

Partnerships for cooperation

What are partnerships for cooperation?

This action enables participating organisations to gain experience in international cooperation and to strengthen their capacities, but also to produce high-quality innovative deliverables. Depending on the objectives of the project, the participating organisations involved, or the expected impact, among other elements, Partnerships for Cooperation can be of different sizes and scope, and adapt their activities accordingly. The qualitative assessment of these projects will be proportional to the objectives of the cooperation and the nature of the organisations involved.

Based on this logic, two types of partnerships are offered to organisations to work, learn and grow together:

- Cooperation Partnerships
- Small-scale Partnerships

These two types of partnerships are presented in detail in the next section. The information included in the two sections will help you to choose the type of partnership that suits best the profile and structure of your organisation and your project ideas.

Which activities are typically carried out by partnerships for cooperation?

Over the lifetime of a project, organisations may typically carry out a broad range of activities. From traditional activities to more creative and innovative ones, organisations have the flexibility to choose the best combination that contributes to reaching the project's objectives in relation to its scope and in proportion to the capacities of the partnership. For example:

- **Project management:** activities that are necessary to ensure the adequate planning, implementation and follow-up of the projects, including smooth and efficient collaboration between project partners. In this phase, activities typically include organisational and administrative tasks, virtual meetings among partners, preparation of communication materials, preparation and follow-up of participants taking part in activities, etc.
- **Implementation activities:** can include networking events, meetings, working sessions to exchange practices and to develop results. These activities may also involve the participation of staff and learners (provided that their participation contributes to the achievement of project objectives).
- **Sharing and promotion activities:** organisation of conferences, sessions, events aimed at sharing, explaining and promoting the results of the project, whether they are in the form of tangible results, conclusions, good practices or any other form.

Contribution of this action to achieving policy priorities

On a yearly basis, the European Commission sets common priorities and objectives to be pursued at the level of the Erasmus+ Programme in different fields of education, training, youth and sport. Therefore, apart from developing capacities of organisations involved in the project, partnerships for cooperation aim at contributing with their results toward achieving the priorities.

Projects are therefore requested to frame their work in relation to one or more of these priorities and to select them at application stage. When formulating project proposals, it is also recommended to consult the results produced by previously funded projects based on similar priorities, to ensure consistency and avoid duplications, as well as to progressively build on existent results and contribute to the joint development of the different fields. Useful information about funded projects can be found in the Erasmus+ Project Results Platform:

https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects_en

In addition, to better link European priorities with the specific needs at national level, Erasmus+ National Agencies have the possibility to identify one or more of these European priorities as particularly relevant in their national context, in order to encourage organisations to focus their contributions in these selected areas on a given year.

In 2021, partnerships for cooperation must address one or more of the following priority areas:

Priorities applying to all Erasmus+ sectors

Inclusion and diversity in all fields of education, training, youth and sport: the Programme will support projects that promote social inclusion and aim at improving the outreach to people with fewer opportunities, including people with disabilities and people with a migrant background, as well as people living in rural and remote areas, people facing socio-economic difficulties or any other potential source of discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. These projects will help addressing the barriers faced by these groups in accessing the opportunities offered by the programme, as well as contributing to creating inclusive environments that foster equity and equality, and that are responsive to the needs of the wider community.

Environment and fight against climate change: the Programme aims to support, across all sectors, awareness-raising about environmental and climate-change challenges. Priority will be given to projects aimed at developing competences in various sustainability-relevant sectors, developing green sectorial skills strategies and methodologies, as well as future-oriented curricula that better meet the needs of individuals. The Programme will also support the testing of innovative practices to prepare learners, staff and youth workers to become true agents of change (e.g. save resources, reduce energy use and waste, compensate carbon footprint emissions, opt for sustainable food and mobility choices, etc.). Priority will also be given to projects that – through education, training, youth and sport activities - enable behavioural

changes for individual preferences, consumption habits, and lifestyles; develop sustainability competences of educators and education leaders and support the planned approaches of the participating organisations regarding environmental sustainability.

Addressing digital transformation through development of digital readiness, resilience and capacity: The Programme will support digital transformation plans of primary, secondary, vocational education and training (VET), higher, and adult-education institutions. Priority will be given to projects aiming to increase the capacity and readiness of institutions to manage an effective shift towards digital education. The Programme will support the purposeful use of digital technologies in education, training, youth and sport for teaching, learning, assessment and engagement. This includes the development of digital pedagogy and expertise in the use of digital tools for teachers, including accessible and assistive technologies and the creation and innovative use of digital education content. Equally, it includes developing the digital skills and competences of all the population through appropriate programmes and initiatives. Particular attention will be given to promoting gender equality and addressing differences in relation to the access and use by underrepresented groups. The Programme will further support the use of the European frameworks on digital competences of educators, citizens and organisations.

Common values, civic engagement and participation: The Programme will support active citizenship and ethics in lifelong learning; it will foster the development of social and intercultural competences, critical thinking and media literacy. Priority will also be given to projects that offer opportunities for people's participation in democratic life, social and civic engagement through formal or non-formal learning activities. The focus will also be on raising awareness on and understanding the European Union context, notably as regards the common EU values, the principles of unity and diversity, as well as their cultural identity, cultural awareness and their social and historical heritage.

In addition to the general priorities mentioned above, the following specific priorities will be pursued in the respective sectors.

Sector specific priorities

In the field of higher education:

Priority will be given to actions that are key to achieving the objectives of the European Education Area. The aim is to support the higher education sector in becoming even more inter-connected, innovative, inclusive and digital. For this purpose, the Programme will encourage much deeper and inter-disciplinary cooperation between higher education institutions, as well as with their surrounding innovation ecosystems, and the strengthening of links between education, research and innovation. The focus will in particular be on strengthening inclusion, mobility, digitalisation, lifelong learning, quality assurance and automatic recognition. The underlying objective is to accelerate the higher education transformation throughout Europe, in order to train the future generations in co-creating knowledge for a resilient, inclusive and sustainable society.

Promoting inter-connected higher education systems: The Programme will aim to strengthen the strategic and structured cooperation between higher education institutions through: a) support for developing and testing various types of cooperation models, including virtual and blended cooperation and the use of different digital tools and online platforms; b) improving mobility by implementing automatic mutual recognition of qualifications and learning outcomes, and by embedding mobility in curricula; c) support for higher education institutions to implement the Bologna principles and tools to enhance mobility for all.

Stimulating innovative learning and teaching practices: to tackle societal challenges through support for: a) the development of learning outcomes and student-centred curricula that better meet the learning needs of students and reduce skills mismatches, while also being relevant for the labour market and for the wider society; b) the development, testing and implementation of flexible learning pathways and modular course design (part-time, online or blended) and appropriate forms of

assessment, including the development of online assessment; c) promoting the lifelong learning dimension of higher education, including by facilitating the take-up, validation and recognition of short learning courses leading to micro-credentials; d) implementation of trans-disciplinary approaches and innovative pedagogies such as inverted learning, collaborative online international learning and research-based learning; e) mainstreaming sustainable development in all curricula for students in all disciplines and at all levels.

Developing STEM/STEAM in higher education, in particular women

participation in STEM: This priority supports the development and implementation of fit-for-purpose STEM higher education curricula, following a STEAM approach; promoting participation of women in STEM fields of study and especially in engineering, ICT and advanced digital skills; development of guidance and mentoring programmes for students, especially girls and women, to pursue STEM and ICT fields of study and occupations; fostering gender sensitive education and training practices in STEM education; eliminating gender stereotypes in STEM;

Rewarding excellence in learning, teaching and skills development: through a) developing and implementing strategies and quality culture to reward and incentivise excellence in teaching, including online teaching, and teaching for disadvantaged learners; b) training of academics in innovative and/or online pedagogies, including trans-disciplinary approaches, new curriculum design, delivery and assessment methods linking education with research and innovation where relevant, c) fostering an entrepreneurial, open and innovative higher education sector, by promoting learning and teaching partnerships with commercial and non-commercial organisations in the private sector; e) developing of new practices in instructional design, based on educational research and creativity.

Building inclusive higher education systems: The Programme will foster inclusive approaches for the mobility and cooperation activities such as a) increased access, participation and completion rates of target groups with fewer opportunities; b) active support to incoming mobile participants throughout the process of finding accommodation, including through collaboration with the relevant stakeholders for the

provision of appropriate and affordable housing; c) supporting the development of flexible career pathways between education and research; d) foster gender balance in higher education institutions, across fields of study and in leadership positions; e) fostering civic engagement through the promotion of informal learning and extra-curricular activities and recognition of voluntary and community work in students' academic results.

Supporting digital capabilities of the higher education sector: through a) actions that enable the implementation of the European Student Card initiative through secure electronic transfer of students' data between higher education institutions, in full respect of personal data protection and linking where possible with the new Europass; b) development of digital skills and competences of students and staff.

In the field of school education, priority will be given to:

Tackling learning disadvantage, early school leaving and low proficiency in basic skills: The aim of this priority is to help make success possible for all learners, particularly those with fewer opportunities. The priority includes monitoring, early identification of pupils at risks, preventive and early intervention approaches for learners with difficulties, promotion of more learner-centered approaches, promotion of well-being and mental health for learners and teachers, as well as protection from bullying at school. At the level of schools, this priority supports holistic approaches to teaching and learning and collaboration among all actors within schools, as well as with families and other external stakeholders. Finally, at strategic level, the focus is on improving transitions between different stages of education, improving evaluation and developing strong quality assurance systems.

Supporting teachers, school leaders and other teaching professions: This priority supports practitioners in teacher professions (including teacher educators) through all phases of their career. Projects under this priority can focus on enhancing teachers' initial education, as well as their continuous professional development, in

particular by improving the policy framework and concrete opportunities for teacher mobility. A second focus of the priority is making teaching careers more attractive and diverse, and strengthening selection, recruitment and evaluation for teaching professions. Finally, projects can also directly support the development of stronger school leadership and innovative teaching and assessment methods.

Development of key competences: Projects under this priority will focus on promoting cross-curricular collaboration, using innovative learning approaches, developing creativity, supporting teachers in delivering competence-based teaching and developing assessment and validation of key competences.

Promoting a comprehensive approach to language teaching and learning: This priority includes projects that work on supporting the integration of the language dimension across the curricula and ensuring that learners reach adequate language competence levels by the end of compulsory education. Mainstreaming the use of new technologies for language learning is also part of the efforts under this priority. Finally, the priority supports projects that can help create language aware schools and that build on the increasing linguistic diversity in schools, for example by encouraging early language learning and awareness and developing bilingual teaching options (especially in border regions and areas where inhabitants use more than one language).

Promoting interest and excellence in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and the STEAM approach: This priority supports projects that promote the STEM approach to education through interdisciplinary teaching in cultural, environmental, economic, design and other contexts. The priority includes development and promotion of effective and innovative pedagogies and assessment methods. Developing partnerships between schools, businesses, higher education institutions, research institutions, and wider society is particularly valuable in this context. At strategic level, the priority serves to promote development of national STEM strategies.

Developing high quality early childhood education and care systems: This

priority focuses on promoting the implementation of the EU quality framework for early childhood education and care. It includes projects providing support for initial and continuing professional development of staff involved in organising, leading and providing early childhood education and care. In addition, the priority also supports creating, testing and implementing strategies and practices to foster participation of all children in early childhood education and care, including children with fewer opportunities.

Recognition of learning outcomes for participants in cross-border learning

mobility: This priority aims to help put in practice the Council Recommendation on automatic mutual recognition. It supports embedding cross-border class exchanges in school programmes, building capacity of schools to organise learning periods abroad for their pupils, and creation of long-term partnerships between schools in different countries. At strategic level, this priority aims for stronger involvement of school authorities at all levels in efforts to ensure recognition, and it supports development and sharing of tools and practices for preparation, monitoring and recognition of periods abroad.

In the field of vocational education and training (both initial and continuing), priority will be given to:

Adapting vocational education and training to labour market needs: This includes supporting the development of VET programmes that offer a balanced mix of vocational skills and create work-based learning opportunities well aligned to all economic cycles, evolving jobs and working methods and key competences. This priority also fosters the development of VET curricula, programme offers and qualifications which are regularly updated, building on skills intelligence. Projects will support VET providers in the adaptation of their training offer to changing skills needs, green and digital transitions and economic cycles.

Increasing the flexibility of opportunities in vocational education and training:

This priority supports initiatives that develop flexible and learner-centred VET

programmes, and that contribute to closing existing gaps in the access to training for working age adults to successfully manage labour market transitions. Projects under this priority also contribute to the development of continuing vocational training programmes designed to be adaptable to labour market, as well as programmes that facilitate the transfer, recognition and accumulation of learning outcomes leading to national qualifications.

Contributing to innovation in vocational education and training: This priority supports projects which core aim is to substantially change the way in which VET is practiced, making it more relevant to the current and future needs of the economy and society. These changes can be organizational (planning, financing, human resource management, monitoring and communication). They can also address teaching and learning processes through the development and implementation of new and more relevant teaching and learning approaches. These changes can relate to the VET providers ecosystem and the way they engage with partners, for example through technology diffusion and applied research, advocacy, networking and internationalization activities. They can also target the development and provision of VET products and services (e.g. skills development, applied research, and consultancy) to external actors such as students, companies and governments.

Increasing attractiveness of VET: Priority will be given to projects that contribute to increasing the attractiveness of VET at different levels. Examples of these can be projects that work towards greater permeability between diverse educational levels, that foster open and participative learning environments, support the professional development of VET teachers and trainers, or facilitate recognition of learning outcomes and the use of Europass and other digital services. This priority also support projects that develop long-term partnerships for establishing or reinforcing international, national, regional and sectoral skills competitions. The impact of these activities can be optimised by working closely together with businesses, VET providers, chambers of commerce and other relevant stakeholders along the different phases of the project cycle.

Improving quality assurance in vocational education and training: This priority

focuses on measuring and improving quality of VET by developing national quality assurance systems, for both initial and continuing VET, in all learning environments and all learning formats, delivered by both public and private providers. In particular, this includes setting-up and testing graduate tracking arrangements in line with the Council Recommendation on tracking graduates, and the Recommendation on the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET)¹, as well as exploring EU vocational core profiles, and micro-credentials.

Creation and implementation of internationalisation strategies for VET

providers: This priority aims at putting in place support mechanisms and contractual frameworks to promote quality mobility of VET staff and learners. Particularly important aspects include automatic mutual recognition of qualifications and learning outcomes, as well as developing student support services for learner mobility. Such services can include informing, motivating, preparing and facilitating the social integration of the VET learners in the host country, as well as enhancing their intercultural awareness and active citizenship.

In the field of adult education priority will be given to:

Improving the availability of high quality learning opportunities for adults:

This priority provides support for creation and development of flexible learning offers adapted to the learning needs of adults, for example by developing digital and blended learning opportunities. Priority is also given to projects working on validation of skills acquired through informal and non-formal learning.

Creating upskilling pathways, improving accessibility and increasing take-up of adult education:

This priority aims at promoting new adult education opportunities, particularly for adults with a low level of skills, knowledge and competences. Creation of new upskilling pathways should allow adult learners to enhance their key competences and to progress towards higher qualifications. Complementary work covered under this priority includes developing guidance as a

service to ensure that adults have access to relevant learning throughout life, improving skills identification and screening, designing tailored learning offers, and developing effective outreach, guidance and motivation strategies.

Improving the competences of educators and other adult education staff:

Priority is given particularly to projects that develop staff competences that lead to overall improvements in provision, targeting and effectiveness of adult education. This includes assessment of prior knowledge and skills of adult learners, better and more innovative teaching methods, as well as strengthening the supporting role the adult education staff has in motivating, guiding and advising learners in challenging learning situations.

Enhancing quality assurance in adult education: This priority supports the development of better quality assurance mechanisms for adult learning policies and provision. In particular, this includes development and transfer of monitoring methodologies to measure effectiveness of adult education provision and to track the progress of adult learners.

Developing forward-looking learning centres: This priority aims to support local learning environments, to promote social inclusion, civic engagement and democracy, and to attract and offer everyone in the community lifelong and life wide learning opportunities, also by exploiting digital technologies. Projects could for example, encourage local learning centres, libraries, civil society and the wider community (NGOs, local authorities, health, culture, etc.) to work together to motivate and enable adults of all ages to learn the life skills and key competences necessary to be resilient and adaptable in the face of change and uncertainty.

Promoting Erasmus+ among all citizens and generations: Priority is given to projects that create and promote education opportunities and exchanges of experiences to seniors, with a view to building and strengthening European identity.

In the field of youth:

Priority will be given to actions that contribute to the core areas of the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027: engage, connect and empower young people. A particular focus will be on strengthening cross-sectorial cooperation that allows for greater synergies across different areas of actions that matter for young people, promoting youth participation in various scales and formats and supporting active citizenship of young people, notably youth at risk of social exclusion. Specific priorities for the youth field include:

Promoting active citizenship, young people's sense of initiative and youth entrepreneurship including social entrepreneurship: The priority aims to foster active citizenship among young people, notably through volunteering and acts of solidarity, and thereby strengthen young people's sense of initiative, particularly in the social field, and support their communities. Projects under this priority could also promote entrepreneurship, creative learning and social entrepreneurship among youth. Intercultural dialogue, knowledge and recognition of diversity and promotion of tolerance are key to this priority.

Increasing quality, innovation and recognition of youth work: The priority aims to promote the recognition and validation of youth work and informal and non-formal learning on all levels, and support quality development and innovation in youth work. This includes capacity-building of youth workers in their online and offline practices, as well as support to the development and sharing of methods to reach marginalised young people, prevent racism and intolerance among youth, and the risks, opportunities and implications of digitalisation.

Strengthening the employability of young people: The priority aims to strengthen young people's key competences and basic skills. The youth sector plays an important role in easing the transition of young people from youth to adulthood, including supporting their integration into the labour market. Activities focusing on the inclusion and employability of young people with fewer opportunities (including NEETs), with

particular emphasis on young people at risk of marginalisation and those with a migrant background, are at the core of this priority.

Reinforcing links between policy, research and practice: This priority addresses the need for stronger links between policy, research and practice in the youth field to provide improved evidence of needs and facilitate policy making. Activities to promote better knowledge about the situation of young people and youth policies in Europe and beyond will be of importance to this priority.

In the field of sport:

Priority will be given to partnerships which contribute to the implementation of key policy documents such as the EU Work Plan for Sport (2021-2024) or the Council recommendation of health-enhancing physical activity. Specific priorities in the sport field include:

Encouraging the participation in sport and physical activity: projects under this priority will focus mainly on a) the implementation of the Council Recommendation on health-enhancing physical activity, the EU Physical Activity Guidelines and the Tartu Call for a Healthy Lifestyle b) the support to the implementation of the European Weeks of Sport c) the promotion of sport and physical activity as a tool for health c) the promotion of all activities encouraging the practice of sport and physical activity including traditional sport and games and intergenerational sport.

Promoting integrity and values in sport: projects under this priority will focus mainly on a) combating the usage of doping b) combating match fixing and corruption in sport c) improving good governance in sport and d) promoting the positive values of sport.

Promoting education in and through sport: projects under this priority will focus mainly on a) supporting skills development in sport, b) encouraging Dual Careers of Athletes c) promoting the quality of coaching and staff d) using mobility as a tool for improving qualifications e) promoting employability through sport.

Combating violence and tackling racism, discrimination and intolerance in sport and tackling violent radicalisation: projects under this priority will focus mainly on combating those behaviors that may have a negative influence over the practice of sport and society more in general. Projects will contribute to the fight of any form of discrimination and promote equality in sport, including gender equality.

1. OJ C 417, 2.12.2020, P. 1-16