented in the Programme Guide and according to the quality of the specific project.

3. What is an EVS accreditation?

The EVS accreditation application is the application the organisation submits in order to be evaluated for EVS accreditation (not the same as an application for funding). This must be submitted on the official form and parts of it will be published on the European Youth Portal's Volunteering Platform. An organisation can seek accreditation as a Sending, Receiving and/or Coordinating Organisation on the same official form. The form can be found on the websites of the National Agencies.

The Agency/accreditors will contact the contact person provided on the accreditation application form. They may have questions, and will arrange interviews and visits to the organisation.

Before submitting an accreditation application, a PIC number (Participant Identification Code) is needed. The Erasmus+ Programme Guide provides information on how to register with the European Commission Participant Portal.

4. Who is the accreditation for?

Accreditation is for organisations that want to send or receive volunteers, or to act as coordinators of a project. To obtain accreditation, the organisation submitting the accreditation application must be clearly identified, as must the location of the activities planned. As such, the entity accredited cannot be an informal group of young people. The organisation submitting the form can, if successful in obtaining accreditation, draw on the support of contact points outside that same organisation. However, as concerns hosting, a volunteer must be hosted by the local Receiving Organisation to which the accreditation has been awarded; this Receiving Organisation must bear the financial and administrative responsibility for carrying out the EVS project.

The Receiving Organisation will be the entity evaluated and accredited. An accreditation application should not refer to the entirety of a complex organisation with numerous departments and/or branches in general terms. The information entered on the form should make clear the location, project environment and possible activities for volunteers.

5. Who processes requests for accreditation?

Accreditation of EVS organisations is carried out by:

- the respective National Agency of the Erasmus+ programme for all organisations located in Programme Countries
- SALTO EECA for all organisations located in Eastern Partnership countries and the Russian Federation
- SALTO SEE for all organisations located in Western Balkans countries
- SALTO Euromed for all organisations located in the Southern Mediterranean countries

6. When should an organisation apply for accreditation?

Organisations can submit their accreditation applications at any time to the respective Agency or SALTO. Since organisations must have a valid accreditation at the date of the project application deadline, interested organisations are advised to submit the form well before they plan to take part in their first project.

It takes about six weeks to process an accreditation application, but organisations should allow longer to be on the safe side. The duration of the accreditation can be, as a maximum, for the entire duration of the Erasmus+ programme, though the organisation may request a shorter validity period, and the NA/SALTO may award accreditation for a shorter period than what has been requested. On expiry, accreditation can be renewed by submitting a new accreditation application.

7. Who issues accreditation?

That depends on the location and status of the organisation. The relevant National Agency/SALTO coordinates the accreditation process. They give information and support to organisations and receive the accreditation applications.

Accreditors/assessors appointed by the National Agency/SALTO evaluate accreditation applications and carry out interviews with organisations. Accreditors may be National Agency/SALTO staff, Commission staff, external experts, former volunteers, volunteer trainers or regional information providers. To avoid conflicts of interest, accreditors/assessors external to the NA must not be members of a selection committee deciding on project applications and they must not in any way be involved in EVS projects.

At least two accreditors will assess each accreditation application to ensure that all are dealt with in an objective and fair way. The role of the accreditors is to assess the quality of applicants and to support them. In most cases, at least one accreditor will visit the applicant to meet those who will be responsible for running the project, to get to know the organisation and to discuss all aspects of the accreditation application.

Accreditors may ask for further clarification, suggest improvements and possibly ask for revisions of an accreditation application which can be done by resubmitting the form.

The accreditors assess the application on behalf of the National Agency/SALTO. They collect further information as necessary and provide the Agency with a recommendation. An evaluation committee gives the final opinion on the applications and an answer is communicated to the organisations.

During the period for which the organisation has been accredited, the NA/SALTO will undertake checks, follow-up and be in contact with the organisation to assess continued compliance with the EVS Charter. In case of any relevant changes to the organisations' activities, structure or similar that affects the basis for its EVS accreditation, the organisation must inform the NA/SALTO.

8. What is being assessed?

Before submitting an accreditation application, organisations should consult the Erasmus+ Programme Guide. It is also useful to take a look at the Volunteering Platform (which contains a database of already accredited organisations) on the European Youth Portal.

The accreditation application can only be assessed if all parts of the form have been correctly completed.

All organisations must apply the principles of the EVS Charter at all stages of the project.

This is the basis for accreditation. The EVS Charter can be found in the accreditation application form. It highlights the roles of each organisation in an EVS project, as well as the main principles and quality standards of EVS.

The National Agency/SALTO Resource Centre may withdraw accreditation at any time if an organisation fails to comply with the EVS Charter.

More specifically, the accreditors' assessment of an organisation will be based on the following:

For all organisations:

Motivation and experience, in particular:

- motivation for taking part in EVS;
- previous experience with Youth in Action/Erasmus+, EVS, international;
- projects and working with full-time volunteers.

Knowledge of Erasmus+ and EVS, in particular:

- the EVS Charter;
- the Training and Evaluation Cycle;
- understanding the importance of good partnerships;
- understanding of what is needed in a Volunteering Agreement between the volunteer and the partner organisations;
- the group insurance plan for EVS volunteers;
- the document "what to expect from EVS";
- funding rules and the need for co-funding;
- making EVS available free of charge for the volunteer.
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The organisation's aims, activities and capacities, in particular:

- the organisation's aims and objectives;
- regular activities;
- organisational, administrative and financial capacity, particularly in order to have assurance regarding the number of volunteers the organisation has capacity to send/host or coordinate at the same time;
- role of Contact Point outside the organisation.

Risk, safety and well-being, in particular:

- how to prevent risks and crises;
- how to manage conflicts and cultural shock;
- how to guarantee safe living and working conditions.

Ideas for future projects, in particular:

- possible themes and activities;
- relevance to Erasmus+ features;
- inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities;
- plans for evaluation during and after a project;
- ideas concerning visibility of Erasmus+, the European Voluntary Service, as well as dissemination and exploitation of results.
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Recruitment of volunteers, in particular:

- how to ensure an open and transparent recruitment process;
- awareness that EVS is open to all young people, regardless of background, competence or experience;
- awareness of the Youthpass.

For Receiving Organisations:

Possible volunteer tasks, in particular:

- awareness of and ideas for well-defined tasks constituting 30-38 hours per week;
- how to avoid job-substitution and routine tasks;
- how to ensure quality task-related training and support;
- possibility for the volunteer to influence and shape the tasks according to her/his profile and interests.

Learning aspects, in particular:

- familiarity with the concepts of informal, non-formal and intercultural learning;
- learning opportunities offered through the service;
- arrangements for language training.

Personal support, in particular:

- mentor;
- integration of volunteers into the local community.

Practical arrangements, in particular:

- accommodation;
- arrangements for food, local transport and volunteer allowance;
- awareness of issues relating to the visa, residence permit and other administrative issues in the host country.

For Sending Organisations:

- arrangements for pre-departure preparation;
- how to stay in contact with and support the volunteer during the service period.

9. After accreditation

The Volunteering Platform hosted on the European Youth Portal is a main tool to find partners in the framework of EVS. Information about accredited organisations, such as the description provided in English, will be published on the website of the database.

The contact person provided in the form is responsible for keeping information up-to-date, posting volunteering opportunities on the European Youth Portal and informing the Agency/SALTO if there are periods during which the organisation does not intend to be involved in any projects. It could, in such cases, be temporarily removed from the database of EVS organisations.

Information in the database is published as it is formulated in the accreditation application form. It is therefore crucial that organisations write clearly so that potential partners and volunteers can get a good impression of the organisation and its involvement in EVS.

Once the organisation receives a confirmation from the Agency/SALTO about accreditation, it may take part in its first EVS project application!

10. More information

- [Erasmus+ Programme Guide](#)
- [National Agencies and SALTO Resource Centres](#)
- [Volunteering Platform](#) (database of EVS accredited organisations) on the European Youth Portal
- [Otlas – the partner finding tool](#)
- [Opportunities for young people in the Erasmus+ Programme](#)

