



# Erasmus+ Programme (ERASMUS)

## Call for proposals

European policy experimentation

ERASMUS-EDU-2024-POL-EXP

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2.0	29.02.2024	▪ Deleting the part concerning the UK applicants, adding the missing paragraph on budget-based Lump Sum	
		▪	
		▪	



## EUROPEAN EDUCATION AND CULTURE EXECUTIVE AGENCY (EACEA)

EACEA.A – Erasmus+, EU Solidarity Corps  
EACEA.A.2 – Skills and Innovation

### CALL FOR PROPOSALS

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## 0. Introduction

This is a call for proposals for EU action grants in the field of policy experimentation in Education and training under the **Erasmus+ Programme**.

The regulatory framework for this EU Funding Programme is set out in:

- Regulation 2018/1046 ([EU Financial Regulation](#))
- the basic act (Erasmus+ Regulation [2021/817](#)<sup>1</sup>).

The call is launched in accordance with the [Erasmus+ 2024 Work Programme](#)<sup>2</sup> and will be managed by the **European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)** ('Agency').

The call covers the following **topics**:

– **Topic 1 – Digital Education - ERASMUS-EDU-2024-POL-EXP-DIGITAL**

Priority 1: Building a teaching framework and policy intervention aiming to boost gender balance in pursuing ICT related studies and professions

Priority 2: Digital well-being: Putting into practice what works

Priority 3: Data literacy strategies in primary and secondary education

– **Topic 2 – Vocational Education and Training - ERASMUS-EDU-2024-POL-EXP-VET**

Priority 4: Women in GreenTech

Priority 5: Support structures and networks for apprentices' mobility

– **Topic 3 – Adult Education - ERASMUS-EDU-2024-POL-EXP-ADULT**

Priority 6: Joining forces to reskill workers

Priority 7: Supporting the Pact for Skills

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation (EU) 2021/817 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021 establishing Erasmus+: the Union Programme for education and training, youth and sport and repealing the Regulation 1288/2013 (OJ L189/1):<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32021R0817>

<sup>2</sup> Commission Implementing Decision C(2023) 6157 of 18/09/2023 on the financing of Erasmus+: the Union Programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport and the adoption of the work programme for 2024: [eplus-awp-20240-C-2023-6157\\_en.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)

– **Topic 4 – School Education - ERASMUS-EDU-2024-POL-EXP-SCHOOL**

Priority 8: Pathways to school success

Priority 9: Building sustainability competences

Priority 10: Support structures and mechanisms for enhancing mobility of teachers

– **Topic 5 – Micro-credentials - ERASMUS-EDU-2024-POL-EXP-MICRO-CRED**

Priority 11: Micro-credentials Eco-systems

Priority 12: Micro-credentials for the digital and green transitions

– **Topic 6 – Higher Education - ERASMUS-EDU-2024-POL-EXP-HIGHER-EDU**

Priority 13: National/regional support to European Universities alliances

Each project application under the call should address only one of these topics, and within the topic only one priority. Applicants wishing to apply for more than one topic/priority, must submit a separate proposal under each topic/priority.

We invite you to read the **call documentation** carefully, and in particular this Call Document, the Model Grant Agreement, the [EU Funding & Tenders Portal Online Manual](#) and the [EU Grants AGA – Annotated Grant Agreement](#).

These documents provide clarifications and answers to questions you may have when preparing your application:

- the [Call Document](#) outlines the:
  - background, objectives, themes and priorities, activities that can be funded and the expected impact (sections 1 and 2);
  - timetable and available budget (sections 3 and 4);
  - admissibility and eligibility conditions (including mandatory documents; sections 5 and 6);
  - criteria for financial and operational capacity and exclusion (section 7);
  - evaluation and award procedure (section 8);
  - award criteria (section 9);
  - legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements (section 10);
  - how to submit an application (section 11);

- the [Online Manual](#) outlines the:
  - procedures to register and submit proposals online via the EU Funding & Tenders Portal ('Portal');
  - recommendations for the preparation of the application;
- the [AGA – Annotated Grant Agreement](#) contains:
  - detailed annotations on all the provisions in the Grant Agreement you will have to sign in order to obtain the grant (*including cost eligibility, payment schedule, accessory obligations, etc.*).

You are also encouraged to visit the [Erasmus+ Project Results](#) website to consult the list of projects funded previously under the Erasmus+ programme.

## 1. Background

The European Union supports Member States and other key stakeholders in their efforts to provide the best education and training for their citizens.

The Council Resolution of 2021 establishing the [Strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond \(2021-2030\)](#)<sup>3</sup> underlines that education and training have a vital role to play when it comes to shaping the future of Europe, at a time when it is imperative that its society and economy become more cohesive, inclusive, digital, sustainable, green and resilient. Education and training help also citizens to find personal fulfilment and well-being, to be prepared to adapt and perform on a changing labour market and to engage in active and responsible citizenship.

The [European Education Area](#)<sup>4</sup> (EEA) fosters collaboration among European Union Member States and other key stakeholders to build more resilient and inclusive national education and training systems supporting economic growth and high-quality employment opportunities. It will allow learners to pursue their studies in different stages of life and to look for employment across the EU.

The framework support Member States and other key stakeholders to exchange best practices and learn from each other, with an aim to make lifelong learning and mobility a reality, improve the quality and efficiency of education and training, promote equity, social cohesion and active citizenship as well as enhance creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship.

European cooperation in education and training should enable the European Union and the wider education and training community to deliver on initiatives supporting the achievement of the European Education Area by 2025, in synergy with the [European Higher Education Area](#)<sup>5</sup>, the European Skills Agenda<sup>6</sup> and also the [Digital Education Action Plan](#)<sup>7</sup>. Based on strengthened guidance from the Council and in line with the Open Method of Coordination, this requires boosting flexible cooperation methods and strengthening synergies with other initiatives in education and training.

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<sup>3</sup> [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32021G0226\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32021G0226(01))

<sup>4</sup> <https://education.ec.europa.eu/about-eea>

<sup>5</sup> <https://education.ec.europa.eu/education-levels/higher-education>

<sup>6</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_20\\_1196](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_1196)

<sup>7</sup> <https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/digital-education/action-plan>

The [EEA Progress Report](#)<sup>8</sup> (2022) gives an overview on strategic initiatives already adopted.

Other initiatives in the fields of education, training and social rights to support the relevant European policy agendas:

- [The Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027](#)<sup>9</sup>
- The [proposal for a Council Recommendation on key enabling factors for successful digital education and training](#)<sup>10</sup>
- The [proposal for a Council Recommendation on improving the provision of digital skills in education and training](#)<sup>11</sup>
- The [Staff Working Document](#) underpinning both proposals<sup>12</sup>
- The Council Recommendation on [Blended learning approaches for high-quality and inclusive primary and secondary education](#)<sup>13</sup>
- [The Digital Decade Strategy](#)<sup>14</sup>
- The [Learning Lab on Investing in Quality Education and Training](#)<sup>15</sup>
- The [Council Recommendation on common values, inclusive education and the European dimension of teaching](#)<sup>16</sup>
- The 2022 Council Recommendation on [Learning for the green transition and sustainable development](#)<sup>17</sup>
- The [Council Conclusions on skills and competences for the green transition](#)<sup>18</sup>
- The [Council recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning](#)<sup>19</sup>
- The Council Recommendation on [Pathways to school success](#)<sup>20</sup>
- The [European Pillar of Social Rights](#)<sup>21</sup>
- The [Council Recommendation on vocational education and training for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience](#)<sup>22</sup>
- The [Osnabrück Declaration on vocational education and training as an enabler of recovery and just transitions to digital and green economies](#)<sup>23</sup>
- The [European Skills Agenda](#)<sup>24</sup>
- [The Council Recommendation on individual learning accounts](#)<sup>25</sup>
- [The Council Resolution on a new European agenda for adult learning 2021-2030](#)
- [The Council Recommendation on Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults](#)<sup>26</sup>

<sup>8</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52022DC0700&qid=1669030250195>

<sup>9</sup> <https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/digital-education/action-plan>

<sup>10</sup> <https://education.ec.europa.eu/document/proposal-for-council-recommendation-on-the-key-enabling-factors-for-successful-digital-education-and-training>

<sup>11</sup> [https://education.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2023-04/deap-recommendation-provision-digital-skills-180423-1\\_en.pdf](https://education.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2023-04/deap-recommendation-provision-digital-skills-180423-1_en.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> [https://education.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2023-04/deap-swd-digital-skills-180423\\_en.pdf](https://education.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2023-04/deap-swd-digital-skills-180423_en.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32021H1214%2801%29>

<sup>14</sup> <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/digital-decade-policy-programme-2030>

<sup>15</sup> <https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/improving-quality/learning-lab>

<sup>16</sup> <https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/improving-quality/inclusive-education/common-values>

<sup>17</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32022H0627%2801%29>

<sup>18</sup> [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ%3AJOC\\_2023\\_095\\_R\\_0003](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ%3AJOC_2023_095_R_0003)

<sup>19</sup> [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C\\_.2018.189.01.0001.01.ENG&toc=OJ:C:2018:189:TOC](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2018.189.01.0001.01.ENG&toc=OJ:C:2018:189:TOC)

<sup>20</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2022:316:FIN>

<sup>21</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1226&langId=en>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/content/council-recommendation-24-november-2020-vocational-education-and-training-vet-sustainable>

<sup>23</sup> [https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/osnabrueck\\_declaration\\_eu2020.pdf](https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/osnabrueck_declaration_eu2020.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_20\\_1196](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_1196)

<sup>25</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32022H0627%2803%29>

<sup>26</sup> [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ%3AJOC\\_2016\\_484\\_R\\_0001](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ%3AJOC_2016_484_R_0001)



- The [European strategy for universities](#)<sup>27</sup> and the related [Council Conclusions on a European strategy empowering higher education institutions for the future of Europe](#)<sup>28</sup>
- The [Council Conclusions on the European Universities initiative - Bridging higher education, research, innovation and society: Paving the way for a new dimension in European higher education](#)<sup>29</sup>
- The [Council Recommendation of 5 April 2022 on building bridges for effective European higher education cooperation](#)<sup>30</sup>
- [The Council Recommendation of 16 June 2022 on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability](#)<sup>31</sup>
- The [Green Deal Industrial Plan](#)<sup>32</sup>
- The [Communication on the Green Deal Industrial Plan for the Zero-Net Age](#)<sup>33</sup>
- [The Commission Proposal for a Council Recommendation on a learning mobility framework: 'Europe on the Move' learning mobility opportunities for everyone.](#)<sup>34</sup>

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:

- identifying and developing innovative (policy) approaches that have the potential of becoming mainstreamed, thus improving education and training systems;
- testing theoretical assumptions in real life situations and assessing the potential for promising measures to be implemented, replicated, or scaled up.

By combining strong private and public 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 and/or private organisations, combining researchers, practitioners and partners with the capacity to reach policy-makers.

In this context, the role of public authorities in European policy experimentation projects could be crucial:

- 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;

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<sup>27</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2022%3A16%3AFIN>

<sup>28</sup> <https://education.ec.europa.eu/document/commission-communication-on-a-european-strategy-for-universities>

<sup>29</sup> <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/d47fca3c-c985-11eb-84ce-01aa75ed71a1>

<sup>30</sup> [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32022H0413\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32022H0413(01))

<sup>31</sup> [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32022H0627\(02\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32022H0627(02))

<sup>32</sup> [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/green-deal-industrial-plan\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/green-deal-industrial-plan_en)

<sup>33</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2023:62:FIN>

<sup>34</sup> [Europe on the Move - a proposal on the future of learning mobility | Erasmus+ \(europa.eu\)](#)

- to feed the results back into the policy process at regional, country and EU level.

Supported projects will aim at achieving systemic impact at European level by having the capacity to deploy their innovative outcomes on a European scale and/or by being able to transfer them into different thematic, sectoral, or geographical contexts.

## **2. Objectives – Themes and priorities – Activities that can be funded – Expected impact**

European policy experimentations are transnational cooperation projects that involve developing, implementing and testing the relevance, effectiveness, potential impact and scalability of activities to address policy priorities in different countries. By combining strategic leadership, methodological soundness, and a strong European dimension, they enable mutual learning and support evidence-based policy at European level.

To address this objective, the call is composed of **six separate topics** with specific objectives and priorities:

### **TOPIC 1: DIGITAL EDUCATION (CROSS-SECTORAL) - ERASMUS-EDU-2024-POL-EXP-DIGITAL**

#### *Objectives*

**Projects under Topic 1 can address different educational sectors or bridge educational sectors, and must support high quality and inclusive digital education, in line with the [Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027](#)<sup>35</sup>.**

Education and training systems are currently undergoing a deep digital transformation, which is being driven by: advances in connectivity; the widespread use of devices and digital applications; the need for individual flexibility; the wider availability of and need for high-quality digital education content and the ever-increasing demand for digital skills. The COVID-19 pandemic, which has heavily impacted education and training, has accelerated the change and provided multiple new learning experiences and perspectives. It has also highlighted the need to examine new areas such as digital education in relation to the wellbeing of learners and teachers.

The **Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027** sets the EU strategic policy framework for digital transformation in education and training. It is a call to action for stronger cooperation at European level to learn from the COVID-19 crisis and to make education and training systems fit for the digital age. The Action Plan foresees 14 actions under two strategic priorities, namely:

- Supporting the development of a high-performing **digital education ecosystem** (1)
- Addressing the need to enhance **digital competences for the digital transformation** (2)

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<sup>35</sup> <https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/digital-education/action-plan>

Adopted by the Commission as a key enabler of the European Education Area, the Action Plan started its implementation in January 2021 and has already delivered on most of its actions.

In 2022, taking up the Council's invitation and following [Commission President von der Leyen's 2021 State of the Union address](#)<sup>36</sup>, the Commission carried out a Structured Dialogue with Member States on digital education and skills. The Dialogue aimed to support Member States in the digital transformation of their education and training systems in an integrated, coherent and more ambitious approach, bringing together different sectors of government, as well as the private sector (e.g. EdTech companies), social partners and civil society. Through the Structured Dialogue, the Commission and the Member States formulated a shared diagnosis on the situation and perspectives at national level; identifying lessons learned and the necessary next steps for further action on digital education. The Dialogue fed current and future actions at EU level on digital education and skills, including the two Council Recommendations<sup>37</sup> on key enabling factors for successful digital education and on improving the provision of digital skills in education and training.

In this context, it is necessary to ensure that the adequate methodologies and teacher training opportunities are in place as to assure the effective development of digital skills and competences through education and training, also taking into consideration latest developments in the field of AI in education. It would be important to consider the active use of technologies at young age and the development of skills and competences to address pressing societal issues, such as tackling disinformation and promoting digital literacy.

In addition, the Digital Education Action Plan sets out to support more effective cooperation on digital education and training at EU level through the set-up of a [European Digital Education Hub](#).<sup>38</sup> The Hub promotes cross-sectoral collaboration, identifies and shares good practices, as well as supports Member States and the education and training sector with tools, frameworks, guidance, technical expertise and research in the domain of digital education. The Hub links national and regional digital education initiatives and actors and supports new models for exchange of digital education content, addressing issues such as AI in education, common standards, interoperability, accessibility and quality-assurance. In alignment with the objectives of the Hub, it is also important to support all actors in the digital education ecosystem to cooperate with each other effectively. The idea is to facilitate the collaboration between public authorities/education and training institutions and rapidly developing sectors, such as the European Education Technology (EdTech)

Finally, it is crucial that everyone, regardless of gender, is able to pursue the studies and careers of their choosing, including in the digital field. Today, girls and women are less likely to pursue ICT studies due to institutional, socio-economic, and cultural

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<sup>36</sup> [https://state-of-the-union.ec.europa.eu/state-union-2021\\_en](https://state-of-the-union.ec.europa.eu/state-union-2021_en)

<sup>37</sup> See : [Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council - Consilium \(europa.eu\)](#)

<sup>38</sup> <https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/digital-education/action-plan/european-digital-education-hub>

barriers such as gender stereotypes, a lack of role models, and biased teaching materials.<sup>39</sup>

### *Themes and priorities (scope)*

Proposals submitted under this topic must address one of the following priorities, and these are further explained below:

- Priority 1: Building a teaching framework and policy intervention aiming to boost gender balance in pursuing ICT related studies and professions
- Priority 2: Digital well-being: Putting into practice what works
- Priority 3: Data literacy strategies in primary and secondary education

### **Priority 1: Building a teaching framework and policy intervention aiming to boost gender balance in pursuing ICT related studies and professions**

As the digital transition is reshaping the way we live, work and learn, digital skills have become a prerequisite for actively participating and shaping the world around us. Yet, studies indicate that around 44% of Europeans lack basic digital skills. In addition, Europe is facing a growing need for ICT specialists and especially female specialists who only represent 19% of the field<sup>40</sup>. With the [Digital Decade strategy](#)<sup>41</sup>, the European Commission has set ambitious targets to tackle this imbalance and encourage Member States actions on digital skills development. Concretely, by 2030, it aims to reach at least 20 million employed ICT specialists and in striving towards this target, special attention should be paid to achieving gender balance.

The Digital Decade Strategy builds upon the [European Skills Agenda](#)<sup>42</sup> and the [European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan](#)<sup>43</sup> and the achievement of its targets are supported by several European Commission policies, including the [Digital Education Action Plan](#)<sup>44</sup>. The Digital Education Action Plan includes two initiatives dedicated to empower girls and women of all ages to engage with digital topics: 'Girls Go Circular' and the 'ESTeAM Fests'. Finally, in 2023, special attention is paid to digital skills in the context of the Year of Skills, announced by President von der Leyen in her State of the European Union Address on 14 September 2022.

Despite numerous studies indicating that the low proportion of women in the ICT sector is related to institutional, socio-economic and cultural barriers prevalent from a young age, there is a lack of research and effective policy interventions tackling these barriers in primary and secondary education. In addition, initiatives in this field often focus on the Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) fields as a whole rather than

<sup>39</sup> See for example: UNESCO (2019) "I'd blush if I could. Closing gender divides in digital skills through education" (<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000367416>)

<sup>40</sup> See Eurostat statistics: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=ICT\\_specialists\\_in\\_employment#ICT\\_specialists\\_by\\_sex](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=ICT_specialists_in_employment#ICT_specialists_by_sex)

<sup>41</sup> <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/digital-decade-policy-programme-2030>

<sup>42</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1223&langId=en>

<sup>43</sup> [https://pact-for-skills.ec.europa.eu/community-resources/publications-and-documents/european-pillar-social-rights-action-plan\\_en#:~:text=The%20European%20Pillar%20of%20Social%20Rights%20Action%20Plan,active%20involvement%20of%20social%20partners%20and%20civil%20society](https://pact-for-skills.ec.europa.eu/community-resources/publications-and-documents/european-pillar-social-rights-action-plan_en#:~:text=The%20European%20Pillar%20of%20Social%20Rights%20Action%20Plan,active%20involvement%20of%20social%20partners%20and%20civil%20society)

<sup>44</sup> <https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/digital-education/action-plan>

digital skills and informatics specifically. They are also fragmented across different education and training sectors at European, national, regional and local level.

Supporting research on the key factors and actors influencing girls' aspirations and mapping best practices across Europe could help developing and piloting of a more impactful and scalable policy intervention. In addition, a relevant teaching framework could support educators in primary and secondary schools with breaking patterns of harmful cultural barriers such as gender stereotypes and biases, often conveyed in language and visuals.

### Activities that can be funded

Main activities under this priority could involve (non-exhaustive list):

- Methodologically robust research and analysis leading to better understanding of topic at hand, transnational mapping work on existing practices, policies, or methods producing large-scale sectoral or cross-sectoral outputs;
- Development and effective delivery of transnational capacity-building activities such as training, mentoring programmes, institutional adjustments;
- Analysis of policy contexts, policy-research, design of policy intervention building a solid bridge between policy and practice;
- Design and pilot frameworks, guidelines, methods (including on cooperation of different stakeholders and actors) and activities related to innovative solutions;
- Proposal of evidence-based recommendations potentially addressing different stakeholders and at different levels i.e. national or European;
- Analysis of transferability of the project results and sustainability of its results after the end of the project;
- Dissemination and networking events (sectoral or cross sectoral) aiming for further exposure of the project work and results and for increasing possibility for transferability in similar contexts.

### Expected deliverables and impact

Projects under this priority should produce the following deliverables:

- Identify key factors and actors that influence girls' aspirations in pursuing ICT studies and professions in Europe through **a review of existing research and a mapping of national initiatives** (as well as European and regional ones, if relevant) currently active in the EU. This work should take into consideration institutional (e.g. informatics as a subject at school and availability of gender sensitive learning resources) as well as socio-economic (e.g. access to technology) and cultural factors (e.g. gender biases and stereotypes). Key actors for girls' career orientation could include parents, career counsellors, teachers and educators. This part may identify gaps as well as best practices on EU, national, regional and local level with the aim of deducing lessons learned;
- The work under point 1 above should inform the relevant design and **promotion of a teaching framework** related to digital skills and competences in primary and secondary education;
- The development and piloting of a **policy intervention** aimed at increasing girls' aspirations in pursuing ICT studies and professions in Europe. The intervention may involve formal, non-formal and informal education and should have **high potential for scalability and transferability in different educational systems**. It should be based on existing best practices as identified under point (1), and aims to increase girls' exposure to digital technologies from a young age, debunk gendered notions of intelligence and aptitude, and foster role models and peer-to-peer learning.

Ultimately the project should have a measurable impact in unpacking the phenomenon of underrepresentation of girls in the field of ICT studies and design a solution (policy intervention) that has a high potential for increasing the number of girls whose career choice or learning pathway leads to an ICT field.

## Priority 2: Digital well-being: Putting into practice what works

Well-being in digital education is an emerging policy area which addresses the effects of the digital technologies on the well-being of the school community. It is **central for the mainstreaming of high-quality and inclusive digital education** (i.e. digitally competent teachers, high quality digital content, effective pedagogy, access to devices etc.). It is understood as a feeling of physical, cognitive, social and emotional contentment that enables all individuals to engage positively in all digital learning environments including through digital education and training tools and methods, maximise their potential and self-realisation and helps them to act safely online, supporting their empowerment in online environments.

As such, it includes both the creation of a positive learning experience through the use of digital tools and technologies and a comprehensive approach towards 'digital well-being', and brings together issues relating to the empowerment of young people online and the promotion of digital citizenship, corresponding to the needs of the digital societies we live in. Therefore, it is important to **accompany the evolution of digital education through a holistic approach** that responds to the challenges and takes advantage of the benefits of today's digital world while safeguarding children's and young people's privacy, safety and mental health. Lastly, this policy situates **well-being in the broader digital education ecosystem** and the complex nature of wellbeing in digital education is intertwined with the integration of digital technologies in learning, teaching and assessment. The ongoing research in this area brings to light best practices for teachers and educators when it comes to creating a learning environment which champions digital wellbeing. As such, the need to translate best practices into specific projects within classrooms is the basis for this priority.

### Activities that can be funded

Main activities under this priority could involve (non-exhaustive list):

- Methodologically robust research and analysis leading to better understanding of topic at hand, transnational mapping work on existing practices, policies, or methods producing large-scale sectoral or cross-sectoral outputs;
- Development and effective delivery of transnational capacity-building activities such as training, mentoring programmes, institutional adjustments;
- Analysis of policy contexts, policy-research, design of policy intervention building a solid bridge between policy and practice;
- Design and pilot frameworks, guidelines, methods (including on cooperation of different stakeholders and actors) and activities related to innovative solutions;
- Proposal of evidence-based recommendations potentially addressing different stakeholders and at different levels i.e. national or European;
- Analysis of transferability of the project results and sustainability of its results after the end of the project;
- Dissemination and networking events (sectoral or cross sectoral) aiming for further exposure of the project work and results and for increasing possibility for transferability in similar contexts.

### Expected deliverables and impact

Projects under this priority should produce the following deliverables:

- The design and implementation of a project which builds on best practices with a focus on how schools can best strengthen well-being in digital education and point to ways in which the use of technology in teaching, learning and assessment provides a way forward for well-being in digital education. The project should take into account the diversification of technology, the acquisition of digital skills and pedagogical approaches to digital well-being whilst being mindful of the risks associated with excessive use of technology;
- The promotion of cooperation between schools, education technology providers and the wider community in addressing how inclusive and high-quality digital education contributes to the digital wellbeing of learners. This cooperation should bring together the relevant expertise in view of designing and implementing projects that underscore the importance of digital wellbeing.

### **Priority 3: Data literacy strategies in primary and secondary education**

Data plays a crucial role in education as they provide valuable insights into student learning, helps educators make informed decisions, and drives continuous improvement in teaching and learning. Data are important in a number of key functions: assessment, personalisation, evaluation, decision-making and research.

Data literacy is the ability to critically understand, evaluate, create and communicate data as information, and it focuses on the competences involved in working with data<sup>45</sup>. This skill set and knowledge base provides many advantages. For example, data literacy empowers students to critically navigate and interpret the vast digital information landscape preparing them for life and career success in a data-driven world. Data literacy also gives teachers tools to improve their teaching, reduce their workload, connect better with individual students, and enables teachers to educate students in developing this skill-

### Activities that can be funded

Main activities under this priority could involve (non-exhaustive list):

- Methodologically robust research and analysis leading to better understanding of topic at hand, transnational mapping work on existing practices, policies, or methods producing large-scale sectoral or cross-sectoral outputs;
- Development and effective delivery of transnational capacity-building activities such as training, mentoring programmes, , institutional adjustments;
- Analysis of policy contexts, policy-research, design of policy intervention building a solid bridge between policy and practice.
- Design and pilot frameworks, guidelines, methods (including on cooperation of different stakeholders and actors) and activities related to innovative solutions.
- Proposal of evidence-based recommendations potentially addressing different stakeholders and at different levels i.e. national or European.
- Analysis of transferability of the project results and sustainability of its results after the end of the project.

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<sup>45</sup> See more on what data literacy competence include in the Digital competence Framework (DigComp): [https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/digcomp/digcomp-framework\\_en](https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/digcomp/digcomp-framework_en)

- Dissemination and networking events (sectoral or cross sectoral) aiming for further exposure of the project work and results and for increasing possibility for transferability in similar contexts.

### *Expected deliverables and impact*

Projects under this priority should produce the following deliverables:

- Identify existing data literacy strategies, either as standalone or as part of the institutions' broader digital education strategies, and explain their benefits in primary and secondary education. Particular attention should be paid on whether and how teachers and educators are supported in developing data literacy competences for teaching. This would imply data literacy for improving their teaching as such, and being able to develop this skill for their learners as part of the teaching process;
- Map data literacy strategies in national curricula: Identify in particular to what extent and in what ways data literacy is addressed in curricula in different Member States and how curricula are being modified to reflect the need for data literacy.
- Based on the above, identify existing or tested practices in the field as well as challenges or gaps to be addressed. Based on the mapping, the following should be produced:
  - Best practices for integrating this skill as part of the Member States and third countries associated to the Programme overall digital education strategy setting. The strategies should have a particular focus on ways to support teachers with developing data literacy competence, both for themselves and their learners as part of teachers' pedagogical practice;
  - Recommendations that could be addressed at European and national level taking into consideration the success factors and challenges of developing data literacy in curricula or practices in primary and secondary education.

## **TOPIC 2 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET) - ERASMUS-EDU-2024-POL-EXP-VET**

### *Objectives*

**Projects under Topic 2 address the VET sector. These projects support the implementation of the principles and objectives of the [European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan](#)<sup>46</sup>, the [European Skills Agenda](#)<sup>47</sup>, the [Council Recommendation on vocational education and training for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience](#)<sup>48</sup>, and the [Osnabrück Declaration on vocational education and training as an enabler of recovery and just transitions to digital and green economies](#)<sup>49</sup>.**

### *Themes and priorities (scope)*

Proposals submitted under this topic must address one of the following priorities:

<sup>46</sup> [https://pact-for-skills.ec.europa.eu/community-resources/publications-and-documents/european-pillar-social-rights-action-plan\\_en#:~:text=The%20European%20Pillar%20of%20Social%20Rights%20Action%20Plan,active%20involvement%20of%20social%20partners%20and%20civil%20society](https://pact-for-skills.ec.europa.eu/community-resources/publications-and-documents/european-pillar-social-rights-action-plan_en#:~:text=The%20European%20Pillar%20of%20Social%20Rights%20Action%20Plan,active%20involvement%20of%20social%20partners%20and%20civil%20society)

<sup>47</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1223&langId=en>

<sup>48</sup> <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/content/council-recommendation-24-november-2020-vocational-education-and-training-vet-sustainable>

<sup>49</sup> [https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/osnabrueck\\_declaration\\_eu2020.pdf](https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/osnabrueck_declaration_eu2020.pdf)



- Priority 4: Women in GreenTech
- Priority 5: Support structures and networks for apprentices' mobility

### Priority 4: Women in GreenTech

The [Green Deal Industrial Plan](#)<sup>50</sup> gives new urgency to the full implementation of the European Skills Agenda as well as to improving how we value and use skills in the economy. The green and digital transitions will bring many opportunities in terms of new jobs, if we put in place the right measures to make sure the workforce has the right skills. However, as stated in the Green Deal Industrial Plan, a gender gap continues to prevail in net-zero technologies<sup>51</sup>. For example, women are under-represented in vocational education and training in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) sub-fields that are highly relevant for the net-zero industry. In the renewables sector, women account for only one third of the workforce.<sup>52</sup>

Underlying barriers to women's participation in the net-zero economy include not only a lack of technical skills but also insufficient mentorship opportunities as well as cultural and social norms more broadly. Hence, there is a clear opportunity for harnessing female talent there, which is why the inclusiveness of women is at the heart of the third pillar of the Green Deal Industrial Plan.

Partnerships should focus on developing ways to overcome the obstacles preventing girls and women from pursuing a VET career in the green/clean technology sector and to increase the participation of women in the sector. One of the aims would be to develop a blueprint of best practices in the clean technology sector aimed at attracting girls and women to green vocational education and training programmes, and career pathways.

Cooperation with local, regional and/or national public authorities, and education and training providers, would be crucial.

#### Activities that can be funded

The projects under this priority should implement at least 4 of the activities mentioned below (additional activities may be added, non-exhaustive list) and should cover at least one of ISCED/EQF levels 3 or 4:

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<sup>50</sup> [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/green-deal-industrial-plan\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/green-deal-industrial-plan_en)

<sup>51</sup> [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/green-deal-industrial-plan\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/green-deal-industrial-plan_en) - Net-zero technologies' means renewable energy technologies; electricity and heat storage technologies; heat pumps; grid technologies; renewable fuels of non-biological origin technologies; sustainable alternative fuels technologies; electrolyzers and fuel cells; advanced technologies to produce energy from nuclear processes with minimal waste from the fuel cycle, small modular reactors, and related best-in-class fuels; carbon capture, utilisation, and storage technologies; and energy-system related energy efficiency technologies. They refer to the final products, specific components and specific machinery primarily used for the production of those products. (Source: Commission's proposal for a Net Zero Industry Act: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52023PC0161>)

<sup>52</sup> Communication from the Commission - A Green Deal Industrial Plan for the Net-Zero Age (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52023DC0062&qid=1696328930380>)

- Campaigns run together by VET providers and the green/clean technology sector in coordination with schools and/or public employment services to attract more female applicants to relevant VET programmes;
- Involve female role models from the local, regional or national community to showcase successful professional and personal experiences in STEM fields to raise awareness and encourage females both youngsters and those in later stages of life to choose relevant VET programmes;
- Develop mentoring programmes by women in the sector for girls in the final stage of their VET programme or when entering the sector;
- Provide specific training to career guidance officers, teachers and trainers, both in schools, training centres and public employment services, to raise their awareness about green/clean technology career opportunities and female potential;
- Provide targeted career guidance, upskilling and reskilling opportunities with an awareness-raising component about women's perspectives in clean technology jobs both targeting young girls in schools and VET providers and adult women in periods of career re-orientation;
- Identify successful methods, good practices, to attract girls and women in green/clean technology VET programmes, including through research as relevant.

Projects should carry out above activities in cooperation with local, regional and/or national public authorities. Young women at time of choosing learning pathways and/or adult women in periods of career re-orientation should be the project main target groups. Activities would aim to develop, for example, a blueprint of inspiring practices in the VET sector aimed at attracting girls and women to green/clean technology career pathways.

#### Expected impact

Projects should develop ways to attract women to the net-zero Technology sector<sup>53</sup> and overcome the obstacles women face that prevent them from pursuing a career in this field, thereby increasing the participation of women in the sector.

### **Priority 5: Support structures and networks for apprentices' mobility**

The [2020 Council Recommendation on Vocational Education and Training \(VET\)](#)<sup>54</sup> and the [Osnabrück Declaration](#)<sup>55</sup> have placed a very strong emphasis on VET internationalisation, and learner mobility in particular. Along with setting the target of 8% of VET learners (including apprentices) benefitting from a learning mobility abroad, the 2020 Council Recommendation stressed the importance of opportunities for learning mobility of VET learners and staff, including virtual mobility, long duration mobility, and mobility to third countries. The Osnabrück Declaration includes actions at the national level to support and facilitate mobility, including for apprentices.

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<sup>53</sup> Green Deal Industrial Plan - [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/green-deal-industrial-plan\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/green-deal-industrial-plan_en)

<sup>54</sup> <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/content/council-recommendation-24-november-2020-vocational-education-and-training-vet-sustainable>

<sup>55</sup> [https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/osnabrueck\\_declaration\\_eu2020.pdf](https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/osnabrueck_declaration_eu2020.pdf)

There has been a strong political push to increase the average duration of learning mobility periods of VET learners and especially apprentices since 2016, with the introduction of the Erasmuspro activity (e.g lasting more than 90 days) in the Erasmus+ 2014-2020 programme. Such opportunity of so called “long duration mobility” has also been included in the Erasmus 2021-2027 programme. However, barriers and impediments still persist.

Projects under this priority aims at removing obstacles to mobility of apprentices, in particular creating or enhancing support structures, networks and/or reference points for apprentices’ mobility, including for example mobility coordinators in charge of facilitating, preparing and following up mobility of apprentices. They address the VET sector and its ecosystem, including local, regional and/or national authorities as well as Erasmus+ accredited consortia coordinators, social partners, VET providers and companies, in particular SMEs, and other relevant stakeholders, with the aim of developing support structures and networks for apprentices’ mobility.

Proposals submitted under this priority should address the following sub-priorities:

1. Targeting barriers and structural obstacles to mobility of apprentices, including, as relevant, for long duration mobility, and testing solutions and opportunities to overcome them;
2. Supporting sending and hosting organisations, in particular those engaged in apprenticeships schemes, in the implementation of learning mobility periods for apprentices;
3. Enhance the outreach to apprentices and employers and the quality of the learning mobility experience.

### *Activities that can be funded*

The projects under this priority should implement at least 5 of the activities mentioned below (additional activities may be added, non-exhaustive list):

- Support national, regional and /or local authorities, and/or Erasmus+ accredited consortium coordinators, chambers, social partners, sectoral organisations etc. to set up support structures, networks, reference points or mobility coordinators to facilitate all stages of mobility of apprentices (for finding partners, preparation before the mobility, support and mentoring during and after mobility<sup>56</sup> including to ensure recognition of learning outcomes from the mobility experience and post-mobility reintegration phase) for learners, sending and receiving organisations with a focus on small companies;
- Involve social partners to support employers, identify sectoral needs and specificities, and develop broad-scale, sector-specific measures to enable the mobility of apprentices;
- Find solutions to the barriers and obstacles (legal framework, structure of curricula, social insurance coverage, recognition of learning outcomes, etc.), and design and implement concrete measures to overcome them;
- Support partnerships between organisations (including companies) to implement stable and regular mobility schemes as part of curricula;

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<sup>56</sup> For example, support the application process, predefine the individual training plan as relevant, create guidelines, take care of organisational and practical aspects, provide mentoring, recognition, career planning, develop train the coordinators material, etc.

- Collect additional data, research on the key success factors for, and long-term benefits of, mobility of apprentices for all parties involved, with special focus on long duration mobility, and raise awareness of them, through communication campaigns;
- Build capacity for organisations and businesses to undertake apprentices' mobility and take advantage of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships<sup>57</sup>, with its objective of promoting the mobility of apprentices;
- Build up and strengthen apprentices networks, on the basis of the already existing initiatives all over Europe;
- Support companies and in-company trainers in receiving apprentices, including for learning mobility of apprentices between companies from the same sector;
- Foster bottom-up initiatives aiming at supporting integration (cultural, linguistic) of apprentices during the mobility experience in the host country;
- Design and implement in the framework of the project new bilateral or multilateral mobility opportunities for apprentices with partners in the project, for example by creating sectoral networks for rotation schemes, as possible.

### Expected impact

In terms of impact, projects should foster a strategic approach towards mobility of apprentices and implementing the appropriate measures to overcome the obstacles hindering such learning mobility abroad, within or outside of the Erasmus+ programme. They should also contribute to the 8% mobility target set in the Council recommendation on Vocational Education and Training (VET), building on its objectives and principles, as well as promoting effective forms of cooperation of stakeholders at all levels, including the involvement of employers, in particular SMEs.

## **TOPIC 3: ADULT EDUCATION - ERASMUS-EDU-2024-POL-EXP-ADULT**

### Objectives

**Projects under Topic 3 address the adult learning sector. These projects support the implementation of the principles and objectives of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan, the European Skills Agenda and in particular the Council Recommendation on individual learning accounts, the initiative on the Pact for Skills and the Council Resolution on a new European agenda for adult learning 2021-2030.**

### Themes and priorities (scope)

Proposals submitted under this topic must address one of the following priorities:

- Priority 6: Joining forces to reskill workers
- Priority 7: Supporting the Pact for Skills

### **Priority 6: Joining forces to reskill workers**

Rapidly changing skills requirements as a result of the digital and green transitions require more support for adults to update their skills throughout their life. Furthermore,

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<sup>57</sup> [European Alliance for Apprenticeships - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](https://european-council.europa.eu/media/en/press-communications/infographic/infographic_european_alliance_for_apprenticeships_en.pdf)

demographic ageing makes it essential for adults to continue skills developments to avoid skills shortages. All this requires more upskilling and reskilling of workers, therefore more participation in adult learning, including non-formal adult learning in non-traditional settings.

Projects under this priority will identify and test methods and mechanisms to bring together public and private players to help employed and unemployed workers reskill for new tasks or into new jobs at scale, including in particular initiatives for reskilling workers from declining sectors into the green and digital economy.

### Activities that can be funded

Partnerships should focus on developing ways to increase participation of adults, especially the up- and reskilling of in-transition-workers, unemployed or inactive people, from sectors in decline to sectors that are growing and in need of more workers with skills for the green and digital economy. The output would be to develop standardised practices of partnership models for the cooperation of companies, together with public players, to improve up- and reskilling from declining sectors into the green and digital economy. Specific attention should be paid to the needs of lower skilled and vulnerable individuals, as well as those who are the most reluctant to engage with training activities in adult age.

Main activities under this priority could involve (non-exhaustive list):

- Development and testing of training materials, innovative training methods and the establishment of “reskilling labs”, where the public and the private sector jointly design content for skills development, especially in growing sectors where shortages exist. These should include concrete targets to reskill and place workers from declining sectors, unemployed or inactive people into in-demand jobs from the green and digital economy;
- Mobilising employers to proactively reskill their employees and running outreach campaigns by companies, training providers, public and private organisations, to mobilise and include more in-transition-workers, unemployed or inactive people from sectors in decline to sectors that are growing and are in need of more workers with matching skills, through up- and reskilling;
- Development of adequate skills assessment tools to identify the potential of workers from declining sectors, unemployed and inactive people and empower them to train based on their individual needs;
- In-company training activities to apply training materials and methods developed by the “reskilling labs”. These should, include workers from small- and medium-sized enterprises or micro-enterprises;
- Development of digital platforms that link potential participants to relevant training. The platform should be based on skills intelligence on training needs, by using relevant data and reflecting on expected trends and include guidance and counselling for employers and employees alike. These platforms should be designed and tested with the idea to be extended to larger, national level platforms. Testing should focus mainly on the needs of small- and medium-sized enterprises, micro-enterprises and other companies without the capabilities to put in place proactive reskilling programmes;
- Increase the supply of short programmes with high employability outcomes, wherever possible leading to quality assured micro-credentials;
- Putting in place career guidance and counselling designed for the objectives of this action, with special focus on the needs of small- and medium-sized enterprises and micro-enterprises. This could also include specific training for career guidance and counselling officers in guidance services as well as in

enterprises, training centres, public employment services, to raise their awareness about career opportunities in the green and digital economy;

- During the training activities, mentoring programmes should be put in place for the participants;
- Activities should be analysed on efficiency and impact, to allow later upscaling.

### Expected impact

- Higher participation rate of adults in lifelong learning, contributing to the target agreed by Member States, that at least 60 % of all adults should be participating in training every year by 2030;
- Blueprints on ways to improve training of adults, especially in-transition-workers, unemployed or inactive people, through approaches that have the potential of becoming mainstreamed;
- Blueprints of “reskilling labs” where the public and the private sector jointly design content for skills development for in-demand occupations of the green and digital economy;
- Models for enhanced career guidance, counselling and mentoring for the up- and reskilling of adults, especially from declining sectors to the green and digital economy;
- Improved reflections on the specific up- and reskilling needs of SMEs and micro-enterprises;
- Availability of tried and tested platforms that can be upscaled into national platforms, to link training needs of companies, individuals with relevant provision.

Projects should result in effective structural collaboration frameworks where all actors involved share the responsibility for adult skills development.

## **Priority 7: Supporting the Pact for Skills**

The [Pact for Skills](#)<sup>58</sup> is the first flagship action of the [2020 European Skills Agenda](#)<sup>59</sup>. The Pact is firmly anchored in the principles of the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#)<sup>60</sup> and supports the goals of the Green Deal and the digital transformation, as set out in the [Commission communication “A strong Social Europe for Just Transitions”](#)<sup>61</sup>. It also contributes to reaching the EU target of 60% of adults participating in training every year by 2030, as set out in the [European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan](#)<sup>62</sup>.

The Pact for Skills is an engagement model for addressing skills challenges and deliver on the [EU Industrial Strategy](#)<sup>63</sup>, and the green and digital transitions. It aims to further address skills gaps throughout industrial eco-systems by mobilising companies, workers, national, regional and local authorities, social partners, industry organisations,

<sup>58</sup> [https://pact-for-skills.ec.europa.eu/index\\_en](https://pact-for-skills.ec.europa.eu/index_en)

<sup>59</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1223>

<sup>60</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1226&langId=en>

<sup>61</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/ALL/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0014>

<sup>62</sup> [https://pact-for-skills.ec.europa.eu/community-resources/publications-and-documents/european-pillar-social-rights-action-plan\\_en#:~:text=The%20European%20Pillar%20of%20Social%20Rights%20Action%20Plan,active%20involvement%20of%20social%20partners%20and%20civil%20society](https://pact-for-skills.ec.europa.eu/community-resources/publications-and-documents/european-pillar-social-rights-action-plan_en#:~:text=The%20European%20Pillar%20of%20Social%20Rights%20Action%20Plan,active%20involvement%20of%20social%20partners%20and%20civil%20society)

<sup>63</sup> [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/european-industrial-strategy\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/european-industrial-strategy_en)

education and training providers, chambers of commerce and employment services to invest in upskilling and reskilling actions.

This priority aims at supporting existing regional partnerships (partnerships at the level of one region within a country or involving more than one region, within one or more countries) under the Pact for Skills to organise and implement action to deliver on their concrete commitments to invest in training for people of working age.

Projects under this priority should therefore include only registered members of regional partnerships under the Pact for Skills, including regional and/or local authorities.

### Activities that can be funded

Projects should implement all the activities listed below:

- Develop and support governance structures or arrangements connecting members within the same regional partnership, including regional and/or local authorities.
- Support the definition, implementation, and monitoring of concrete commitments of a regional partnership, such as:
  - gathering skills intelligence,
  - upskilling of low-skilled people,
  - reskilling people for new tasks in their jobs or reskilling of people from certain sectors with skills transferable to other sectors.
- Develop and support cooperation in the above fields of activity between regional and/or local authorities and other stakeholders that are members of the same regional partnership.

### Expected impact

Projects should result in effective structural cooperation frameworks between regional skills partnerships under the Pact for Skills.

Projects should help regional partnerships to consolidate arrangements that enable the implementation at regional level of up- and reskilling actions for the working-age population with a focus on the active involvement of all relevant stakeholders, including education and training providers and SMEs.

The concrete commitments by the regional skills partnerships under the Pact should implement skilling actions to be supported either by EU funding or else through national and regional support. These actions should generate a strong and lasting impact on the availability of up- and reskilling opportunities to the working age population.

Projects are expected to make visible impact at regional level to help stakeholders better meet the skills needs of their economy, consistently with their regional smart specialisation strategies and taking into account developments of skills partnerships of relevant Industrial Ecosystems at European level.

Through the wide dissemination of project outcomes, solutions for governance structures and arrangements should serve as inspiration for other regional partnerships that can replicate these solutions to involve all relevant stakeholders, including education and training providers and in particular SMEs in the joint implementation of skilling actions.

## **TOPIC 4: SCHOOL EDUCATION - ERASMUS-EDU-2024-POL-EXP-SCHOOL**

### *Objectives*

The following European policy experimentations aim to support reforms and policy impact in Member States in the school education sector. All three priorities are linked to and inspired by the European Education Area<sup>64</sup> (EEA) priorities and relevant recent EU policy documents:

- On inclusive education – Council Recommendation on Pathways to School Success<sup>65</sup> and its accompanying Staff Working Document<sup>66</sup>, and Expert Group on supportive learning environments for groups at risk of underachievement and for supporting well-being at school;
- On green education – Council Recommendation on Learning for the green transition and sustainable development<sup>67</sup> and GreenComp, the European Sustainability Competence Framework<sup>68</sup>;
- Promotion of learning mobility of teachers to contribute to their continuous professional development, the attractiveness of the teaching profession and reduce teacher shortages across Europe – Council conclusions on enhancing teachers’ and trainers’ mobility, in particular European mobility, during their initial and in-service education and training<sup>69</sup>.

### *Themes and priorities (scope)*

Proposals submitted under this topic must address one of the following priorities:

- Priority 8: Pathways to school success
- Priority 9: Building sustainability competences
- Priority 10: Support structures and mechanisms for enhancing mobility of teachers

### **Priority 8: Pathways to school success**

Projects should address only one of the following 2 sub-priorities:

- a) Assessing learners’ competences - developing assessment practices to support school success for all learners (with a special focus on formative assessment)**

<sup>64</sup> <https://education.ec.europa.eu/about-eea>

<sup>65</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32022H1209%2801%29&qid=1671106078506>

<sup>66</sup> <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/2f5457d7-3edb-11ed-92ed-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-277177871>

<sup>67</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32022H0627%2801%29>

<sup>68</sup> JRC Publications Repository - GreenComp 'The European sustainability competence framework': <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/bc83061d-74ec-11ec-9136-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

<sup>69</sup> Council conclusions on enhancing teachers’ and trainers’ mobility, in particular European mobility, during their initial and in-service education and training 2022/C 167/02 : [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52022XG0421\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52022XG0421(01))



The Council Recommendation on Pathways to School Success<sup>70</sup>, aimed at improving quality and inclusion in school education, invites Member States to place a special attention to assessment policies and practices, which have a key role to play to help adapt teaching and learning more effectively to learners' needs and support learners' progression. Member States are invited to “*promote assessment practices that reflect and support personal learning needs and paths, in particular by making extensive use of formative and continuous assessment, and by combining multiple digital and non-digital forms and tools (e.g., portfolios, peer assessment and self-assessment) that are inclusive, culturally responsive, and participatory*”. It also invites them to invest in high quality and research-based initial teacher education and continuous professional development (CPD) to support school leaders, teachers, trainers, and other educational staff in their assessment practices.

During the first semester 2023, the Working Group Schools, Pathways to School Success explored the question: “**How can an effective alignment of formative and summative assessments of learners' key competences be ensured and supported and be more effectively integrated in teaching and learning?**” The key messages of this work have been captured in a thematic report<sup>71</sup> which aims to serve as a guide to policy making at national and regional levels.

### Activities that can be funded

Projects should implement at least the first 3 activities mentioned below (other activities can also be added, the list below being non-exhaustive list) and support education authorities to:

- Establish standards and guidelines that ensure a balanced and coherent approach to assessment of learners' competences, which is consistent with curricula and learning standards and aligns formative assessment with more traditional, summative ways of assessment;
- Design alternative forms of assessment, methods and tools (including feedback, portfolios, etc) that are more inclusive and equitable, and effectively help students progress in their learning process and measure a broad set learners' competences, including higher-order thinking (e.g. problem-solving, creativity, collaborative work, etc.) and social and emotional competences;
- Help teachers expand their assessment repertoire and capacity to support diverse learner needs. This should include addressing competence assessment in initial teacher education programmes and in continuing professional development programmes, both in subject areas and transversal competences, as well as providing support for ongoing professional learning communities and other networks;
- Ensure involvement of learners at classroom, school and policy levels in decisions concerning assessment;
- Support school leaders to promote coherent, whole school approaches to assessment;
- Ensure the development of a shared vocabulary and facilitate communication and dialogue across networks and in schools (school and teacher professional networks, teacher educators and other education stakeholder groups), and

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<sup>70</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2022:316:FIN>

<sup>71</sup> <https://education.ec.europa.eu/news/new-thematic-report-assessing-of-learner-competences-policies-and-practices-to-support-successful-and-inclusive-education>

between educators, learners and their parents;

- Pilot and refine new assessment approaches in selected schools and school networks, with a view to prepare system-wide change;
- Ensure ongoing monitoring and evaluation, considering the extent to which teachers' practices and students' experience shift in line with the new proposed assessment methods.

### Expected impact

Build, test and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions (to be integrated into national educational policies) promoting assessment forms which are inclusive and 'fit for purpose' (e.g., effectively measure competences, including social and emotional learning, and support competence development), including interventions aimed at building assessment literacy for different groups (teachers, school leaders and learners; policy makers; parents).

#### ***b) Building a systemic, whole-school approach to mental health and well-being in schools in Europe***

It is increasingly being acknowledged that education and school experience should include more than knowledge and skills, to also provide learners with safe environments to develop their social emotional competences, grow as individuals, and thrive as learners. At EU level, Pathways to School Success places special attention to **well-being, both of learners and teachers** and supports a whole school approach to well-being and mental health.

In a whole-school approach, the entire school community - schools, families, communities, authorities - engages in a cohesive, collective and collaborative action, based on multi-disciplinarity and aimed at supporting each learner in the most appropriate way. The **whole-system, school approach to well-being and mental health** focuses on universal strategies for all school children as a major goal of education.

Such universal strategies include development of social and emotional learning, of positive classroom and school climate, include the voice of the learners in the learning process and school decisions etc. In addition, students at risk of, or experiencing, mental health issues benefit from targeted interventions, in collaboration with mental health professionals and family. The approach also underlines the importance of addressing mental health and well-being of teachers and staff and their training needs. Implementation of such an approach in schools requires a comprehensive and coordinated effort across all levels of the education system (from policy and governance to individual schools, classrooms and students), and across policies (health, social policies, migration, justice, ...).

Pathways to School Success is complemented by an informal **expert group on supportive learning environments for groups at risk of underachievement and for supporting well-being at school**, that started its activity on 30 March 2023. The group's objective is to assist the Commission in developing guidelines (at policy and at school levels) on the promotion of supportive learning environments and well-being in school.

To highlight some concrete measures at school level, and point out to some inspiring practices, the Commission, in cooperation with Network of Experts working on the Social dimension of the Education and Training ([NESET](#)) created a series of factsheets on<sup>72</sup>:

- Importance of [social and emotional learning](#)
- Building [resilience in schools](#)
- Supporting [well-being and mental health through education](#)
- [Bullying: What can schools do about bullying? and What motivates children who bully, and can they change?](#)
- [Well-being in the digital age](#)
- [Promoting teacher well-being.](#)

### *Activities that can be funded*

Based on a whole-school approach to well-being and mental health, on the recommendations within [Pathways to School Success policy framework](#)<sup>73</sup>, projects should implement at least 2 of the activities below:

- Develop, adapt and implement an integrated and comprehensive strategy towards success at school with well-being and mental health as a key component. Such a strategy should include a high focus on prevention, combined as appropriate with intervention measures, be evidence-based and combine universal measures with targeted and/or individualised provisions for learners requiring additional attention. It should be multi-layered and multisectoral (eg: cooperation between health, education, social welfare and child protection). It should also include a set of clear goals and plans with measurable indicators or checks;
- Accompany schools, from early childhood to upper secondary, in building their capacity for an enabling learning environments for well-being and mental health through:
  - embedding mental health literacy and social and emotional learning as an educational goal,
  - development of mental health and psychosocial support policies informed by learners' needs, voices and capacities
  - access to early intervention and mental health services and support.
  - meaningful collaboration between the school, family, and community to build a safe and nurturing learning environment
  - enhanced capacity of the education professionals, including school leaders, teachers and mental health workforce professionals (e.g., school psychologists, school social workers, school counsellors, school nurses and doctors, etc.) that work in partnership with children, families and community-based mental health services.
- Prepare school leaders, teachers, trainers and other education professionals to understand well-being and mental health issues, to strengthen their knowledge and capacities in a systematic way, both in initial teacher education (ITE) and continuing professional development (CPD) programmes.

<sup>72</sup> Supporting well-being and mental health through education: a series of inspiring factsheets for schools | European Education Area: <https://education.ec.europa.eu/news/supporting-well-being-and-mental-health-through-education-factsheets-for-schools>

<sup>73</sup> See Annex of the Council Recommendation: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32022H1209%2801%29&qid=1671106078506>

### Expected impact

Build, test, implement and evaluate policy interventions to support schools and school leaders in building an integrated and comprehensive strategy towards supporting well-being and mental health in schools; develop solutions (including embedding well-being in curricula, school planning and governance processes, training materials and courses for teachers and school leaders, handbooks, etc.) to prepare school leaders, teachers, trainers and other educational staff to understand well-being and mental health issues and to support development of social and emotional competences of learners and their teachers.

### **Priority 9: Building sustainability competences**

To address climate change and achieve the transition to a greener and fairer economy and society it is crucial for everybody to strengthen and develop competences and skills that help us live, work and act more sustainably.

To support the development and assessment of knowledge, skills and attitudes for sustainability, the Commission published [GreenComp](#)<sup>74</sup>, the European competence framework on sustainability in January 2022. This framework, which has been translated into all official EU languages, is a general reference model. It does not target any education level in particular; rather, policy makers and practitioners can use it and adapt it to their contexts and needs in education and training programmes.

Over the last two decades, EU Member States have increasingly adopted competence based approaches to education. *GreenComp* fits well into this development as the definition of sustainability competences is based on the [2018 Council Recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning](#)<sup>75</sup> which identifies competences as a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes and which has been a reference document for education ministries across the EU.

In April 2023, the Commission launched a community of practice for ministries, schools and research and training bodies, including many who are active in Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe projects, using the new *GreenComp* framework on sustainability competences. The community of practice provides a forum for exchange, networking and collaboration for those stakeholders and is open for interested users to join.

Policy experimentation should support education stakeholders and institutions to strengthen sustainability competence development and foster its systemic integration into education and training by building on the *GreenComp* framework. Embedding sustainability in a competence-based education can help learners foster a sustainability mindset based on the knowledge, skills and attitudes to think, plan and act with empathy, responsibility, and care for our planet.

### Activities that can be funded

Main activities under this priority could involve (non-exhaustive list):

- Develop models and approaches for the teaching and learning of sustainability competences at all levels of formal general education at school level (where

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<sup>74</sup> <https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC128040>

<sup>75</sup> [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C\\_.2018.189.01.0001.01.ENG&toc=OJ:C:2018:189:TOC](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2018.189.01.0001.01.ENG&toc=OJ:C:2018:189:TOC)

relevant, this can include ECEC and initial VET);

- Explore different forms of assessment for sustainability competences;
- Explore ways to build teachers' capacities related to sustainability competences;
- Build, test and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions related to sustainability competence development.

### Expected impact

- Improved methods for teaching sustainability competences in formal general education;
- Better linkage of curriculum content, learning outcomes and student assessment with regard to sustainability competences;
- Improved teacher preparedness for teaching sustainability competences.

### **Priority 10: Support structures and mechanisms for enhancing mobility of teachers**

The Council conclusions on enhancing teachers' and trainers' mobility, in particular European mobility, during their initial and in-service education and training, issued in 2022, stresses the benefits of mobility for the professional development of teachers themselves but also for the European development of their education and training institutions, and the education and training systems. It can also contribute to the attractiveness of the teaching profession and reduce teacher shortages across Europe.

**The objective for this European policy experimentation is** to support the embedding of learning mobility abroad for teachers (and more generally staff) as standard in the internationalisation strategy of schools, in the education and training systems, as well as in teachers' careers.

### Activities that can be funded

Projects should implement at least 2 of the following activities:

- Set up mobility offices, reference points, mobility coordinators or similar public support services providing administrative, practical, legal and policy advice to schools developing internationalisation strategies and wanting to implement cross-border learning mobility activities;
- Establish structured opportunities for peer-learning and mentoring between teachers and schools experienced in implementation of learning mobility, and those that are less experienced;
- Define and test simplified practices for ensuring substitute teachers during learning mobility periods (e.g. through pooling of teacher resources or simplified hiring procedures);
- Gather information on legal possibilities to recognize project management work performed by school staff as part of their regular (remunerated) work tasks, producing practical guidance to implement such possibilities and testing them;
- Create partnerships between education and training institutions and other public and private organisations (social partners, NGOs) that can contribute to the quality of teacher mobility.

In addition, projects should implement at least 2 of the following activities:

- Test practical and procedural solutions for removing administrative barriers and structural obstacles to the mobility of teachers (including reciprocal\_exchanges of teachers on teaching assignments);
- Gather and structure information about existing practices and procedures for recognising and rewarding learning outcomes of mobility periods abroad as a legitimate and valuable part of teachers' professional development activities;
- Define and test mobility windows in the school year: a period during the school year in which sending and hosting teachers and future teachers is appropriate and easy to implement (e.g. in terms of easily available substitutes);
- Design and implement modules dedicated to acquiring the skills necessary to organise learning mobility periods abroad for use in initial teacher education and continuous professional development for teachers (e.g., language skills, intercultural mediation, digital skills, comparative curriculum analysis).

Projects can improve their impact by implementing further complementary activities, including (but not limited to):

- Creating stable partnerships between schools from different Member States to implement regular and reciprocal mobility activities integrated into the school curricula;
- Creating synergies between Erasmus+ and other local, regional, national and EU funding mechanisms;
- Improving the capacity of education and training institutions to host teachers and teachers in training from abroad;
- Training school leaders to better understand and use the potential of learning mobility as an instrument to improve the school's everyday work and development strategies;
- Designing or significantly improving simplified procedures for financial management of EU grants for schools (in the context of national financing and accounting rules);
- Cooperating with Erasmus+ Teacher Academies, in particular to integrate and standardize teacher mobility into teacher training programmes;
- Creating training programmes, learning tools, and/or materials to train school staff in preparation, implementation, and follow-up of learning mobility.

### Expected impact

The expected impact is to develop, test and share practices and innovative mechanisms for overcoming the main obstacles to mobility of teachers as specified in the Council conclusions on enhancing teachers' and trainers' mobility.

Projects should maximise their impact by ensuring that the identified solutions are open, widely accessible, scalable and transferable.

For maximum impact, projects should bring together expertise of policy makers in school education, local and regional coordinators, school owners and other coordination bodies, schools, and especially Erasmus+ accredited schools. Projects should make use of practical know-how of teachers experienced in Erasmus+ (especially accreditation coordinators) or other international mobility programmes.T

**TOPIC 5: MICRO-CREDENTIALS - ERASMUS-EDU-2024-POL-EXP-MICRO-CRED***Objectives*

The objective of Topic 5 is to support reforms and policy impact in Member States and/or third countries associated to the Programme in the implementation of the Council Recommendation of 16 June 2022 on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability<sup>76</sup>.

Micro-credentials are the record of the learning outcomes that a learner has acquired following a small volume of learning. Micro-credentials make it possible for individuals to acquire knowledge, skills and competences in a flexible and targeted way. They can be instrumental in upskilling and reskilling of learners, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, so that they can adapt to a fast-changing labour market. Micro-credentials do not replace, however, traditional qualifications. The above-mentioned Council Recommendation sets out three building blocks: 1) a common definition for micro-credentials, 2) standard elements for consistent description of micro-credentials, and 3) principles for design, issuance and use of micro-credentials.

To deliver on the full potential of micro-credentials, Member States are recommended to create an enabling ecosystem composed of various providers of micro-credentials, relevant public authorities, as well as national qualifications frameworks and quality assurance mechanisms. Providers of micro-credentials' cover education and training institutions and organisations, including higher education institutions, Vocational Education and Training (VET) institutions, social partners (i.e. organisations representing workers and employers), employers and industry, civil society organisations, public employment services (PES), non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and regional and national authorities, and other types of actors designing, delivering and issuing micro-credentials for formal, non-formal and informal learning. There are also already several research projects carried out on micro-credentials to be considered for the purposes of this topic. For example:

- [Micro-credential innovations in higher education, by OECD](#)<sup>77</sup>;
- [Micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability, by OECD](#)<sup>78</sup>;
- [Micro-credentials for labour market education and training, by CEDEFOP](#)<sup>79</sup>;
- [Guide to design, issue and recognise micro-credentials, by ETF](#)<sup>80</sup>;

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<sup>76</sup> [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32022H0627\(02\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32022H0627(02))

<sup>77</sup> OECD Education Policy Perspectives, published on September 22, 2021, no. 39:

<https://www.oecd.org/publications/micro-credential-innovations-in-higher-education-f14ef041-en.htm>

<sup>78</sup> OECD Education Policy Perspectives, published 17 March, 2023, no. 66: [https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/micro-credentials-for-lifelong-learning-and-employability\\_9c4b7b68-en](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/micro-credentials-for-lifelong-learning-and-employability_9c4b7b68-en)

<sup>79</sup> 2 CEDEFOP research papers published in October 2022 (No 87) and February 2023 (No 89): <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/projects/microcredentials-labour-market-education-and-training/publications>

<sup>80</sup> European Training Foundation, 2022: <https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2023-05/Micro-Credential-Guidelines-Final-Delivery.pdf>

- [Micro-credentials linked to the Bologna key commitments - Common Framework for Micro-credentials in the EHEA, by the MICROBOL project](#)<sup>81</sup>.

### *Themes and priorities (scope)*

Proposals submitted under this topic must address one of the following priorities:

- Priority 11: Micro-credentials eco-systems
- Priority 12: Micro-credentials for the digital and green transitions

### **Priority 11: Micro-credentials eco-systems**

Thanks to the three building blocks of the above-mentioned Council Recommendation, the design and provision of micro-credentials can be more structured and transparent. However, more work is needed to further translate it into practice. While objectives and practices need to be adapted to given national/regional/local circumstances, approaches taken need to be transparent and comparable, in line with the provisions of the Council Recommendation.

Public authorities at national, regional, and/or local level, in cooperation with providers of micro-credentials, social partners and other stakeholders need to design and implement systemic changes in education and training as well as labour market systems so as to adapt them to the provision of micro-credentials.

The objective of Priority 11 is to support the stakeholders in their work to design systemic changes leading to:

- Defining the micro-credentials' framework and purpose in the national set-up, including in relation to the national qualifications framework (where appropriate);
- Incorporating micro-credentials issued by higher education institutions, VET institutions and other formal and non-formal providers in relevant quality assurance mechanisms;
- Facilitating understanding and recognition of micro-credentials issued by various actors and their portability between education systems and in the labour market, as well as promoting increased awareness on the meaning and value of micro-credentials;
- Making the provision of micro-credentials relevant and targeted.

Beneficiaries need to explore methods of design and issuance of micro-credentials, based on evidence, relevant to the needs of the specific target groups.

Beneficiaries may want to screen existing micro-credentials, try to identify shortcomings and suggest optimal and concrete solutions, along the lines of the above-mentioned Council Recommendation and aiming at practices as much as possible in synergy with practices developed in other Member States.

### *Activities that can be funded*

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<sup>81</sup> Microbol project, 2022 : [https://microbol.knowledgeinnovation.eu/wp-content/uploads/sites/20/2022/03/Micro-credentials\\_Framework\\_final-1.pdf](https://microbol.knowledgeinnovation.eu/wp-content/uploads/sites/20/2022/03/Micro-credentials_Framework_final-1.pdf)



Main activities under this priority could involve (non-exhaustive list):

- Examine the three building blocks as laid down in the above-mentioned Council Recommendation and explore avenues to incorporate the micro-credential concept fully in the national education/training system and national qualifications framework. If no strategy exists, draft a strategy and deliver specific recommendations for the public authorities at national/regional/local level as well as guidance for providers of micro-credentials;
- Explore changes needed in existing quality assurance mechanisms to incorporate micro-credentials. Prepare a roadmap for piloting such changes. Select bodies responsible for quality assurance, including for Higher Education, VET, adult learning, including related to providers from outside the formal system, that could test relevant quality assurance mechanisms. Deliver recommendations, based on the project findings, to ensure quality assurance culture in line with Annex II to the Council Recommendation on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability;
- Map current recognition practices of micro-credentials delivered by higher education institutions, VET institutions, and/or other formal and non-formal providers. Explore changes needed in existing tools and/or rules. Prepare a roadmap for piloting such changes. Select providers and competent authorities that could test them for academic, training or employment purposes. Deliver recommendations, based on the project findings, to facilitate transparent recognition procedures for micro-credentials issued by different types of providers, including recognition of prior learning (RPL) and the validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL), in line with Annex II to Council Recommendation on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability;
- Explore transferability and scalability of existing portability solutions, including ongoing pilot projects (such as digital portfolios, e-backpacks, applications confirming various types of skills - including those acquired outside formal education). Prepare a roadmap for piloting such portability solutions. Select providers that could implement it. Deliver specific recommendations, based on the project findings, regarding necessary changes at national level and guidance for providers of micro-credentials, to ensure that micro-credentials are portable in line with Annex II of the Council Recommendation on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability;
- Explore how micro-credentials are currently used to develop relevant skills as well as to promote employability, e.g. considering strengthening cooperation between education and training institutions with employers, public employment services and social partners. Explore changes needed in existing initiatives. Prepare a roadmap for piloting such changes. Select providers and competent authorities that could test it. Deliver specific examples and recommendations on how to exploit micro-credentials' potential for relevant education and training, upskilling and reskilling for the labour market, based on the project findings.

## **Priority 12: Micro-credentials for the digital and green transitions**

Public authorities at national, regional and/or local level from Member States and/or third countries associated to the Programme, in cooperation with providers of courses leading to micro-credentials (such as higher education institutions, VET institutions, adult learning organisations and non-formal providers), social partners and other

relevant stakeholders may receive grants for the design and implementation of micro-credentials to provide targeted learning, upskilling and reskilling opportunities to respond to the needs of the digital and green transitions.

Actions should be in line with the characteristics of micro-credentials as set out in the above-mentioned Council Recommendation and experimentation should focus in particular on learning pathways, diversity of learning settings, and designing relevant micro-credentials to respond to the challenges and opportunities of the digital and green transitions. The outcomes of the conducted project need to be implemented in the national/regional systems that are part of the project, with the potential to be transferred also to other systems.

### Activities that can be funded

Main activities under this priority could involve (non-exhaustive list):

- Examining and analysing actual and future needs of the economy and society at large with regard to equipping young people and lifelong learners with future proof skills needed to comply with the requirements of the green and digital transitions. This analysis should be based on skills intelligence tools, skills assessment tools and other solid evidence;
- Exploring the needs and ultimate interests of specific groups that need training, up- or reskilling;
- Mapping how courses leading to micro-credentials could serve the above needs;
- Designing and implementing relevant innovative, targeted and accessible courses leading to micro-credentials, based on the results of the prior mapping, offered to any learner, including for reskilling and upskilling purposes;
- These learner-centred courses leading to micro-credentials may be:
  - o courses offered to students, staff and other learners at formal education and training institutions or by non-formal providers;
  - o courses offered to upskill and reskill people for skills and jobs that are in demand on the labour market, including in the context of the digital and green transitions;
  - o courses offered to workers and jobseekers to address skills mismatches and bottlenecks in given economic sectors and regions;
  - o stand alone or designed as modules.
  - o In higher education, they could be delivered at short-cycle, Bachelor, Master or Doctoral level (EQF 5 to 8) and address skills and competences at basic, advanced or specialist level.
- Engaging companies that suffer from labour and skills shortages to cooperate with formal education and training organisations in designing ad-hoc micro-credentials that generate potential employment within the engaged companies.
- Targeted outreach activities, including communication materials.

### **Common to both priorities 11 and 12**

**Activities** of the project are, for example, meetings, consultations (online or physical), surveys, focus group discussions, activities related to the implementation of the piloting changes, including training sessions for staff and learners involved in testing the proposed solutions, design, issuance/publication and implementation of the actual micro-credentials and the courses leading to them, drafting of the strategies/recommendations/guidance documents, as well as dissemination activities.

To ensure the visibility of the selected projects, the activities shall **include a communication and dissemination plan**, which includes but is not limited to:

- Disseminating information about the call and project, its objectives and its results through reach-out activities addressed to the wider public;
- Organising a final event and delivering sustainable online dissemination materials targeting a wide range of providers of micro-credentials and other actors of the micro-credentials eco-system and presenting lessons learned from the activities conducted during the piloting phase, with key proposals towards the design, implementation, relevance, quality, recognition and portability of micro-credentials.

### *Expected impact*

- Improved knowledge and evidence base in the field of design, implementation, relevance, quality, recognition and portability of micro-credentials, together with information on potentially systemic changes needed in the micro-credential ecosystem at different levels in different national setups;
- Demonstrated European added value by identifying and sharing good practices and lessons on how to incorporate micro-credentials in the national qualifications frameworks and in education and labour market policies;
- Ensured transferability of conclusions by testing the implementation in different national contexts;
- Ensured scalability by involving a wide range of actors making part of the micro-credentials eco-systems.

## **TOPIC 6: HIGHER EDUCATION - ERASMUS-EDU-2024-POL-EXP-HIGHER-EDU**

### *Objectives - Themes and priorities (scope)*

#### **Priority 13: National/regional support to European Universities alliances**

In line with [the Council Recommendation of 5 April 2022 on building bridges for effective European higher education cooperation](#)<sup>82</sup>, “deeper and more effective transnational cooperation in the higher education sector across all Europe is key to supporting Union values, identity and democracy, to building the resilience of European society and economy, and to building a sustainable future”. In this Recommendation, it is also stated that “the European Universities, and similar long-standing institutionalised cooperation models, provide useful lessons learned while testing deeper transnational cooperation models that go beyond existing individual institutional strategies, governance and collaboration ecosystems. They are a source of inspiration for the wider higher education community to drive system-level reforms while facilitating better coordination between European higher education and research policies.”

In line with the spirit of the [Council conclusions of June 2021 on the European Universities initiative - Bridging higher education, research, innovation and society: Paving the way for a new dimension in European higher education](#)<sup>83</sup>, further efforts are needed at national and regional levels, to create an enabling environment for European Universities and similar long-standing institutionalised cooperation models. On top of

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<sup>82</sup> [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32022H0413\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32022H0413(01))

<sup>83</sup> <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/d47fca3c-c985-11eb-84ce-01aa75ed71a1>

cooperation with the European level, this requires cooperation between the national and regional authorities involved, and support of the higher education sector.

Indeed, the Council conclusions of June 2021 on the European Universities initiative invites Member States inter alia to:

- *“Work together at international, national and regional level, as well as between governments and institutions, to identify and remove, where necessary, the obstacles towards more compatible higher education systems and closer strategic alliances of higher education institutions, building on the extensive work that has already been developed through the EEA, the EHEA and the ERA; and*
- *Strive to find – where possible – co-funding mechanisms for higher education institutions engaged in the European Universities initiative, based on their basic and performance-based funding or specific funding programmes, or strategic funds”.*<sup>84</sup>

### Activities that can be funded

Projects should address both of the below work strands.

Main activities under this priority and both work strands could involve the ones listed below (non-exhaustive list).

1. **Work strand 1: Creation of a supporting environment for European Universities** and other similar long-standing institutionalised cooperation models, both in view of related legislation, its application and provided technical support in a particular region/country. This can for example include work in relation to the regulatory/administrative environment in a particular region/country when it comes to (non-exhaustive list):
  - Joint educational programmes and other joint educational activities:
    - joint degrees/diploma’s
    - accreditation (eg. issues with foreign languages, ECTS credits, foreign teachers)
    - evaluation/quality assurance (eg. institutional quality assurance, versus programme-based quality assurance and application of the relevant Bologna tools)
    - tuition fees and systems
    - student selection
    - joint blended/online learning
    - inter-disciplinarity
    - flexible learning pathways
  - Automatic recognition of study periods abroad;
  - Rules with regard to innovative mobility formats;
  - Student housing for mobile students within the alliances;
  - Differences in the autonomy of higher education institutions in each national context;
  - Promotion of the alliances within and outside the European Union;
  - Technical support to / cooperation with alliances of higher education institutions in a particular region/country.

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<sup>84</sup> Lines 35 and 33 of the [Council conclusions](#)

2. **Work strand 2: Increasing coherence of funding at national/regional level of higher education institutions part of European Universities alliances and other similar long-standing institutionalised cooperation models**, in addition to the grants received at European level under Erasmus+, complemented by other EU instruments such as Horizon Europe. This can for example include work on national/regional funding of higher education institutions part of alliances of higher education institutions in relation to (non-exhaustive list):
- The amounts/scales of funding;
  - Timing and duration of funding provided;
  - Funding of innovative mobility formats;
  - Funding of innovative educational offering;
  - Coverage of the different missions of the alliances;
  - Other modalities of national/regional funding.

The work under work strands 1 and 2 can entail different types of activities, such as peer learning activities (including for example country visits), thematic seminars on key issues related to the regulatory environment/funding of alliances in regions/countries, in depth targeted analysis of national/regional frameworks by peers/experts and advice from peers/experts (non-exhaustive list), reporting and dissemination (to share the lessons learnt and recommendations). This list of activities is non-exhaustive.

#### *Expected impact*

It is expected that the conducted activities will help to:

- Improve the supporting environment for European Universities and other similar long-standing institutionalised cooperation models, both in view of related legislation, its application and provided technical support in a particular region/country;
- Improve the funding models and modalities at national/regional level of European Universities and other similar long-standing institutionalised cooperation models.

This can be achieved through implementing the related tangible policy and funding recommendations and taking advantage of the peer learning in the regions/countries concerned. It is thus expected that the relevant outcomes of the conducted activities will in the end be implemented in the respective national/regional higher education systems in the short to medium-term.

### **3. Available budget**

The available call budget is **EUR 47 000 000**.

Specific budget information per topic can be found in the table below.

Topic	Topic indicative budget
<b>1 - Digital Education</b>	<b>EUR 15 000 000</b>
<b>2 - Vocational Education and Training</b>	<b>EUR 10 000 000</b>

<b>3 - Adult Education</b>	<b>EUR 10 000 000</b>
<b>4 - School Education</b>	<b>EUR 7 000 000</b>
<b>5 - Micro-credentials</b>	<b>EUR 4 000 000</b>
<b>6 - Higher education</b>	<b>EUR 1 000 000</b>

We reserve the right not to award all available funds or to redistribute them between the call topics, depending on the proposals received and the results of the evaluation.

#### 4. Timetable and deadlines

Timetable and deadlines (indicative)	
Call opening:	28 November 2023
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	<u>4 June 2024 – 17:00:00 CET</u> <u>(Brussels)</u>
Evaluation:	June 2024 - September 2024
Information on evaluation results:	November 2024
GA signature:	January 2025

#### 5. Admissibility and documents

Proposals must be submitted before the **call deadline** (see *timetable section 4*).

Proposals must be submitted **electronically** via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System (accessible via the Topic page in the [Search Funding & Tenders](#) section). Paper submissions are NOT possible.

Proposals (including annexes and supporting documents) must be submitted using the forms provided *inside* the Submission System (⚠ NOT the documents available on the Topic page – they are only for information).

Proposals must be **complete** and contain all the requested information and all required annexes and supporting documents:

- **Application Form Part A** – contains administrative information about the participants (future coordinator, beneficiaries and affiliated entities) and the summarised budget for the project (*to be filled in directly online*);
- **Application Form Part B** – contains the technical description of the project (*to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed and then assembled and re-uploaded*);

- **Mandatory annexes and supporting documents** (*templates available to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed, assembled and re-uploaded*):
  - **Detailed budget table/calculator**

Please be aware that since the detailed budget table serves as the basis for fixing the lump sums for the grants (and since lump sums must be reliable proxies for the actual costs of a project), the costs you include **MUST** comply with the basic eligibility conditions for EU actual cost grants (see [AGA – Annotated Grant Agreement, art 6](#)). This is particularly important for purchases and subcontracting, which must comply with best value for money (or if appropriate the lowest price) and be free of any conflict of interests. If the budget table contains ineligible costs, the grant may be reduced (even later on during the project implementation or after their end)

At proposal submission, you will have to confirm that you have the **mandate to act** for all applicants. Moreover, you will have to confirm that the information in the application is correct and complete and that the participants comply with the conditions for receiving EU funding (especially eligibility, financial and operational capacity, exclusion, etc.). Before signing the grant, each beneficiary and affiliated entity will have to confirm this again by signing a declaration of honour (DoH). Proposals without full support will be rejected.

Your application must be **readable, accessible and printable**.

Proposals are limited to maximum **70 pages** (Part B). Evaluators will not consider any additional pages.

You may be asked at a later stage for further documents (*for legal entity validation, financial capacity check, bank account validation, etc.*).

- ❗ For more information about the submission process (including IT aspects), consult the [Online Manual](#).

## 6. Eligibility

Applications will only be considered eligible if their content corresponds wholly (or at least in part) to the topic description for which it is submitted.

### Eligible participants (eligible countries)

In order to be eligible, the applicants (beneficiaries and affiliated entities) must:

- be legal entities (public or private bodies) active in the fields of education and training, research and innovation or in the world of work;

The below topics have the following additional eligibility requirements:

**Under topic 3 'Adult Education' – Priority 7 'Supporting the Pact for Skills'**, in order to be eligible, the applicants (beneficiaries and affiliated entities) must be registered partners of existing Pact for Skills regional partnerships;

**Under topic 4 'School Education'**, in order to be eligible, the coordinator must

be a public educational authority (national, regional or local level), in accordance with the structure of the relevant education and training system;

**Under topic 5 'Micro-credentials'**, in order to be eligible, each project must include at least one public authority at national, regional, and/or local level as applicants (beneficiaries, not affiliated entities);

**Under topic 6 'Higher Education' - Priority 13 'National/regional support to European Universities alliances'**, in order to be eligible, the applicants (beneficiaries and affiliated entities) must be:

- relevant public authorities, which higher education institutions are involved in the European Universities initiative, or other similar long-standing institutionalised cooperation models,
  - And/or bodies with a mandate from their country related to quality assurance, funding of alliances of higher education institutions, or other specific fields relevant to the success of the European Universities initiative
- be established in one of the eligible countries, i.e.:
    - **Erasmus+ Programme Countries:**
      - EU Member States (including overseas countries and territories (OCTs))
      - non-EU countries:
        - listed EEA countries and countries associated to the Erasmus+ Programme ([list of participating countries](#))
    - **Exception: Under topic 6 'Higher Education' - Priority 13 'National/regional support to European Universities alliances'** applicants from the following **Erasmus+ Partner Countries** are also eligible:

Region	Countries
<b>Western Balkans (Region 1)</b>	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo <sup>85</sup> , Montenegro

- for higher education institutions (HEIs) established in Erasmus+ Programme Countries (*see above*): be holders of the ECHE certificate (Erasmus Charter for Higher Education).

Organisations from third countries not associated to the Programme can be involved as associated partners (not as beneficiaries and affiliated entities).

Beneficiaries and affiliated entities must register in the [Participant Register](#) — before submitting the proposal — and will have to be validated by the Central Validation Service (REA Validation). For the validation, they will be requested to upload documents showing legal status and origin.

Other entities may participate in other consortium roles, such as associated partners, subcontractors, third parties giving in-kind contributions, etc. (*see section 13*).

<sup>85</sup> This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.




### *Specific cases*

Natural persons — Natural persons are NOT eligible (with the exception of self-employed persons, i.e. sole traders, where the company does not have legal personality separate from that of the natural person).

International organisations — International organisations are not eligible. The rules on eligible countries do not apply to them.

Entities without legal personality — Entities which do not have legal personality under their national law may exceptionally participate, provided that their representatives have the capacity to undertake legal obligations on their behalf, and offer guarantees for the protection of the EU financial interests equivalent to that offered by legal persons<sup>86</sup>.

EU bodies — EU bodies (with the exception of the European Commission Joint Research Centre) can NOT be part of the consortium.

Associations and interest groupings — Entities composed of members may participate as 'sole beneficiaries' or 'beneficiaries without legal personality'<sup>87</sup>.  Please note that if the action will be implemented by the members, they should also participate (either as beneficiaries or as affiliated entities, otherwise their costs will NOT be eligible).

Countries currently negotiating association agreements — Beneficiaries from countries with ongoing negotiations (*see list above*) may participate in the call and can sign grants if the negotiations are concluded before grant signature (with retroactive effect, if provided in the agreement).

EU restrictive measures — Special rules apply for certain entities (*e.g. entities subject to [EU restrictive measures](#) under Article 29 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) and Article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU)*<sup>88</sup> and entities covered by Commission Guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#)<sup>89</sup>). Such entities are not eligible to participate in any capacity, including as beneficiaries, affiliated entities, associated partners, subcontractors or recipients of financial support to third parties (if any).

 For more information, see [Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment](#).

### *Consortium composition*

Proposals must be submitted by a consortium of at least 3 applicants (beneficiaries, not affiliated entities), from a minimum of 3 EU Member States or third countries associated to the Programme.

Affiliated entities and associated partners do not count towards the minimum eligibility criteria for the consortium composition, and can not be coordinator.

### *Eligible activities*

Eligible activities are the ones set out in section 2 above.

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<sup>86</sup> See Article 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

<sup>87</sup> For the definitions, see Articles 187(2) and 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

<sup>88</sup> Please note that the EU Official Journal contains the official list and, in case of conflict, its content prevails over that of the [EU Sanctions Map](#).

<sup>89</sup> Commission guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#) on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards (OJEU C 205 of 19.07.2013, pp. 9-11).

Projects should take into account the results of projects supported by other EU funding programmes. The complementarities must be described in the project proposals (Part B of the Application Form).

Projects must comply with EU policy interests and priorities (*such as environment, social, security, industrial and trade policy, etc.*).

#### Geographic location (target countries)

Proposals must relate to activities taking place in the eligible countries (*see above*).

#### Duration

Projects should normally range between 24 and 36 months.

Extensions are possible, if duly justified and through an amendment.

**Exception - For topic 6**, higher education, projects should normally range between 36 and 48 months.

The duration has to be chosen at application stage, based on the objective of the project, on the type of activities planned over time, the budget and the ambitions set for the project.

## **7. Financial and operational capacity and exclusion**

### Financial capacity

Applicants must have **stable and sufficient resources** to successfully implement the projects and contribute their share. Organisations participating in several projects must have sufficient capacity to implement all these projects.

The financial capacity check will be carried out on the basis of the documents you will be requested to upload in the [Participant Register](#) during grant preparation (*e.g. profit and loss account and balance sheet, business plan, audit report produced by an approved external auditor, certifying the accounts for the last closed financial year, etc*). The analysis will be based on neutral financial indicators, but will also take into account other aspects, such as dependency on EU funding and deficit and revenue in previous years.

The check will normally be done for the coordinators, except:

- public bodies (entities established as public body under national law, including local, regional or national authorities) or international organisations;
- public legal entities, and institutions and organisations in the fields of education and training, youth and sport that have received over 50% of their annual revenue from public sources over the last two years;
- if the individual requested grant amount is not more than EUR 60 000.

If needed, it may also be done for affiliated entities.

If we consider that your financial capacity is not satisfactory, we may require:

- further information
- an enhanced financial responsibility regime, i.e. joint and several responsibility

for all beneficiaries or joint and several liability of affiliated entities (*see below, section 10*)

- prefinancing paid in instalments
- (one or more) prefinancing guarantees (*see below, section 10*)

or

- propose no prefinancing
- request that you are replaced or, if needed, reject the entire proposal.



For more information, see [Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment](#).

### Operational capacity

Applicants must have the **know-how, qualifications** and **resources** to successfully implement the projects and contribute their share (including sufficient experience in projects of comparable size and nature).

This capacity will be assessed together with the 'Quality' award criterion, on the basis of the competence and experience of the applicants and their project teams, including operational resources (human, technical and other) or, exceptionally, the measures proposed to obtain it by the time the task implementation starts.

If the evaluation of the award criterion is positive, the applicants are considered to have sufficient operational capacity.

Applicants will have to show their operational capacity via the following information:

- profiles (qualifications and experience) of the staff responsible for managing and implementing the project
- description of the consortium participants.

Additional supporting documents may be requested, if needed to confirm the operational capacity of any applicant.

Public bodies, Member State organisations and international organisations are exempted from the operational capacity check.

### Exclusion

Applicants which are subject to an **EU exclusion decision** or in one of the following **exclusion situations** that bar them from receiving EU funding can NOT participate<sup>90</sup>:

- bankruptcy, winding up, affairs administered by the courts, arrangement with creditors, suspended business activities or other similar procedures (including procedures for persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts);
- in breach of social security or tax obligations (including if done by persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts);

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<sup>90</sup> See Articles 136 and 141 of EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

- guilty of grave professional misconduct<sup>91</sup> (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant);
- committed fraud, corruption, links to a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant);
- shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement, prize, expert contract, or similar (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant);
- guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Regulation No [2988/95](#) (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant);
- created under a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or other legal obligations in the country of origin or created another entity with this purpose (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant).

Applicants will also be refused if it turns out that<sup>92</sup>:

- during the award procedure they misrepresented information required as a condition for participating or failed to supply that information
- they were previously involved in the preparation of the call and this entails a distortion of competition that cannot be remedied otherwise (conflict of interest).

## 8. Evaluation and award procedure

Proposals will have to follow the **standard submission and evaluation procedure** (one-stage submission + one-step evaluation).

An **evaluation committee** (assisted by independent outside experts) will assess all applications. Proposals will first be checked for formal requirements (admissibility, and eligibility, *see sections 5 and 6*). Proposals found admissible and eligible will be evaluated (for each topic) against the operational capacity and award criteria (*see sections 7 and 9*) and then ranked according to their scores.

For proposals with the same score (within a topic or budget envelope) a **priority order** will be determined according to the following approach:

Successively for every group of *ex aequo* proposals, starting with the highest scored group, and continuing in descending order:


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<sup>91</sup> Professional misconduct includes: violation of ethical standards of the profession, wrongful conduct with impact on professional credibility, false declarations/misrepresentation of information, participation in a cartel or other agreement distorting competition, violation of IPR, attempting to influence decision-making processes or obtain confidential information from public authorities to gain advantage.

<sup>92</sup> See Article 141 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

- 1) Projects focusing on a theme that is not otherwise covered by higher ranked projects will be considered to have the highest priority.
- 2) The ex aequo proposals within the same topic will be prioritised according to the scores they have been awarded for the award criterion 'Relevance'. When these scores are equal, priority will be based on their scores for the criterion 'Quality of the project design and implementation'. When these scores are equal, priority will be based on their scores for the criterion 'Impact'.
- 3) If this does not allow to determine the priority, a further prioritisation can be done by considering the overall project portfolio and the creation of positive synergies between projects, or other factors related to the objectives of the call. These factors will be documented in the panel report.
- 4) After that, the remainder of the available call budget will be used to fund projects across the different topics in order to ensure a balanced spread of the geographical and thematic coverage and while respecting to the maximum possible extent the order of merit based on the evaluation of the award criteria.

All proposals will be informed about the evaluation result (**evaluation result letter**). Successful proposals will be invited for grant preparation; the other ones will be put on the reserve list or rejected.

 No commitment for funding — Invitation to grant preparation does NOT constitute a formal commitment for funding. We will still need to make various legal checks before grant award: *legal entity validation, financial capacity, exclusion check, etc.*

**Grant preparation** will involve a dialogue in order to fine-tune technical or financial aspects of the project and may require extra information from your side. It may also include adjustments to the proposal to address recommendations of the evaluation committee or other concerns. Compliance will be a pre-condition for signing the grant.

If you believe that the evaluation procedure was flawed, you can submit a **complaint** (following the deadlines and procedures set out in the evaluation result letter). Please note that notifications which have not been opened within 10 days after sending are considered to have been accessed and that deadlines will be counted from opening/access (see also [Funding & Tenders Portal Terms and Conditions](#)). Please also be aware that for complaints submitted electronically, there may be character limitations.

## 9. Award criteria

<b>1. Relevance</b> ( <i>maximum 30 points</i> )	
<b>Relevance of the project</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Link to EU policy and initiatives:</b> the proposal establishes and develops a project that supports policy experimentation at EU level, taking into account and fostering existing EU tools and initiatives (if relevant). The proposal also supports the implementation of EU policies, EU Frameworks, and EU initiatives;</li> <li>• <b>Purpose:</b> the proposal is relevant to the objectives of the Action, as well as to the specific objectives of the addressed topic and priority (see section 2 above);</li> <li>• <b>Scope:</b> the proposal addresses <b>one of the priorities</b> of the Action (see section 2 above). The extent to which the proposal</li> </ul>

	<p>consistently integrates the activities, research or events as specified in section 2 above for the priority addressed. Additional specificities for the following topics/priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Topic 3 – Adult Education –</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Priority 6:</b> the extent to which the proposal enhances participation in adult learning, including non-formal adult learning in non-traditional settings and fosters cooperation of public and private players to help employed and unemployed workers reskill for new tasks or into new jobs at scale, including from declining sectors into the green and digital economy;</li> <li>▪ For <b>Priority 7:</b> the extent to which proposals help develop strong cooperation arrangements in the regional Skills Partnerships under the Pact for Skills that enable the relevant stakeholders, including education and training providers and SMEs, to implement impactful skilling actions;</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ <b>Topic 6 – Higher Education:</b> the extent to which the proposal aims at creating a supporting environment for European Universities and other similar long-standing institutionalised cooperation models in the countries concerned, including in relation to the funding of European Universities at national/regional level;</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Innovation:</b> the proposal considers state-of-the-art methods and techniques, and leads to innovative results and solutions;</li> <li>• <b>Consistency:</b> the objectives and activities are based on a comprehensive, well-grounded and high-quality problems and needs analysis. The objectives are clearly defined, realistic and the activities address well the findings of the needs analysis to which they clearly link;</li> <li>• <b>EU values:</b> the proposal is relevant for the respect and promotion of shared EU values, such as respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, as well as fighting any sort of discrimination;</li> <li>• <b>European added value:</b> The proposal 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 proposal or other sectors.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Quality</b> (<i>maximum 40 points</i>)</p>	
<p><b>2.1. Project design and implementation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Coherence:</b> the overall project design ensures consistency between project objectives, methodology, activities, duration and the budget proposed. The proposal presents a coherent</li> </ul>

<p><i>maximum 20 points</i></p>	<p>and comprehensive set of appropriate activities to meet the identified needs and lead to the expected results;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Structure:</b> the work programme is clear and complete (covering appropriate project phases: preparation, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, dissemination and exploitation). It comprises an ex ante and ex post (both within the project duration) analysis of the introduced experimentation in education and training;</li> <li>• <b>Methodology:</b> the quality and feasibility of the methodology proposed and its appropriateness for producing the expected results is demonstrated (using EU instruments whenever relevant to the project);</li> <li>• <b>Management:</b> solid management arrangements are foreseen. Timelines, organisation, coordination, supervision and other responsibilities are well defined and realistic. The proposal allocates appropriate resources to each activity;</li> <li>• <b>Contributing to systemic education, training and social policy:</b> the proposal’s experimentation and work programme embeds activities and outputs which clearly contribute to policy design in education and training or in the world of work;</li> <li>• <b>Budget:</b> the budget provides for appropriate resources necessary for success, is clearly linked to the proposal activities, and is neither overestimated nor underestimated;</li> <li>• <b>Financial and quality control:</b> control measures (continuous quality evaluation and training, peer reviews, benchmarking activities, etc.) and quality indicators ensure that the project implementation is of high quality and cost-efficient. Challenges/risks of the project are clearly identified and mitigating actions properly addressed. The work programme includes an independent external quality assessment at mid-term and a few months before the project end in order to enable potential project adjustments.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2.2 Partnership and cooperation arrangements</b></p> <p><i>maximum 20 points</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Configuration:</b> the composition of the partnership is in line with the Action and project objectives. It brings together an appropriate mix of relevant organisations with the necessary profiles, skills, experience, expertise and management support required for the successful delivery of the whole project. The proposal includes partners that adequately represent the sector or cross-sectoral approach concerned.</li> <li>• <b>Commitment:</b> the contributions from partners are significant and pertinent. The distribution of responsibilities demonstrates the commitment and active contribution of all participating organisations in relation to their specific expertise and capacity;</li> <li>• <b>Tasks:</b> the coordinator shows high quality management and coordination of transnational networks and leadership in complex environment. Individual tasks of partners are allocated on the basis of the specific know-how of each partner. The distribution of responsibilities and tasks is clear and appropriate;</li> <li>• <b>Collaboration/Team spirit:</b> an effective mechanism is</li> </ul>

	<p>proposed to ensure an efficient coordination, decision-making, communication and conflict resolution between the participating organisations, participants and any other relevant stakeholder;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Geographical dimension:</b> the partnership includes relevant partners from different geographical areas and this geographical composition is motivated.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Impact</b> (<i>maximum 30 points</i>)</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Exploitation:</b> the proposal demonstrates how the outcomes of the project will be mainstreamed at system level in one or more sectors/countries. It provides means to measure exploitation within the project lifetime and after;</li> <li>• <b>Dissemination:</b> the proposal provides a clear plan for the dissemination of results, and includes appropriate identified quantitative targets, activities, relevant timing, tools and channels to ensure that the results and benefits will be spread effectively to the right stakeholders and policy makers and drivers of innovation within and after the project’s lifetime. The proposal also indicates which partners will be responsible for dissemination and demonstrates the relevant experience that they have in dissemination activities;</li> <li>• <b>Open access:</b> as a general rule, and within the limits of existing national and European legal frameworks, results should be made available as open educational resources (OER) as well as on relevant professional, sectorial or competent authorities’ platforms. The proposal will describe how data, materials, documents and audio-visual and social media activity produced will be made freely available and promoted through open licences, and does not contain disproportionate limitations;</li> <li>• <b>Impact:</b> the proposal demonstrates the potential impact of the project, within the project’s duration and beyond:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On the targeted groups and sector(s);</li> <li>• On policy-makers at system level;</li> <li>• Outside of the policy-makers and authorities directly targeted in the project, on private or public policy-drivers at local, regional, national and/or European levels.</li> </ul> <p>The proposal includes measures as well as identified quantitative targets and indicators to monitor progress and assess the expected impact (short- and long-term);</p> </li> <li>– <b>Sustainability:</b> the proposal explains how the Policy Experimentation Project will be rolled out and further developed at different levels (local, regional, national). The proposal includes the design of a long-term action plan for the progressive roll-out of project deliverables after the project has finished and their incorporation into the mainstream. This plan shall be based on sustained partnerships between policy-makers, education and training providers and key industry stakeholders at the appropriate level. It should include the identification of appropriate governance structures, as well as plans for scalability and financial sustainability, including the</li> </ul>



	potential identification of financial resources (European, national and private) to ensure that the results and benefits achieved will have a long-term sustainability.
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Award criteria		Minimum pass score	Maximum score
Relevance		15	30
Quality	Project design and implementation	10	20
	Partnership and cooperation arrangements	10	20
Impact		15	30
<b>Overall (pass) scores</b>		<b>70</b>	<b>100</b>

Maximum points: 100 points.

Individual thresholds per criterion: 15/30, 10/20, 10/20 and 15/30 points.

Overall threshold: 70 points.

Proposals that pass the individual thresholds AND the overall threshold will be considered for funding – within the limits of the available budget. Other proposals will be rejected.

## 10. Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements

If you pass evaluation, your project will be invited for grant preparation, where you will be asked to prepare the Grant Agreement together with the EU Project Officer.

This Grant Agreement will set the framework for your grant and its terms and conditions, in particular concerning deliverables, reporting and payments.

The Model Grant Agreement that will be used (and all other relevant templates and guidance documents) can be found on [Portal Reference Documents](#).

### Starting date and duration

The project starting date and duration will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 1*). Normally the starting date will be after grant signature. Retroactive application can be granted exceptionally for duly justified reasons but never earlier than the proposal submission date.

Project duration: see section 6 above.

### Milestones and deliverables

The milestones and deliverables for each project will be managed through the Portal Grant Management System and will be reflected in Annex 1 of the Grant Agreement.

### Form of grant, funding rate and maximum grant amount

The grant parameters (*maximum grant amount, funding rate, total eligible costs, etc.*) will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 3 and art 5*).

Project budget (maximum grant amount): 1 000 000 EUR per project.

For **Topic 6 'Higher education'**, the estimated total number of projects to be selected is 1.

The grant awarded may be lower than the amount requested.

The grant will be a lump-sum grant. This means that it will reimburse a fixed amount, based on a lump sum or financing not linked to costs. The amount will be fixed by the granting authority on the basis of the estimated project budget and a funding rate of 80%.

#### Budget categories and cost eligibility rules

The budget categories and cost eligibility rules are fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 3, art 6 and Annex 2*).

*Budget categories for this call:*

- Lump sum contributions<sup>93</sup>

*Specific cost eligibility rules for this call:*

- the lump sum amount must be calculated in accordance with the methodology set out in the lump sum decision and using the detailed budget table/calculator provided;
- the lump sum calculation should respect the following conditions:
  - the estimated budget must comply with the basic eligibility conditions for EU actual cost grants (see [AGA – Annotated Grant Agreement, art 6](#)).
  - costs for financial support to third parties: not allowed.

#### Reporting and payment arrangements

The reporting and payment arrangements are fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4 and art 21 and 22*).

After grant signature, you will normally receive a **prefinancing** to start working on the project (float of normally **40%** of the maximum grant amount; exceptionally less or no prefinancing). The prefinancing will be paid 30 days from entry into force/financial guarantee (if required) – whichever is the latest.

There will be no **interim payments**.


There will be one or more **additional prefinancing payments** linked to a prefinancing report.

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<sup>93</sup> [Decision](#) of 24 March 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions and unit contributions under the Erasmus+ Programme 2021-2027.

**Payment of the balance:** At the end of the project, we will calculate your final grant amount. If the total of earlier payments is higher than the final grant amount, we will ask you (your coordinator) to pay back the difference (recovery).

All payments will be made to the coordinator.

 Please be aware that payments will be automatically lowered if one of your consortium members has outstanding debts towards the EU (granting authority or other EU bodies). Such debts will be offset by us — in line with the conditions set out in the Grant Agreement (*see art 22*).

Please also note that you are responsible for keeping records on all the work.

### Prefinancing guarantees

If a prefinancing guarantee is required, it will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4*). The amount will be set during grant preparation and it will normally be equal or lower than the prefinancing for your grant.

The guarantee should be in euro and issued by an approved bank/financial institution established in an EU Member State. If you are established in a non-EU country and would like to provide a guarantee from a bank/financial institution in your country, please contact us (this may be exceptionally accepted, if it offers equivalent security).

Amounts blocked in bank accounts will NOT be accepted as financial guarantees.

Prefinancing guarantees are formally NOT linked to individual consortium members, which means that you are free to organise how to provide the guarantee amount (*by one or several beneficiaries, for the overall amount or several guarantees for partial amounts, by the beneficiary concerned or by another beneficiary, etc*). It is however important that the requested amount is covered and that the guarantee(s) are sent to us in time to make the prefinancing (scanned copy via Portal AND original by post).

If agreed with us, the bank guarantee may be replaced by a guarantee from a third party.

The guarantee will be released at the end of the grant, in accordance with the conditions laid down in the Grant Agreement.

### Certificates

Depending on the type of action, size of grant amount and type of beneficiaries, you may be requested to submit different certificates. The types, schedules and thresholds for each certificate are fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4 and art 24*).

### Liability regime for recoveries

The liability regime for recoveries will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet point 4.4 and art 22*).

For beneficiaries, it is one of the following:

- limited joint and several liability with individual ceilings — *each beneficiary up to their maximum grant amount;*
- unconditional joint and several liability — *each beneficiary up to the maximum grant amount for the action;*

or

- individual financial responsibility — *each beneficiary only for their own debts.*

In addition, the granting authority may require joint and several liability of affiliated entities (with their beneficiary).

*Provisions concerning the project implementation*

IPR rules: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 16 and Annex 5):*

- rights of use on results: Yes
- access to results for policy purposes: Yes
- access rights to ensure continuity and interoperability obligations: Yes

Communication, dissemination and visibility of funding: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 17 and Annex 5):*

- additional communication and dissemination activities: Yes

Specific rules for carrying out the action: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 18 and Annex*

- EU restrictive measures: Yes

*Other specificities*

n/a

*Non-compliance and breach of contract*

The Grant Agreement (chapter 5) provides for the measures we may take in case of breach of contract (and other non-compliance issues).



For more information, see [AGA – Annotated Grant Agreement](#).

## **11. How to submit an application**

All proposals must be submitted directly online via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System. Paper applications are NOT accepted.

Submission is a **2-step process**:

### **a) create a user account and register your organisation**

To use the Submission System (the only way to apply), all participants need to [create an EU Login user account](#).

Once you have an EU Login account, you can [register your organisation](#) in the Participant Register. When your registration is finalised, you will receive a 9-digit participant identification code (PIC).

### **b) submit the proposal**

Access the Electronic Submission System via the Topic page in the [Search Funding & Tenders](#) section (or, for calls sent by invitation to submit a proposal, through the link provided in the invitation letter).

Submit your proposal in 3 parts, as follows:

- Part A includes administrative information about the applicant organisations (future coordinator, beneficiaries, affiliated entities and associated partners) and the summarised budget for the proposal. Fill it in directly online
- Part B (description of the action) covers the technical content of the proposal. Download the mandatory word template from the Submission System, fill it in and upload it as a PDF file
- Annexes (*see section 5*). The proposal must keep to the **page limits** (*see section 5*); excess pages will be disregarded.

Documents must be uploaded to the **right category** in the Submission System otherwise the proposal might be considered incomplete and thus inadmissible.

The proposal must be submitted **before the call deadline** (*see section 4*). After this deadline, the system is closed and proposals can no longer be submitted.

Once the proposal is submitted, you will receive a **confirmation e-mail** (with date and time of your application). If you do not receive this confirmation e-mail, it means your proposal has NOT been submitted. If you believe this is due to a fault in the Submission System, you should immediately file a complaint via the [IT Helpdesk webform](#), explaining the circumstances and attaching a copy of the proposal (and, if possible, screenshots to show what happened).

Details on processes and procedures are described in the [Online Manual](#). The Online Manual also contains the links to FAQs and detailed instructions regarding the Portal Electronic Exchange System.

## 12. Help

As far as possible, ***please try to find the answers you need yourself***, in this and the other documentation (we have limited resources for handling direct enquiries):

- [Online Manual](#)
- FAQs on the Topic page (for call-specific questions)
- [Portal FAQ](#) (for general questions).

Please also consult the Topic page regularly, since we will use it to publish call updates. (For invitations, we will contact you directly in case of a call update).

### Contact

For individual questions on the Portal Submission System, please contact the [IT Helpdesk](#).

Non-IT related questions should be sent to the following email address: [EACEA-POLICY-SUPPORT@EC.EUROPA.EU](mailto:EACEA-POLICY-SUPPORT@EC.EUROPA.EU). Please indicate clearly the reference of the call and topic to which your question relates (*see cover page*).

## 13. Important



### IMPORTANT

- **Don't wait until the end** — Complete your application sufficiently in advance of the deadline to avoid any last minute **technical problems**. Problems due to last minute submissions (*e.g. congestion, etc.*) will be entirely at your risk. Call deadlines can NOT be extended.
- **Consult** the Portal Topic page regularly. We will use it to publish updates and additional information on the call (call and topic updates).
- **Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Exchange System** — By submitting the application, all participants **accept** to use the electronic exchange system in accordance with the [Portal Terms & Conditions](#).
- **Registration** — Before submitting the application, all beneficiaries, affiliated entities and associated partners must be registered in the [Participant Register](#). The participant identification code (PIC) (one per participant) is mandatory for the Application Form.
- **Consortium roles** — When setting up your consortium, you should think of organisations that help you reach objectives and solve problems.

The roles should be attributed according to the level of participation in the project. Main participants should participate as **beneficiaries** or **affiliated entities**; other entities can participate as associated partners, subcontractors, third parties giving in-kind contributions. **Associated partners** and third parties giving in-kind contributions should bear their own costs (they will not become formal recipients of EU funding). **Subcontracting** should normally constitute a limited part and must be performed by third parties (not by one of the beneficiaries/affiliated entities). Subcontracting going beyond 30% of the total eligible costs must be justified in the application.

- **Coordinator** — In multi-beneficiary grants, the beneficiaries participate as consortium (group of beneficiaries). They will have to choose a coordinator, who will take care of the project management and coordination and will represent the consortium towards the granting authority. In mono-beneficiary grants, the single beneficiary will automatically be coordinator.
- **Affiliated entities** — Applicants may participate with affiliated entities (i.e. entities linked to a beneficiary which participate in the action with similar rights and obligations as the beneficiaries, but do not sign the grant and therefore do not become beneficiaries themselves). They will get a part of the grant money and must therefore comply with all the call conditions and be validated (just like beneficiaries); but they do not count towards the minimum eligibility criteria for consortium composition (if any).
- **Associated partners** — Applicants may participate with associated partners (i.e. partner organisations which participate in the action but without the right to get grant money). They participate without funding and therefore do not need to be validated.
- **Consortium agreement** — For practical and legal reasons it is recommended to set up internal arrangements that allow you to deal with exceptional or unforeseen circumstances (in all cases, even if not mandatory under the Grant Agreement). The consortium agreement also gives you the possibility to redistribute the grant money according to your own consortium-internal principles and parameters (for instance, one beneficiary can reattribute its grant money to another beneficiary). The consortium agreement thus allows you to customise the EU grant to the needs inside your consortium and can also help to protect you in case of disputes.

- **Balanced project budget** — Grant applications must ensure a balanced project budget and sufficient other resources to implement the project successfully (*e.g. own contributions, income generated by the action, financial contributions from third parties, etc*). You may be requested to lower your estimated costs if they are ineligible (including excessive).
- **No-profit rule** — Grants may NOT give a profit (i.e. surplus of revenues + EU grant over costs). This will be checked by us at the end of the project.
- **No double funding** — There is a strict prohibition of double funding from the EU budget (except under EU Synergies calls). Outside such Synergies calls, any given action may receive only ONE grant from the EU budget and cost items may under NO circumstances be declared to two different EU actions.
- **Completed/ongoing projects** — Proposals for projects that have already been completed will be rejected; proposals for projects that have already started will be assessed on a case-by-case basis (in this case, no costs can be reimbursed for activities that took place before the project starting date/proposal submission).
- **Combination with EU operating grants** — Combination with EU operating grants is possible, if the project remains outside the operating grant work programme and you make sure that cost items are clearly separated in your accounting and NOT declared twice (*see [AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement, art 6.2.E](#)*).
- **Multiple proposals** — Applicants may submit more than one proposal for *different* projects under the same call (and be awarded a funding for them).  
Organisations may participate in several proposals.  
BUT: if there are several proposals for *very similar* projects, only one proposal will be accepted and evaluated; the applicants will be asked to withdraw one of them (or it will be rejected).
- **Resubmission** — Proposals may be changed and re-submitted until the deadline for submission.
- **Rejection** — By submitting the application, all applicants accept the call conditions set out in this this Call Document (and the documents it refers to). Proposals that do not comply with all the call conditions will be **rejected**. This applies also to applicants: All applicants need to fulfil the criteria; if any one of them doesn't, they must be replaced or the entire proposal will be rejected.
- **Cancellation** — There may be circumstances which may require the cancellation of the call. In this case, you will be informed via a call or topic update. Please note that cancellations are without entitlement to compensation.
- **Language** — You can submit your proposal in any official EU language (project abstract/summary should however always be in English). For reasons of efficiency, we strongly advise you to use English for the entire application. If you need the call documentation in another official EU language, please submit a request within 10 days after call publication (for the contact information, *see section 12*).

- **Transparency** — In accordance with Article 38 of the [EU Financial Regulation](#), information about EU grants awarded is published each year on the [Europa website](#).

This includes:

- beneficiary names
- beneficiary addresses
- the purpose for which the grant was awarded
- the maximum amount awarded.

The publication can exceptionally be waived (on reasoned and duly substantiated request), if there is a risk that the disclosure could jeopardise your rights and freedoms under the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights or harm your commercial interests.

- **Data protection** — The submission of a proposal under this call involves the collection, use and processing of personal data. This data will be processed in accordance with Regulation [2018/1725](#). It will be processed solely for the purpose of evaluating your proposal, subsequent management of your grant and, if needed, programme monitoring, evaluation and communication. Details are explained in the [Funding & Tenders Portal Privacy Statement](#).