Erasmus+ Programme (ERASMUS)

Call for proposals

European policy experimentations
ERASMUS-EDU-2026-POL-EXP

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EUROPEAN EDUCATION AND CULTURE EXECUTIVE AGENCY (EACEA)

EACEA.A – Erasmus+ and EU Solidarity Corps
EACEA.A.2 – Erasmus+: 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 under the **Erasmus+ Programme**.

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

- – Regulation 2024/2509 ([EU Financial Regulation](#))[1]
- – the basic act (Erasmus+ Regulation [2021/817](#)[2]).

The call is launched in accordance with the 2026 Work Programme[3] and will be managed by the **European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)** ('Agency').

The call covers the following **topics**:

- – **Topic 1: ERASMUS-EDU-2026-POL-EXP-T01-DIGITAL-CONTENT: Digital Education Content: success factors in decision making and use by teachers, trainers and school/institution leaders**

- – **Topic 2: ERASMUS-EDU-2026-POL-EXP-T02-DIGITAL-ETHICSAI: Digital Education: Public private partnerships for ethical design, development and use of Artificial Intelligence tools in education and training**

- – **Topic 3: ERASMUS-EDU-2026-POL-EXP-T03-DIGITAL-BS: Digital Education: AI-powered Personalised Learning Pathways for Basic Skills**

- – **Topic 4: ERASMUS-EDU-2026-POL-EXP-T04-MICRO-CRED: Micro-credentials – focus on eco-systems**

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[1] Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2024 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (recast) ('EU Financial Regulation') (OJ L, 2024/2509, 26.9.2024).

[2] 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 (OJ L 189, 28.5.2021, p. 1-33).

[3] Commission Implementing Decision C(2025)7358 final of 5.11.2025 concerning the adoption of the work programme for 2026 and the financing decision for the implementation of the Erasmus + Programme.

- **Topic 5: ERASMUS-EDU-2026-POL-EXP-T05-SCHOOL-STEM: School Education: STEM Education Centres**

- **Topic 6: ERASMUS-EDU-2026-POL-EXP-T06-SCHOOL-BS: School Education: Proficiency in basic skills**

- **Topic 7: ERASMUS-EDU-2026-POL-EXP-T07-VET-BS: Vocational Education and Training: Developing basic skills in Vocational Education and Training**

- **Topic 8: ERASMUS-EDU-2026-POL-EXP-T08-VET-QUALIFICATIONS: Vocational Education and Training: Improving transparency and recognition of VET qualifications**

- **Topic 9: ERASMUS-EDU-2026-POL-EXP-T09-ADULT-PS: Adult Education: Support to the Regional Skills Partnerships in the Pact for Skills**

- **Topic 10: ERASMUS-EDU-2026-POL-EXP-T10-ADULT-EMPOWER: Adult Education: Motivation in Motion: Empowering Adults to Up- and Reskilling**

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

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, scope, activities that can be funded and the expected results (sections 1 and 2)

  - available budget and timetable (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 <u>AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement</u> 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 <u>Erasmus+ Project Results</u> website to consult the list of projects funded previously.

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.

Education, training, youth and sport have a crucial role to play in helping the Union in developing its economic and social dimension, emphasizing competitiveness, social inclusion and democratic participation, and promote greater sustainability, with green and digital transitions as its transformative drivers. In her <u>political guidelines for 2024-2029</u>, President von der Leyen committed to strengthen Erasmus+ (including for vocational training) so that more people can benefit: "this is key for people to develop skills and create shared experiences and a better understanding of each other. This will be part of a wider commitment to giving young people greater freedom and responsibility within our societies and democracies."

Erasmus+ also remains true to its mission of close to four decades, i.e. being the Union's main instrument to support young people's mobility, offering increased opportunities for high quality level formal and non-formal learning mobility for learners and staff, and enabling the pursuit of studies and learning paths in different stages of life. In this respect, the Programme will pursue its long-standing mission to support transnational learning mobility in 2026, and is continuously reinforcing its support to these actions, with a view to boost inclusion and to address growing demand.

The Council Resolution of 2021 establishing the <u>Strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030)</u> 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 **<u>European Education Area</u>** (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 supports Member States, participating countries 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 <u>Digital Education Action Plan</u>, <u>European Higher Education Area</u> and the <u>Union of Skills</u> (see below). 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.

The **European Pillar of Social Rights**[4] and **Skills Agenda**[5] both emphasize lifelong skills development through initiatives like the Pact for Skills and European Alliances.

The **Union of Skills** announced in the **Commission's political guidelines for 2024-2029** and in the Communication "The Union of Skills" is a strategic initiative to develop adaptable education and training systems for EU competitiveness in line with the Commission Communication **A Competitiveness Compass for the EU** and the **EU Preparedness Union Strategy**. It promotes building skills for jobs, upskilling workforces, and attracting and retaining talent.

The **Action Plan on Basic Skills**[6] is part of the Union of Skills and has been launched to combat declining basic skills and support strong educational outcomes.

The **STEM Education Strategic Plan**[7] is another flagship initiative under the **Union of Skills** aiming to raise interest in STEM fields and address shortages of skilled professionals throughout cooperation amongst educational sectors and industries for hands-on STEM education and innovation. Additionally, it supports gender inclusion in STEM and provides tailored educational opportunities.

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
- The Council Recommendation on the key enabling factors for successful digital education and training
- The Council Recommendation on improving the provision of digital skills and competences in education and training
- The Staff Working Document accompanying the Proposal for a Council Recommendation on the key enabling factors for successful digital education and training, Proposal for a Council Recommendation on improving the provision of digital skills in education and training
- The Council Recommendation on blended learning approaches for high-quality and inclusive primary and secondary education
- Digital Decade
- The Learning Lab on Investing in Quality Education and Training
- The Council Recommendation on common values, inclusive education and the European dimension of teaching
- The 2022 Council Recommendation on learning for the green transition and sustainable development
- The Council Conclusions on skills and competences for the green transition
- The Council Recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning
- The Council Recommendation on pathways to school success
- The European Pillar of Social Rights

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[4] In particular, the first principle (everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and lifelong learning) and the fourth principle (everyone has the right to timely and tailor-made assistance to improve employment or self-employment prospects, including to receive support for training and re-qualification).

[5] Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience, COM/2020/274 final.

[6] Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the Action Plan on Basic Skills. COM/2025/88 final.

[7] Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, A STEM Education Strategic Plan: skills for competitiveness and innovation. COM/2025/89 final. STEM is the acronym for science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

- The [Council Recommendation on vocational education and training for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience](#)[8]
- The [Herning Declaration](#) to strengthen European cooperation on vocational education and training
- The [European Alliance for Apprenticeships](#) and the [Council Recommendation on a European Framework for quality and effective apprenticeships](#)
- The [Council Recommendation on individual learning accounts](#)
- The [Council Resolution on a new European agenda for adult learning 2021-2030](#)
- The [Council Recommendation on Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults](#)
- The [European strategy for universities](#) and the related [Council Conclusions on a European strategy empowering higher education institutions for the future of Europe](#)
- 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](#)
- The [Council Recommendation of 5 April 2022 on building bridges for effective European higher education cooperation](#)
- The [Council Recommendation of 16 June 2022 on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability](#)
- The [Green Deal Industrial Plan](#)
- The [Communication on the Green Deal Industrial Plan for the Zero-Net Age](#)
- [Council Recommendation of 13 May 2024 'Europe on the Move' — learning mobility opportunities for everyone](#)

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 **10 separate topics** with specific objectives and priorities:

Topic 1: ERASMUS-EDU-2026-POL-EXP-T01-DIGITAL-CONTENT:
Digital Education Content: success factors in decision making and use by teachers, trainers and school/institution leaders

Objectives

The digital transition has brought about an exponential increase in the production and use of **digital education content (DEC)**, i.e. teaching or learning material made accessible through digital formats and tools. This includes, but is not limited to, e-textbooks, animations, text/audio/images/videos materials, e-tests, (3D) simulations, interactive learning materials (maps, quizzes) and mobile apps/games. The abundance of such materials can boost innovation, making digital education content more creative, engaging, interactive, modular and embodied in diverse formats. At the same time, the richness of choice can make it difficult for teachers, trainers and school/institution

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[8] [EUR-Lex - 32020H1202(01) - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

leaders to select digital education content that is best suited to their pedagogical objectives. To support them in this endeavour, the European Commission published guidelines on DEC: "Making informed choices on digital education content – EU guidelines for teachers and educators", which aim to primarily help teachers, trainers and school/institution leaders in their day-to-day selection, creation, access, use and review of DEC to support student learning. The guidelines also encourage better collaboration with all relevant stakeholders to procure well-designed and high-quality DEC.

Themes and priorities (scope)

This topic invites project proposals that:

- Promote and establish collaboration and agreement between teachers/educators, creators/providers of digital education content, and educational authorities on the necessary quality criteria for the selection, creation, adaptation, use and evaluation of DEC, using the European Commission Guidelines on "Making informed choices on digital education content" as a starting point.

- Apply quality criteria on digital education content (based on "Making informed choices on digital education content – EU guidelines for teachers and educators") in real contexts and verify their relevance or adapt them, if necessary, while also proposing the most effective methods for sharing experiences and lessons learnt with the wider community of stakeholders.

- Provide capacity building to teachers and school leaders, in primary and secondary education, to confidently contribute to all stages of decision-making regarding DEC (i.e. selection, creation, access, use, adaptation, and evaluation), effectively involving them as early in the process as possible. Create connections between teachers and school leaders and their relevant educational authorities (whether in charge of curricula, budgets allocated to acquisition or creation, public procurement) and public/ private providers of digital educational content.

Activities that can be funded (scope)

- Apply and implement the recommendations set out in the European Commission Guidelines on digital education content. Propose, where appropriate, improvements, as well as complementary practical tools and approaches for EQF 2-4 that support the use of digital education content. This can include among others: good-practice models of how teachers and schools can share structured evaluations of DEC quality with each other and with stakeholders; tools to facilitate access to, maintenance and sharing of open digital education content (such as OER); spaces for testing and co-creating DEC. Proposals developed by partners (including educational authorities responsible for digital education policies) may choose to cover primary or secondary education (EQF 2-4), or school education rather than targeting all levels of education.

- Contribute to integrating digital education content efficiently into Member States' digital education policies by clearly establishing the levers and channels chosen to involve educators in the development and implementation of strategies and action plans (local, regional, national or European).

Expected impact

Projects should address <u>three or more</u> of the outputs described below. Projects can propose additional outputs.

- **Shared practices** on implementing the "Making informed choices on digital education content – EU guidelines for teachers and educators" (opportunities, challenges and additional proposals), as well as their **widespread use** in school education.

- **Shared methods and good practices** to train and encourage teachers, trainers and school/institution leaders to easily assess and reflect on the quality of the innovative digital education content they use and/or create with their students.

- **Practical models to facilitate DEC co-design, co-creation and co-evaluation** by teachers and educators, creators and providers, researchers. This could include support and assistance mechanisms, as well as common rules for the co-design or testing and improvement of digital education content.

- **Key success factors and practical guidance** to develop a culture of cooperation and a process of continuous feedback between teachers, trainers, school/institution leaders, public authorities and private providers collaboratively, to improve the quality of digital education content and confidence in using, creating, accessing, adapting and evaluating digital education content.

- **Key success factors and guidance** on the ways to integrate digital education content efficiently into Member States' digital education policies for formal education and training and promote common approaches within the EU.

Topic 2: ERASMUS-EDU-2026-POL-EXP-T02-DIGITAL-ETHICSAI: Digital Education: Public-private partnerships for ethical design, development and use of Artificial Intelligence tools in education and training

Objectives

In the last years, we have witnessed an exponential use and integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems in education and training. AI tools offer new opportunities to increase quality, inclusiveness and personalisation of education and training, support adaptive learning pathways, create digital education content and enhance trainers' and educators' work. A key prerequisite of the effective integration of AI in education and training at any level is fostering a human-focused, age-appropriate, ethical, transparent and values-driven approach to AI design, development and deployment.

However, currently AI tools are often perceived as insufficiently reflective of the needs and specificities of the education and training community, as they are usually developed with limited involvement of key stakeholders, such as learners, teachers, educators, school leaders, parents, community members, policymakers, and civil society organisations. In addition, the dominance of a limited number of providers, often from outside of the EU (e.g. Big Tech) raises questions related to their compliance with European values, such as data protection and privacy, inclusion, ethics, transparency, etc. To safeguard Europe's digital sovereignty, it is therefore essential to promote trustworthy, explainable and transparent AI systems developed within the EU and grounded in European values.

Achieving this goal requires a comprehensive approach that fosters innovation while ensuring an ethical, EU-values driven dimension in the design and deployment of educational AI tools and resources that respect human rights and are compliant with

the regulatory framework of the [AI Act][9]. In this context, it is important to embed a multi-stakeholder approach, underpinned by public-private partnerships, which brings together the private sector, government, education and training institutions, academia, and civil society, to address common challenges in the ethical design, development and deployment of AI tools for education and training purposes.

Themes and priorities (scope)

This topic invites proposals that successfully establish public-private partnerships for the pedagogically driven design, development, deployment and use of ethical, trustworthy AI-based resources to improve teaching and learning. Proposal should demonstrate that their outcomes can be transferable and scalable across the EU Member States and third countries associated to the Programme and should focus on formal education and training.

Activities that can be funded (scope)

Projects should propose activities promoting trans-national cooperation and mutual learning to define particularly effective ways to facilitate public-private partnerships in AI that integrate the ethical dimension by default and propose guidance for its implementation at different steps of its development and use (including AI literacy and skills).

Public–Private Partnerships (PPPs) refer to structured collaborations between public authorities and private sector organisations aimed at jointly funding, developing, and delivering infrastructures, digital solutions, or services of public interest. PPPs can support the design, deployment, or management of innovative digital learning environments and services, drawing on the complementary expertise and resources of both sectors.

PPPs will be set up with the consortium partners, can be sectoral and/ or thematic, and can be newly established specifically for this action or build upon existing collaborations. In the latter case, applicants should provide evidence of the partnership's previous achievements and proven track record of activity and impact through relevant evidence and examples.

Projects should include a comprehensive sustainability plan outlining how the PPP and its activities will be maintained beyond the duration of the action. The plan should demonstrate financial sustainability, including documentation of potential funding sources and arrangements or business models that ensure continuity. It should also address organisational, technical, and policy-related aspects required to sustain the outcomes and their long-term impact.

Expected impact

Projects should address **three or more** of the expected outputs described below. Projects can propose additional outputs.

Under this call, the following **three** outputs are **mandatory**:

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[9] Regulation (EU) 2024/1689 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 laying down harmonised rules on artificial intelligence and amending Regulations (EC) No 300/2008, (EU) No 167/2013, (EU) No 168/2013, (EU) 2018/858, (EU) 2018/1139 and (EU) 2019/2144 and Directives 2014/90/EU, (EU) 2016/797 and (EU) 2020/1828 (Artificial Intelligence Act) (Text with EEA relevance).

- **Development of a ready-to-use framework for public-private partnerships in AI for education.** The framework should serve as a practical guide for creating and managing ethical public–private partnerships in AI for education and training. It could offer governance models defining roles, responsibilities and decision-making processes, agreement templates addressing data protection, privacy, intellectual property and long-term system maintenance, and/or guidance to embed ethical principles throughout the design, development and deployment of AI tools. It should be transferable and scalable across EU Member States and third countries associated with the Programme.

- **Development of a stakeholder engagement toolkit** with shared and transferable methods to involve all relevant stakeholders in the design, development, testing, delivery and evaluation of AI in and for education and training. The toolkit should embed co-creation and participatory design principles to ensure that AI EdTech providers, research institutes and education practitioners and policymakers work together from the earliest stages, generating evidence of ethical use and supporting transparent, values-driven innovation.

- **Development and piloting of validated use-cases and good practices, together with evidence-based data-collection**, to involve all relevant stakeholders in the design, development, testing, delivery and evaluation of AI in and for education and training. The results should generate clear evidence of ethical use of AI in and for education and training, that may feed EU and national guidelines and policies.

The following outputs could be addressed in addition:

- Key success factors and practical guidance on the most effective ways to develop public-private partnerships, fostering the ethical use of AI in and for education at any level in formal education. Those should be scalable and transferrable to other Member States and third countries associated to the Programme, and at EU level.

- Design of a roadmap or strategic plan that outlines the steps, milestones and resources needed to create a sustainable EU-wide ecosystem for AI in education that strengthens Europe's digital sovereignty by connecting students, educators, policymakers, and developers in a continuous feedback cycle where each group informs and responds to the others. The roadmap could include governance structures, knowledge-sharing platforms, and indicators to monitor long-term cooperation.

Where relevant, the projects should leverage the 2022 "Ethical Guidelines on the use of AI and data in teaching and learning for educators" their upcoming revision, as well as other relevant Erasmus+ projects on the topic of AI.

Topic 3: ERASMUS-EDU-2026-POL-EXP-T03-DIGITAL-BS:
Digital Education: AI-powered Personalised Learning Pathways for Basic Skills

Objectives

Basic skills are instrumental in enabling citizens to fully participate in society, the labour market, and lifelong learning. As highlighted in the **Action Plan on Basic Skills** adopted on 5 March 2025, basic skills (literacy, numeracy, science, digital and citizenship skills) are vital for everyone's personal development and participation in

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society, economy, labour market and democratic life. Basic skills acquisition starts at an early age in school education and is crucial throughout life. However, many European countries have been facing a decline in basic skills achievement. For instance, PISA results show that around 30% of the 15-year-olds have challenges in understanding and applying mathematics in real-life situations and learning environments[10], and 25% in understanding basic texts or applying simple scientific knowledge, which hinders their personal and professional development. Added to this are the increasingly necessary digital skills, particularly with the growing role of artificial intelligence, supporting learners to critically and confidently engage with learning, personal and professional life. These skills complement the broader citizenship competences required for active participation in society.

With the rise of digital learning platforms and learning management systems, new possibilities for skills development and personalised education are emerging. Combined with advances in technology, they make it possible to design tailored learning journeys, such as personalised learning pathways. A **Personalised Learning Pathway (PLP)** refers to a tailored and adaptive approach to learning that is designed to meet the unique needs, abilities, sustained engagement/interests, and learning styles of an individual learner, in order to help achieve the best possible progress and outcomes[11]. The application of such flexible, personalised, and accessible learning pathways can cater to diverse individual learning needs, support closing skills gaps and enhance student performance. PLPs can help learners receive targeted and immediate support adapted to their needs and in this way close knowledge gaps but also increase curiosity to learn more and advance quickly. It is therefore essential to support the ethical, transparent and quality development and implementation of personalised learning pathways for acquiring basic skills, ensuring that education and training systems are inclusive, effective, and responsive to the needs of all learners, across school education and initial vocational education and training levels.

PLPs can leverage Artificial Intelligence in creating customised learning plans that take into account learners' strengths, weaknesses, and goals, and provide a flexible and responsive learning environment that adjusts to their progress and needs over time.

Themes and priorities (scope)

Projects under this topic will aim to foster the application of (ethical, transparent, and explainable) AI-based PLPs at school education and initial VET level, specifically addressing learners at EQF levels 1 to 4.

The projects should target **one or more of the basic skills**[12] focusing on the priorities below (projects should show awareness of all priorities, but the depth and focus can vary depending on the project's scope):

- Support the deployment of AI-powered PLPs for basic skills development: leveraging PLPs that use AI, machine learning, or other innovative methods to tailor learning journey, content and pace to individual learners' needs.

- Improve basic skills acquisition: improving learners' skills in the basic skills set, as laid out in the Action Plan on Basic Skills, to enhance their learning process and increase their employability and participation in society, through an interdisciplinary approach.

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[10] OECD (2023), PISA 2022 Results (Volume I), The State of Learning and Equity in Education, PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/53f23881-en
[11] Personalisation / personalised learning | European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education
[12] As outlined here https://education.ec.europa.eu/education-levels/school-education/basic-skills and in the Action_Plan_on_Basic_Skills_COM_2025_88_1_EN_0.pdf

- Measure the improvement of basic skills education: learning progress and basic skills development should be made measurable through student and teacher dashboards and learning analytics, complemented by systematic feedback collection from learners and educators.

- Enhance innovative pedagogies and approaches, by supporting adaptive, data-driven teaching, learning, and assessment methods (such as micro-learning and competency-based progress) enabling schools to foster effective, learner-centred, and inclusive environments that strengthen basic skills, to enhance the effectiveness education and training for basic skills provision.

- Foster a level-playing field among learners: proposing innovative pedagogical approaches to use AI-based PLPs in a collaborative environment that supports learners at different levels of attainment to progress together and inclusively towards shared learning goals.

- Promote an effective and ethical use of AI in education, ensuring the AI systems used are transparent, explainable, ethical and in accordance with European data and privacy regulations.

Activities that can be funded (scope)

Projects should address <u>three or more</u> of the activities described below. Projects can propose additional activities.

- International, multilingual, and scalable pilots on the use of AI-powered PLPs for basic skills development that are ethical, effective, purposeful, and pedagogically underpinned. Projects should prioritise open-source technologies and standards, data sovereignty, GDPR compliance, EU-based and ethical AI, interoperability, sustainability, and alignment with EU values and regulations. Design of evidence-based materials and structured use cases (describing in a systematic and organised way the quality and effective interactions between a system and its users) of relevant AI-based PLPs for basic skills development that can be disseminated and easily implemented at organisational level.

- Methodologically robust research and analysis to identify, map, and analyse the effective use and the impact (on teaching, training, learning, assessment and on learning outcomes) of existing AI-based PLPs for basic skills on teaching, training, learning, and assessment in school education and initial VET.

- Analysis to identify challenges and success factors in the deployment of AI-based PLPs for basic skills development.

- Development of questionnaires or other assessment methods (including qualitative ones) for evaluating the effectiveness of AI-based PLPs for basic skills development.

- In-depth interviews with educators, learners, and other stakeholders.

- Development of guidelines on the critical use of AI-based PLPs for basic skills development that can be disseminated and easily implemented from organisational level to a large scale.

Expected impact

Projects should address <u>three or all</u> of the expected outputs described below. Projects can propose additional outputs.

- **Evidence-based framework(s) for AI-powered PLPs in basic skills**: a common EU framework consisting of quality criteria, pedagogical models, assessment criteria and tools (such as teacher dashboards) and ethical guidelines to ensure AI-powered PLPs improve literacy, numeracy, science, digital and citizenship skills in an inclusive and transparent way.

- **Validated pilots implemented in multiple countries, with measurable learning impact** across diverse school and initial VET contexts, with robust evaluation showing measurable progress in basic skills acquisition, reduction of basic skills gaps, improved learner motivation, that enhance – not replace – the teacher's role. Projects should prioritise open-source technologies and standards, data sovereignty, EU-based and ethical AI, and full alignment with EU values and regulations.

- **Practical toolkits and capacity-building resources for educators**, such as ready-to-use guidelines, training modules, and support materials that enable teachers and school leaders to integrate AI-based PLPs safely and effectively into everyday practice.

- **Actionable policy recommendations supported by real-world data** for EU and national policymakers, grounded in piloting evidence, to support upscaling of personalised learning platforms to boost basic skills while safeguarding privacy, inclusion, and learner autonomy.

Projects should leverage relevant initiatives under the Action Plan on Basic Skills, the Digital Education Action Plan and any other relevant actions under the Union of Skills.

Topic 4: ERASMUS-EDU-2026-POL-EXP-T04-MICRO-CRED: Micro-credentials – focus on eco-systems

Objectives

The objective of this topic 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](), as well as implementation of other policy objectives (in particular developing micro-credentials' eco-systems in STEM). 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. Under the Union of Skills, the focus is on expanding the use of micro-credentials as flexible learning solutions, in line with the European approach, to ensure that they are trusted, understandable, issued digitally and comparable across sectors and countries, for which the engagement of all kind of stakeholders (also beyond formal education and training providers) is fundamental.

Themes and priorities (scope)

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 - with an aim of increasing permeability between sectors - 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, industry and employers), 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.

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 to adapt them to the provision of micro-credentials.

Activities that can be funded (scope)

Projects should address <u>one or more</u> of the expected activities described below. Projects can propose additional activities.

The objective 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 and training 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 and third countries associated to the programme.

The activities should be based on cooperation of stakeholders from different sectors: higher education providers and vocational education and training providers (or other providers, as defined in the Council Recommendation of 16 June 2022 on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability[13]).

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[13] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32022H0627(02)

Expected impact

Projects should address <u>one or more</u> of the expected outputs described below. Projects can propose additional outputs.

- 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 and pilot 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 (by for example granting a micro-credentials' quality label), 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 (in education and training) of micro-credentials delivered by higher education institutions, VET institutions, and/or other formal and non-formal providers, and/or acceptance practices of those micro-credentials in the labour market. Explore changes needed in existing tools and/or rules to make micro-credentials portable across the EU. 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 and the validation of non-formal and informal learning), 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, public employment services and social partners (employers, trade unions and governments). 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.

**Topic 5: ERASMUS-EDU-2026-POL-EXP-T05-SCHOOL-STEM:
School Education: STEM Education Centres**

Objectives

Mathematical competence and competence in science, technology, engineering, commonly referred to as STEM, belong to eight key competences for lifelong learning as defined by the 2018 Council Recommendation. They are found essential for individuals to navigate the twin green and digital transitions, to strengthen active and responsible citizenship in democratic processes and for individual empowerment and wellbeing. Such competences are also critical to boosting European innovation and competitiveness in the global arena.

However, STEM education faces persistent challenges across the EU. This includes underachievement in science and mathematics among 15-year-olds, particularly among students from disadvantaged backgrounds; decreasing share of top performers in STEM subjects; underrepresentation of women and girls in STEM studies and careers; a shortage of qualified mathematics and/or science teachers in all educational stages and their unmet need for adequate professional development. Moreover, there is limited research on STEM education overall, and a common definition of STEM education is not agreed between researchers, teachers, and policy makers[14]. Finally, building community awareness and support for STEM and STEAM education is crucial to fostering interdisciplinary learning and innovation[15] [16].

The STEM Education Strategic Plan as part of the Union of Skills initiative, and complemented by the Action Plan on Basic Skills, aims to address these challenges through a set of targeted actions, starting from an early age and tackling the entire school education pipeline[17]. These include piloting the **STEM Education Centres for schools** with the goal of improving how STEM and STEAM education is delivered and experienced in primary and secondary education, including VET schools. These centres will create dynamic learning ecosystems that drive innovation in STEM/STEAM teaching and learning in schools by stepping up cooperation with businesses, science museums, STEM/STEAM organisations, libraries, cultural associations, creative industries, universities and research institutions, among others[18].

The **STEM Education Centres specific objectives** comprise the following:

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[14] The STEM education concept has significantly evolved over the last decades (and is still evolving) shaped by the requirements of the modern world: from narrowly interpreted as teaching and learning in core disciplines only which support and enhance each other, to more elaborated interpretations such as integrated/interdisciplinary STEM and STEAM. The two latter refer to disciplinary integration: integration among the core subjects on the one hand, and in combination with "any other disciplines" such as arts, social sciences and humanities. The recent Commission's policy brief on STEM and STEAM education and disciplinary integration, which builds on research and stakeholder consultations, aims to summarise and clarify STEM definitions with the goal to guide future policymaking initiatives in the field.

[15] European Commission, Joint Research Centre, Pokropek, A., STEM competences, challenges, and measurements: a literature review, Editors: Mazzeo-Ortolani, G., Karpinski, Z., Biagi, F., Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2024, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2760/9390011, JRC138618.

[16] European Commission: Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, Evagorou, M., Puig, B., Bayram, D. and Janeckova, H., *Addressing the gender gap in STEM education across educational levels – Analytical report*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2024, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/260477

[17] These recent EU policy initiatives line up in continuous EU policy efforts promoting the development of key competences for lifelong learning through high-quality and inclusive education and training systems. STEM belongs to the policy field prioritised in the 2021 European Education Area strategic framework and mainstreamed into several EU policy initiatives (e.g., the 2022 Council Recommendation on learning for the green transition and sustainable development, the 2021 Council Recommendation on blended learning approaches for high-quality and inclusive primary and secondary education, the 2020 Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027). In 2021, Member States also committed to having no more than 15% of 15-year-old below a minimum competence level in basic skills, such as in mathematics and science, by 2030.
[18]https://education.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2025-03/STEM_Education_Strategic_Plan_COM_2025_89_1_EN_0.pdf

- Increasing an equal access to holistic quality STEM and STEAM education through community-based learning ecosystems while combining formal, non-formal and informal learning environments.

- Increasing students' interest, motivation and achievement in STEM and STEAM, particularly among the underrepresented groups of learners such as female students, learners from low-income families and migrant backgrounds, as well as with disabilities.

- Raising teachers' competences in effective STEM and STEAM teaching and learning approaches and addressing STEM teacher shortages.

- Strengthening cooperation between community actors to better respond to local/regional needs in STEM and STEAM education.

- Fostering exchange and mutual learning through transnational/regional cooperation between STEM and STEAM education stakeholders.

Themes and priorities (scope)

This topic would aim to support a gradual establishment and development of transnational collaborative partnerships and networks of STEM Education Centres to strengthen and/or build up local and regional STEM/STEAM learning ecosystems for educational innovation and social inclusion. Such ecosystems should respond to different cultural and educational contexts and varying, specific needs in each EU country, while building on existing structures and initiatives where available, or creating new ones. The Centres should be guided by the community-based learning concepts such as the whole school approach[19] or an open schooling,[20] and align with the latest advances in STEM fields e.g. linked to the green and digital transitions, based on research; they should promote a systemic approach in STEM and STEAM education, e.g. with aggregated pedagogical standards, monitoring of learning outcomes, and professional development of educators, going far beyond a simple provision of quality STEM and STEAM education teaching and learning.

By fostering collaborative partnerships and networks operating at multiple levels (local, regional and transnational), the Centres will support European-wide cooperation; through bringing together and empowering STEM ecosystems from across Europe, the Centres will contribute to reducing existing disparities in STEM and STEAM education provision among countries and regions. This would enable educators, educational institutions, policy makers, higher education institutions, researchers and industry and

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[19] A whole-school and whole-system approach represents an important precondition for educational reform and practice that emphasises the interconnectedness of all components—"interacting subsystems"—within the educational ecosystem (Cefai et al., 2021, p. 10). At the school level, it involves the collective responsibility of teachers, administrators, students, parents, and the entire educational community (including non-formal and informal education providers) but also the alignment and coherence of governance, planning, teaching and learning, and assessment practices. This ensures that all parts of the school operate synergistically to create a cohesive and supportive learning environment promoting academic success of all learners. At system level, this implies a collaborative effort between policymakers, educational agencies, businesses, and relevant stakeholders (e.g. active civil society organisations, universities, social services) at all levels of governance. However, it also involves fostering internal coherence within and across policies, practices, and resources to ensure that reforms are systemic and sustainable (Hopkins et al., 2014). It acknowledges that improving education outcomes requires collaboration and coherence across the entire system, not just within schools but in the broader socio-political context that surrounds education.

[20] Open Schooling is an approach that focuses on interdisciplinary STEM-based collaboration between schools and their wider communities. External stakeholders, such as science centres and museums, enterprises, research institutions, parent associations. etc. work together with teachers and students to address relevant societal challenges, contribute to community development, and promote active citizenship, while delivering the curriculum. Open schooling offers students the opportunity to learn together in real-life settings. This approach is supported by various initiatives, such as the Open Schools for Open Societies, Schools as Living Labs, Make it Open, Road-STEAMer, STEAM Learning Ecologies, MULTIPLIERS and others. See also Science Education for Responsible Citizenship (Expert Group report to the EC, 2015).

their ecosystems to innovate, share and scale good practice in a long term, sustainable efforts.

Activities that can be funded (scope)

The STEM Education Centres will cover all stages in school education including early childhood education and care, primary and secondary education levels (including VET schools and special needs education), as well as formal, non-formal and informal learning environments. Attention should be given to the inclusion of underrepresented groups in STEM education such as female students and disadvantaged groups e.g. students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, cultural minorities or learners with disabilities.

The activities should be organised around the following three clusters (work packages) designed to achieve a systemic impact. The applicants are expected to address **all three clusters** of activities, providing details of the concrete actions and deliverables. For each cluster a minimum number of activities should be selected from the lists below. It is expected to include:

- **at least 3** activities under **Cluster 1: Teaching and learning**
- **at least 1** activity under **Cluster 2: Cooperation and partnerships**
- **at least 1** activity under **Cluster 3: Governance and funding**

Projects will reach their objectives through a combination of these activities in a consistent framework. The lists of typical activities per cluster are provided below.

Cluster 1. Teaching and learning: Activities covered by this cluster aim at promoting a holistic and systemic approach to STEM and STEAM education built on educational innovation and inclusion, and they include:

- Developing innovative and inclusive **learning, teaching and assessment** methodologies and resources, including in integrated/interdisciplinary STEM and STEAM.

- Developing and providing **initial and continuous professional development** and **support services** for STEM/STEAM teachers and educators adapted to their real needs.

- Embedding **transnational mobility for teachers and students** in their learning and professional development.

- Ensuring **recognition and validation of learning outcomes** acquired in various educational settings, including in STEAM/STEAM learning ecosystems.

- Developing **quality career guidance** for students to support their education and career choices.

- **Increasing the access** to quality STEM and STEAM education combining formal, non-formal, informal learning settings particularly for underrepresented groups and in disadvantaged areas.

- Mainstreaming **inclusion and participation** through whole school, whole community culture and early intervention.

- Facilitating access to **fully equipped physical spaces** with up-to-date laboratories, technologies, digital tools and other resources, located inside or outside of schools, for both teachers and students.

- Strengthening **research in STEM** and **STEAM education** for evidence-based policies and practices.

- Ensuring systematic **monitoring and evaluation** of the effectiveness and impact at the individual, project and school/system levels and increase the data base on STEM/STEAM education.

- **Ensuring dissemination of new knowledge and resources** and promoting successful initiatives to increase their reach and scale.

Cluster 2. Cooperation and partnership: Activities covered by this cluster aim at building sustainable partnerships and networks at multiple levels and they include:

- Establishing, strengthening and cultivating partnerships and cooperation at local/regional level involving relevant stakeholders in community-based STEM and STEAM education, such as schools and their teachers, students and principals, public authorities, parents, science museums, libraries, NGOs and cultural associations, youth organisations, businesses and creative industry, universities and research institutions, among others.

- Working together with teachers, school leaders, policy makers and researchers among others to **align activities** with e.g. policies and strategies, curricula, professional development programmes and school governance in consistent frameworks.

- **Involving students** in co-creating STEM and STEAM initiatives to provide their own perspectives and voice their opinions.

- Contributing to designing and implementing **STEM education policies**, including those combining formal and non-formal/informal STEM and STEAM education.

- Organising **awareness raising campaigns** to promote STEM and STEAM education.

Cluster 3. Governance and funding: Activities covered by this cluster aim at ensuring long-term sustainability of the STEM learning ecosystems. They include:

- Co-creating **sustainable STEM learning ecosystems structures** anchored in institutionalised cooperation at various levels of governance.

- Empowering **school leaders and leadership teams** to lead STEM and STEAM innovation at schools.

- Developing **sustainable financial models** that e.g. combine public and private funding.

- Making full **use of national and EU financial instruments** and funds, to provide/increase resources for teaching and learning actions, research activities, mobility of learners and teachers, infrastructure investments, including equipment, among others.

The activities should be carried out by formal education and non-formal/informal education actors working with schools from each represented country. Non-formal education providers may represent various sectors involved in creating or strengthening STEM and STEAM learning ecosystems at multiple levels.

Expected impact

The STEM Education Centres are expected to contribute to:

- Improved students' interest, participation, and achievement in STEM and STEAM education.

- Expanded students' access to competent and effective STEM and STEAM teachers and educators.

- Decreasing gender and diversity gaps in STEM and STEAM education and careers

- Increased community awareness and support for STEM and STEAM education.
- Long-term sustainable cooperation, per-learning and best-practice sharing between STEM and STEAM education stakeholders in Europe.

The STEM Education Centres are expected to become an important factor in promoting holistic STEM and STEAM education from an early age and in primary and secondary education, including VET schools. While pooling the expertise and resources across Europe, they have the potential to boost educational innovation and social inclusion at school level, while transforming education overall and aligning it with the requirements of the complex, fast-changing world. They would be also a tool for bringing policy, research and practice more closely, while nurturing the development and implementation of effective, evidence-based strategies, policies and practices at EU, national, regional/local levels. Ultimately the STEM Education Centres are expected to advance STEM and STEAM education in Europe.

Topic 6: ERASMUS-EDU-2026-POL-EXP-T06-SCHOOL-BS: School Education: Proficiency in basic skills

Objectives

Europe's competitiveness and social cohesion depend on strong basic skills. Too many young people across the EU struggle with reading, mathematics, science, digital and citizenship skills. Underachievement in basic skills is threatening innovation, democracy and economic competitiveness.

In the Action Plan on Basic Skills the European Commission addresses underachievement in basic skills and promotes inclusion and excellence, starting from early childhood education and care and through all stages of school education. The Action Plan comprises measures directed at learners, educators, policy makers, parents and the wider community.

The objective of topic 6 is to test and validate measures at the school level that have the potential to reduce underachievement in basic skills among children and young people, with a view to supporting school authorities in implementing these measures at scale through impactful structural reforms, policies or initiatives.

Themes and priorities (scope)

Activities under this topic will be guided by the 2022 Council Recommendation on Pathways to School Success which proposes a policy framework, based on a whole-system, whole-school approach perspective, aimed at guiding policy makers and education practitioners. The framework outlines conditions for effective action, key measures, to be promoted at school, local, regional and national levels as well as specific actions for supporting school leaders, teachers, trainers and other educational staff. This framework has been complemented with system-level guidelines drawn up at EU level to guide education authorities on measures with a proven impact on improving basic skills proficiency, focusing on early intervention and individual, tailor-made support[21].

Activities that can be funded (scope)

Projects are expected to pilot test and validate measures from **two or more** of the areas mentioned below (projects can propose additional activities) in relation to tackling underachievement in basic skills:

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[21] https://school-education.ec.europa.eu/en/discover/news/roadmap-school-success-all

- Targeted tutoring and mentoring support for underachieving learners

- Assessment and diagnostic screening

- Evidence-based pedagogies for basic skills

- Additional learning time and catch-up interventions

- Digital and blended pedagogical tools for personalised learning

- Family and community partnerships to foster basic skills

- Bridging basic skills gaps during key educational transitions (ECEC–primary, primary–secondary)

- Whole-child support partnerships for improving basic skills

- Support to schools in designing and implementing basic skills improvement plans

For the purpose of the pilot testing, measures should promise direct impact on basic skills (by targeting one or several relevant competence areas: literacy, numeracy, science, digital and citizenship), be suitable for launch, and show measurable effects, within one to two school years, be largely implementable within current education governance and funding frameworks, be grounded in robust evidence, and promise transferability across contexts.

The measures can either directly address learners or be implemented through capacity-building, professional development or networking activities directly involving professionals in school education (teachers, school leaders or other staff), as well as external stakeholders such as parents, families and communities.

The activities should involve school authorities (national, regional or local level) and schools/ECEC settings (ISCED 0-3).

Expected impact

Projects are expected to produce the following outputs:

- **Piloting of the measures in at least 12 schools** across all participating countries, and covering all phases of a school year;

- **Evaluation of the piloted measures** for impact on the target group and cost-effectiveness;

- **Analysis of the conditions and enablers for the upscaling of the measures** within the participating school education systems, including the changes and reforms (regulatory or other), resources required and frameworks for the monitoring and evaluation;

- **Analysis of the potential to use of existing funding mechanisms** (EU, national, regional etc.) to upscale the measures;

- **Analysis of the potential of transferability** to other school education systems.

Impact expected: Projects should provide evidence to inform policy design at EU, national, regional or local levels, supporting the scaling-up of successful models within and across Member States and thus contribute to raising levels of basic skills, in particular by lowering the share of young people and children who underachieve in basic skills.

In their implementation, selected projects are expected to link to each other for potential synergies and to build on (initial) lessons and results from projects selected under the Erasmus+ 2025 call on Forward-looking projects on basic skills[22].

Topic 7: ERASMUS-EDU-2026-POL-EXP-T07-VET-BS: Vocational Education and Training: Developing basic skills in Vocational Education and Training

Objectives

In most EU countries, an important share of learners in vocational education and training (VET) face significant challenges in literacy, mathematics, science, digital and citizenship skills, which hinders their educational progression, employability, and active participation in democratic society. Strengthening these basic skills is essential to ensuring equitable learning outcomes, fostering social cohesion, and enhancing the EU's innovation capacity and long-term competitiveness. In line with the Basic Skills Action Plan adopted as part of the Union of Skills in March 2025, projects will aim to improve the basic skills of learners in vocational education and training - both school-based and work-based VET systems (including apprenticeships). Recent evidence underscores the urgency of addressing basic skills in VET. PISA 2022 data reveal that approximately one out of three 15-year-olds in the EU struggles with mathematics application in real-life situations, whilst one out of four fails to understand basic texts or apply simple scientific knowledge. Despite significant efforts to make VET attractive to a broad range of learners, VET systems still receive high numbers of students who have experienced academic challenges in lower secondary education.

The strong connection between VET programmes and the labour market strongly influences both curricula and teaching methods in IVET. VET curricula are typically more practice-based, with a strong focus on job-specific skills, which often leaves less time for the acquisition of basic skills. VET also involve various actors, such as company trainers in apprenticeships, shaping the learning approaches and environments. Nonetheless, the acquisition of basic skills is highly relevant for IVET learners, as these skills are essential for their adaptability, career progression, and lifelong learning. Strong basic skills enhance employability, lay foundations for further learning and adaptability, and help individuals navigate an evolving labour market and society. An important challenge lies in developing approaches that reconcile job-specific learning outcomes with basic skills acquisition, ensuring that VET graduates are well-equipped for both immediate employment and long-term career development.

Themes and priorities (scope)

This topic aims to fund projects to test and pilot promising and innovative practices to improve basic skills in VET and providing opportunities to experiment with these approaches, taking account of the specificities of VET and its very diverse learners.

Projects under this priority will support the implementation of the VET Recommendation, the Herning Declaration and the Basic Skills Action Plan by strengthening the acquisition of one or more of the five basic skills in both school-based and work-based VET, including apprenticeships at EQF levels 3 and 4. They will test innovative and promising practices adapted to the specificities of VET and its diverse learning environments, diverse learner population and provide evidence, guidance and recommendations on how to better develop these skills into VET curricula and learning environments. Cooperation with local, regional and/or national public authorities is

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[22] Topic 1 - ERASMUS-EDU-2025-PI-FORWARD-SCHOOL-BS: School Education: Enhancing basic skills

strongly encouraged to ensure a systemic approach through policy guidance, funding and strategic oversight.

Activities that can be funded (scope)

The projects under this priority should implement **one or more** of the activities mentioned below (additional activities may be added, the list is non-exhaustive):

- Foster basic skills within VET programmes, by embedding literacy, numeracy, science, digital and citizenship skills into vocational curricula and training, and by providing tailored remedial courses, tutoring or individualised support where needed. This should include practical, work-related contexts.

- Design and test innovative pedagogical approaches and learning materials linking job-specific competences with transversal basic skills, including problem-solving methods, scenario-based learning and use of digital tools.

- Develop initial and continuing professional development for VET teachers and trainers specifically on basic skills, enhancing their capacity to integrate literacy, numeracy, science, digital and citizenship competences into vocational teaching and workplace training.

- Design and implement extra-curricular or non-formal learning activities for VET learners to foster one or more basic skills, such as initiatives promoting civic education and democratic engagement, digital skills clubs or challenges, science workshops, or literacy and numeracy mentoring schemes.

Expected impact

In terms of impact, projects should:

- Foster a systemic approach to strengthening basic skills provision in VET, covering literacy, mathematics, science, digital and citizenship skills.

- Develop guidance, frameworks and tools for VET providers, teachers, trainers and policy makers to support effective delivery of basic skills in VET and apprenticeships.

- Provide evidence to inform national and EU policy design, supporting the scaling-up of successful models across Member States.

- Strengthen the professional capacity of teachers and trainers in VET to integrate and support basic skills learning.

In a broader sense, the results of the projects will contribute to reducing drop-out rates in VET and support social inclusion, resilience and active citizenship by enabling VET learners to acquire the basic skills needed to thrive in society, the labour market and democratic life.

Topic 8: ERASMUS-EDU-2026-POL-EXP-T08-VET-QUALIFICATIONS: Vocational Education and Training: Improving transparency and recognition of VET qualifications

Objectives

VET is crucial for the EU's competitiveness and helps individuals gain skills for quality jobs. The Draghi report, however, highlights concern about Europe's declining competitiveness, partly due to skill gaps. Vocational qualifications are needed for many

high demand professions and where acute labour shortages persist – especially in the context of the digital and green transition, and in sectors linked to demographic pressure. Closing the skill gaps is essential for improving competitiveness.

As highlighted in the Union of Skills Communication, VET qualifications are often undervalued and poorly understood outside national contexts, contributing to skills mismatches, labour shortages and low attractiveness of VET pathways. To facilitate the mobility of VET learners and workers, the Union of Skills has announced further work on recognition of qualifications and skills. The focus will be on initial VET at upper-secondary and post-secondary level (EQF levels 3-5).

By facilitating the development of jointly developed VET programmes (full or partial), the aim is to foster strategic transnational cooperation among VET institutions, support the acceptance and understanding of VET qualifications and skills across borders and broaden opportunities for VET students, teachers and trainers, ultimately making VET a more competitive and attractive career choice across Europe.

The initiative could particularly be interesting for sectors where specific skills and knowledge are scarce or dispersed. By enabling VET providers to pool resources and integrate specialised knowledge and skills in which different European regions excel, this approach could help consolidate these assets and foster innovation. Similarly, the initiative could greatly benefit border regions, where a lack of critical mass may restrict the availability of a broad and diverse education offer, especially for specialised programmes or those requiring expensive infrastructure, due to an insufficient number of potential students within a single region. In addition, transnational cooperation across borders can help to stimulate economic growth and innovation.

Joint VET programmes (full or partial) developed in a transnational setting have the potential to reach the following objectives/benefits:

- Increase employability and skills relevance of VET graduates.
- Become a driver for strategic transnational cooperation, supporting innovation and competitiveness in VET.
- Make VET a more attractive study and career choice.
- Facilitate the acceptance and understanding of VET programmes (full or partial), including learning mobility periods abroad, across national borders.

The pilot projects aim to support the creation and/or enhancement of transnational joint VET programmes (full or partial), leading up to or being part of a qualification formally registered in at least two Member States and/or third countries associated to the Erasmus+ Programme, taking into account the diversity of VET systems and in full respect of subsidiarity. Pilot projects should identify best practices, potential obstacles, and strategies to overcome these. They should also investigate and provide recommendations for the further development, implementation, and the acceptance and understanding of transnational joint VET programmes (full or partial) within national and/or regional VET systems of the participating countries and across countries.

Themes and priorities (scope)

The pilot projects need to focus on developing joint VET programmes (full or partial) in a transnational setting at EQF levels 3-5. Various approaches are possible, such as creating modules developed by VET providers from different countries or sectoral/craft organisations at the European level. The projects should aim towards integrating these into qualifications registered in a national or regional qualification framework or system, for example by utilising the optional areas within vocational training programmes. Projects could also aim to develop a comprehensive qualification in a transnational context to address gaps within national and/or regional formal qualification systems.

They should utilise EU instruments and transparency tools such as EQAVET, EQF, Europass and ESCO and could build on the outcome of existing transnational cooperation initiatives which have developed joint training content and modules.

The transnational joint VET programmes (full or partial) to be developed and delivered can be aimed at both regulated and non-regulated professions. These programmes need to (1) have clear added value to learners, teachers, trainers, (2) address regional and/or local labour market needs, and (3) ensure that these are integrated into a national or regional qualification framework or system in the participating countries. They should demonstrate this in their application, supported by a strong quantitative and qualitative data-analysis. The transnational joint VET programmes should include a work-based learning component to ensure a strong connection to the labour market. Moreover, they should include a mobility component for VET learners, teachers, and/or trainers, enhancing learning and curriculum development in an international and transnational context.

Projects are expected to ensure robust involvement from two or more VET providers that each offer vocational programmes at EQF levels 3-4 and be in different EU Member States and/or third countries associated to the Erasmus+ programme. The project could in addition also focus on vocational programmes at EQF level 5. Pilot projects should ensure from the start the involvement of national and/or regional authorities or competent bodies in charge of the awarding and recognition of VET qualifications.

As part of the project, beneficiaries will, in cooperation with the relevant national, regional and/or local authorities and/or other bodies in charge of VET, as well as other stakeholders involved, reflect upon the projects and provide recommendations for potential further steps in the development of transnational joint VET programmes (full or partial). The projects will inform discussions in the Advisory Committee on Vocational Education and Training (ACVT) and the meetings of the Directors-General for VET (DGVT), which are formalised stakeholder groups in the European VET governance framework. Depending on the progress and outcomes of the pilot projects and accompanying discussions, further exploratory work might be initiated towards a potential European VET diploma or label, or alternative approaches may be considered.

Activities that can be funded (scope)

Projects should include **all activities** listed below under each action (1-3):

Action 1: Develop, test and certify transnational joint VET programmes (full or partial)

- Build joint transnational VET programmes (full or partial) and test these in practice allowing students to enroll in the developed programmes.

- The joint transnational VET programmes should be learner-centred, integrate work-based learning, address regional and/or local labour market needs, support innovation and be integrated into / in a national or regional qualification framework or system of participating countries.

- Coordinate a mobility activity for VET learners, rotating learners among project partners. Embed this mobility component within the VET programme curricula (mobility window). Additionally, projects can include a mobility experience for teachers and trainers to guide students, support curriculum development and innovation.

- Projects should aim to certify the learning outcomes of transnational joint VET programmes (full or partial) acquired following national or regional certification rules and automatically recognise the mobility periods of participants abroad through Europass Mobility using European Digital Credentials for Learning Infrastructure.

Action 2: Monitoring, analysis and reflection

- Beneficiaries need to carefully monitor the pilot projects, reviewing and evaluating their progress and results. Eligible activities include meetings, consultations (either online or in person), surveys, and focus group discussions.

- The pilot projects should identify good practices, potential obstacles, and ways to overcome them.

- Beneficiaries, in collaboration with relevant national, regional, or local authorities and other VET stakeholders, need to review the projects and offer recommendations to the European Commission for further steps and improvements to enhance attractiveness and impact. For this purpose, participation in meetings or other events by the European Commission might be required from the beneficiaries.

Action 3: Communication and dissemination

To boost visibility of transnational joint VET programmes, the project has to include a strong communication and dissemination plan. This could involve creating and sharing materials, organising meetings, and distributing information within and outside the VET community, emphasising the joint programmes' benefits, development and implementation.

Expected impact

The proposed pilot projects are expected to lead to significant results and impacts in terms of:

- Increased understanding, acceptance and evidence regarding the design, implementation of transnational joint VET programmes, including periods of learning abroad, with potentially high systemic impact on the VET systems.

- These programmes aim to enhance graduates' employability and skills, promote international collaboration and innovation, make VET more attractive as a study and career option, and support mobility across borders.

- Offer guidance to further develop and implement transnational joint VET programmes (full or partial), with potential expansion across EU member states and involved third countries associated to the programme and integration into those national and/or regional VET systems.

Topic 9: ERASMUS-EDU-2026-POL-EXP-T09-ADULT-PS
Adult Education: Support to the Regional Skills Partnerships in the Pact for Skills

Objectives

The Pact for Skills is the first flagship action of the 2020 European Skills Agenda. The Pact is firmly anchored in the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights 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". 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.

The Pact for Skills is an engagement model for addressing skills challenges and deliver on the Competitiveness Compass, the Clean Industrial Deal, the Automotive Industrial Action Plan, and of the White Paper for European Defence – Readiness 2030 as well as the Apply AI Strategy. It aims to further address skills gaps throughout industrial eco-systems by mobilising companies, workers, national, regional and local authorities,

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

Themes and priorities (scope)

This topic aims at supporting **existing regional partnerships**[23] (partnerships at the level of one region within a country or involving more than one region, within one or more countries) in the Pact for Skills to develop and implement concrete activities/commitments to train people of working age.

Activities that can be funded (scope)

Projects should implement **all** the activities listed below:

- Develop and support governance structures or arrangements connecting members within the same Regional Skills Partnership.

- Support the definition, implementation, and monitoring of concrete commitments of a Regional Skills 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 according to regional needs.

- 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 Skills Partnership.

Expected impact

- Projects should result in effective structural cooperation frameworks in existing Regional Skills Partnerships in 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 in the Pact should aim at implementing 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 by helping Regional Skills Partnership stakeholders better meet the skills needs of their regional economy, consistent with any existing regional smart specialisation strategies and taking into account developments of existing large-scale Pact for 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

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[23] Regional Skills Partnerships

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 10: ERASMUS-EDU-2026-POL-EXP-T10-ADULT-EMPOWER: Adult Education: Motivation in Motion: Empowering Adults to Up- and Reskilling

Objectives

Skills are key drivers of employability and wages. They open the door to new opportunities, yet we know that many adults lack the motivation to take up learning opportunities, even when they are given the chance. Moreover, many face structural barriers, including time constraints and care responsibilities.

A key challenge is that many adults indicate they do not wish to, and/or fail to see the benefit of engaging in further learning. Indeed, this was a recurring theme voiced during the European Year of Skills and a problem in most countries. Yet the pace of change and the reality that people will spend some four decades in the labour market after finishing formal schooling means there is an absolute urgency to find ways to reach these groups. In most cases the key issue is that earlier negative experiences of schooling have resulted in an aversion to learn in a formal educational setting.

Themes and priorities (scope)

This topic asks for proposals to pilot innovative approaches to stimulate adults to engage in learning activities in their usual and trusted environments, as well as providing a flexible offer that helps them overcome barriers to training such as time constraints or care duties.

This can include libraries, community, cultural, sport, health and social inclusion centres, but also the workplace and public employment services.

Partnership approaches between different kinds of organisations are often most effective.

Activities that can be funded (scope)

Projects funded under this topic should address **all activities** listed below:

- Foster a systemic approach to strengthening the engagement of adults, especially adults with low basic skills, in learning activities in their usual and trusted environments, considering the needs of the learners, of the labour market and the society and by paying specific attention to the identified barriers of these learners (e.g. motivation, time barriers, care duties etc.);

- Provide non-stigmatising, tailored, flexible and quality training opportunities, and facilitate their user-friendly integration with skills assessment, validation and career guidance.

- Develop and build lasting partnerships between different actors that can contribute to measures with impact. These can include, among others, public employment services and social services to support adults in improving their basic skills and activate them as relevant. Intergenerational approaches could be tested in this context.

- Develop guidance, frameworks and/or specific tools for policy makers at the relevant level(s) (national, regional, local), for learning providers, other relevant stakeholders, but also for teachers, educators, trainers, in order to support effective delivery of skills and competences to the target group of the action.
- Provide evidence to inform national and EU policy design, supporting the scaling-up of successful models across Member States.

Expected impact

In terms of impact, projects should contribute to the increase of participation of adults in learning, in line with the EU headline target of 60% by 2030. In particular, projects should result in:

- Systemic approaches developed to strengthening the engagement of the target group in learning activities in their usual and trusted environments.
- New skills and competences acquired by the involved learners.
- Delivery models, guidance materials, frameworks and/or tools developed within the project to increase the skills and competences of educators and trainers and to strengthen the capacity of learning providers.
- Established lasting partnerships models that support the development of innovative learning spaces for adults.

    Models for possible upscaling of the projects.

3. Available budget

The estimated available call budget is **EUR 54 000 000.**

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

Topic	Topic budget
1. ERASMUS-EDU-2026-POL-EXP-T01-DIGITAL-CONTENT	EUR 2 000 000
2. ERASMUS-EDU-2026-POL-EXP-T02-DIGITAL-ETHICSAI	EUR 6 000 000
3. ERASMUS-EDU-2026-POL-EXP-T03-DIGITAL-BS	EUR 5 000 000
4. ERASMUS-EDU-2026-POL-EXP-T04-MICRO-CRED	EUR 3 000 000
5. ERASMUS-EDU-2026-POL-EXP-T05-SCHOOL-STEM	EUR 6 000 000
6. ERASMUS-EDU-2026-POL-EXP-T06-SCHOOL-BS-	EUR 9 000 000
7. ERASMUS-EDU-2026-POL-EXP-T07-VET-BS	EUR 5 000 000
8. ERASMUS-EDU-2026-POL-EXP-T08-VET-QUALIFICATIONS	EUR 8 000 000

9. ERASMUS-EDU-2026-POL-EXP-T09-ADULT-PS	EUR 5 000 000
10. ERASMUS-EDU-2026-POL-EXP-T10-ADULT-EMPOWER	EUR 5 000 000

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

4. Timetable and deadlines

Timetable and deadlines (indicative)	
Call opening:	22 December 2025
Deadline for submission:	**08 April 2026 – 17:00:00 CET (Brussels)**
Evaluation:	April-July 2026
Information on evaluation results:	October 2026
GA signature:	By January 2027

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 Calls for proposals 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 *(template to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed, assembled and re-uploaded)*

- Part C — contains additional project data and the project's contribution to EU programme key performance indicators *(to be filled in directly online)*

- **mandatory annexes and supporting documents** *(templates to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed, assembled and re-uploaded)*:

    - detailed budget table

- list of previous projects (key projects for the last 4 years) *(template available in Part B)*

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 all 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** (please check carefully the layout of the documents uploaded).

Proposals are limited to maximum **40 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)*.

ℹ️ For more information about the submission process (including IT aspects), consult the Online Manual.

6. Eligibility

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 field of education and training, research and innovation or in the world of work.
- 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).
- for higher education institutions (HEIs) established in Erasmus+ Programme Countries *(see above)*: be holders of a valid ECHE certificate (Erasmus Charter for Higher Education).

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)*.

Specific cases and definitions

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.

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[24].

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'[25]. ⚠ 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 for participation in the programme *(see list of participating countries above)* may participate in the call and can sign grants if the negotiations are concluded before grant signature and if the association covers the call (i.e. is retroactive and covers both the part of the programme and the year when the call was launched).

EU restrictive measures — Special rules apply for 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)[26]. 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).

EU conditionality measures — Special rules apply for entities subject to measures adopted on the basis of EU Regulation 2020/2092[27]. Such entities are not eligible to participate in any funded role (beneficiaries, affiliated entities, subcontractors, recipients of financial support to third parties, etc). Currently such measures are in place for Hungarian public interest trusts established under the Hungarian Act IX of 2021 or any entity they maintain (see [Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/2506](#), as of 16 December 2022).

ℹ 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 5 applicants** (beneficiaries; not affiliated entities) from a minimum of **3 different** EU Member States or third

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[24]   See Article 200(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

[25]   For the definitions, see Articles 190(2) and 200(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

[26]   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](#).

[26]   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](#).

[27]   Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2092 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2020 on a general regime of conditionality for the protection of the Union budget (OJ L 325, 20.12.2022, p. 94).

countries associated to the Programme.

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

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

Eligible activities

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

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

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)*. Projects must also respect EU values and European Commission policy regarding reputational matters (*e.g. activities involving capacity building, policy support, awareness raising, communication, dissemination, etc*).[28]

Financial support to third parties is not allowed.

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.

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 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 coordinators, except:

- public bodies (entities established as public body under national law, including

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[28] See, for instance, Guidance on funding for activities related to the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of Union legislation and policy.

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 project 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.

ℹ️ 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

– list of previous projects (key projects for the last 4 years) *(template available in Part B)*.

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[29]:

- 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)

- guilty of grave professional misconduct[30] (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 EU Regulation 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)

- intentionally and without proper justification resisted[31] an investigation, check or audit carried out by an EU authorising officer (or their representative or auditor), OLAF, the EPPO, or the European Court of Auditors.

Applicants will also be rejected if it turns out that[32]:

- 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).

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[29] See Articles 138 and 143 of EU Financial Regulation 2024/2509.

[30] 'Professional misconduct' includes, in particular, the following: violation of ethical standards of the profession; wrongful conduct with impact on professional credibility; breach of generally accepted professional ethical standards; false declarations/misrepresentation of information; participation in a cartel or other agreement distorting competition; violation of IPR; attempting to influence decision-making processes by taking advantage, through misrepresentation, of a conflict of interests, or to obtain confidential information from public authorities to gain an advantage; incitement to discrimination, hatred or violence or similar activities contrary to the EU values where negatively affecting or risking to affect the performance of a legal commitment.

[31] 'Resisting an investigation, check or audit' means carrying out actions with the goal or effect of preventing, hindering or delaying the conduct of any of the activities needed to perform the investigation, check or audit, such as refusing to grant the necessary access to its premises or any other areas used for business purposes, concealing or refusing to disclose information or providing false information.

[32] See Article 143 EU Financial Regulation 2024/2509.

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:

1) 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. When these scores are equal, priority will be based on their scores for the criterion 'Impact'.

2) 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.

3) 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. Full 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 will be 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

The **award criteria** for this call are as follows:

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1. Relevance of the project *(maximum 30 points)*

Background and general objectives

- **Link to EU policy and initiatives**: 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.

- **Scope**: the proposal addresses **one of the topics** of the action (see section 2 above). The extent to which the proposal consistently integrates the activities, research or events as specified in section 2 above for the topic addressed.

- **EU values**: 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.

Needs analysis

- **Needs analysis and specific objectives**: the objectives of the project are based on a sound needs analysis in line with the specific objectives of the topic selected. The project identifies and addresses relevant issues/challenges/gaps. The specific objectives are clearly defined, measurable, realistic and achievable within the duration of the project. For each objective appropriate indicators for measuring achievement (including a unit of measurement, baseline value and target value) are defined.

- **Contribution:** to what extent does the proposal include partners contributing to the specific objectives of the topic.

Complementarity with other actions and innovation – European added value

- **Complementarity:** to what extent does the project and its foreseen activities build on the results of and is/are complementary to past activities carried out in the field.

- **Innovation**: the proposal considers state-of-the-art methods and techniques, and leads to innovative results and solutions.

- **European added value**: 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 to other sectors.

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2. Quality *(maximum 40 points)*

2.1. Project design and implementation *(maximum 20 points)*

Concept and methodology

- **Coherence and methodology**: the overall project design ensures consistency between project objectives, methodology, activities, duration and the budget proposed. The proposal presents a coherent and comprehensive set of appropriate activities to meet the identified needs and lead to the expected results.

- **Structure**: 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.

Project management, quality assurance and monitoring and evaluation strategy

- **Management**: solid management arrangements are foreseen ensuring that the project implementation is of high quality and completed in time.

- **Quality assurance:** the proposal describes methods to ensure good quality, monitoring, planning and control and refers to relevant EU instruments and tools, such as EQF, Europass, ESCO, EQAVET, European Approach to micro-credentials.

- **Evaluation strategy:** the proposal includes evaluation methods and indicators (quantitative and qualitative) to monitor and verify the outreach and coverage of the activities and results (including unit of measurement, baseline and target values). The indicators proposed to measure progress are relevant, realistic and measurable. The work programme includes an independent external quality assessment at mid-term and a few months before the project end to enable potential project adjustments.

Cost effectiveness and financial management

- **Budget:** the budget provides for appropriate resources necessary for success, is clearly linked to the proposal activities, and is neither overestimated nor underestimated.

- **Financial management and control**: the proposal indicates the arrangements adopted for the financial management of the project and, in particular, how the financial resources will be allocated and managed within the consortium.

Risk management

- **Critical risks and risk management strategy**: the proposal describes critical risks, uncertainties or difficulties related to the implementation of the project, and the measures/strategy for addressing them.

2.2 Partnership and cooperation arrangements (*maximum 20 points)*

Consortium set-up

- **Configuration:** 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 match the needs of the selected topic:
    - ○ **Topic 2**: The extent to which the partnership of the proposal is forming a PPP (Public and Private Partnership);
    - ○ **Topic 4**: The extent to which the partnership of the proposal involves i) one or more Higher Education providers <u>and</u> ii) one or more VET providers (or other providers as defined in the Council Recommendation of 16 June 2022 on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability);
    - ○ **Topic 5**: The extent to which the partnership of the proposal involves one or more formal education providers and one or more non-formal/informal education providers working with schools from each represented country. The extent to which the partnership involves non-formal education providers that represent various sectors involved in creating or strengthening STEM and STEAM learning ecosystems at multiple levels.
    - ○ **Topic 6**: The extent to which the partnership includes school authorities (national, regional or local level) and schools/ECEC settings (ISCED 0-3).
    - ○ **Topic 8**: The extent to which the partnership includes two or more VET providers that each offer vocational programmes at EQF levels 3-4 in different EU Member States and/or third countries associated to the Erasmus+ programme.
    - ○ **Topic 9**: The extent to which the partnership of the proposal is composed by organisations which are partners of existing Regional Skills Partnerships[33] within the Pact for Skills. The extent to which the partnership of the proposal includes regional and/or local authorities.

- **Commitment**: 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.

Consortium management and decision-making

- **Tasks**: 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.

- **Collaboration/Team spirit**: an effective mechanism is proposed to ensure an efficient coordination, decision-making, communication and conflict resolution between the participating organisations, participants and any other relevant stakeholder.

3. Impact *(maximum 30 points)*

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[33] Regional Skills Partnerships

Impact and ambition

- **Exploitation**: the proposal demonstrates how the outcomes of the project will be mainstreamed at system level in one or more countries. It provides means to measure exploitation within the project lifetime and after.

- **Impact**: the proposal demonstrates the potential impact of the project, within the project's duration and beyond:
    - On the targeted groups and relevant educational sectors;
    - On policy-makers and relevant authorities at system level;
    - On private or public policy-drivers at local, regional, national and/or European levels.

  The proposal includes measures and identifies quantitative targets and indicators to monitor progress and assess the expected impact (short- and long-term).

Communication, dissemination and visibility

- **Dissemination**: 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.

Sustainability and continuation

- **Open access**: 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.

- **Sustainability**: 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 potential identification of financial resources (European, national and private) to ensure that the results and benefits achieved will have a long-term sustainability.

Award criteria	Minimum pass score	Maximum score
Relevance	20	30
Quality — Project design and implementation	15	20
Quality — Partnership and cooperation arrangements	15	20

Impact	20	30
Overall (pass) scores	**80**	**100**

Maximum points: 100 points.

Individual thresholds per criterion: 20/30, 15/20, 15/20 and 20/30 points. Overall threshold: 80 points.

Proposals that pass the individual thresholds AND the overall threshold will be considered for funding — within the limits of the available budget (i.e. up to the budget ceiling). 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 project 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. A retroactive starting date 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.

The project activities should be organised in coherent work packages (between three to maximum six). For example, WP1 Project Management and Coordination, WP2 to WP5 organisation and implementation of activities, WP6 Impact and dissemination.

Meaningful deliverables – ideally not more than three deliverables per work package – should be linked to each work package. The WP1 should include as a deliverable an independent external quality assessment at i) mid-term and ii) close to the end of project.

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 (requested grant amount): **maximum EUR 1 000 000** per project.

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 [34]

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 (if any)

- the lump sum calculation should respect the following conditions:

  - for lump sums based on estimated project budgets: 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

  - communication costs for presenting the project on the participants' websites or social media accounts are eligible; costs for separate project websites are not eligible

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.

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 you or 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 done.

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[34] Decision of 24 March 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions and unit contributions under the Erasmus+ Programme 2021-2027.

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 normally requested from the coordinator, for the consortium. They must be provided during grant preparation, 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 *(art 23)*.

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 5):*

–   EU restrictive measures: Yes

Other specificities

Consortium agreement: Yes

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 EULogin 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 [Calls for proposals](#) section (or, for calls sent by invitation to submit a proposal, through the link provided in the invitation letter).

Submit your proposal in 4 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.

–   Part C containing additional project data. To be filled in directly online.

–   Annexes (*see section 5*). Upload them as PDF file (single or multiple depending on the slots). Excel upload is sometimes possible, depending on the file type.

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 may 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.

Guidance on the use of generative AI tools for the preparation of the proposal:

When considering the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools for the preparation of the proposal, it is imperative to exercise caution and careful consideration. The AI-generated content should be thoroughly reviewed and validated by the applicants to ensure its appropriateness and accuracy, as well as its compliance with intellectual property regulations. Applicants are fully responsible for the content of the proposal (even those parts produced by the AI tool) and must be transparent in disclosing which AI tools were used and how they were utilised.

Specifically, applicants are required to:

• Verify the accuracy, validity, and appropriateness of the content and any citations generated by the AI tool and correct any errors or inconsistencies.

• Provide a list of sources used to generate content and citations, including those generated by the AI tool. Double-check citations to ensure they are accurate and properly referenced.

• Be conscious of the potential for plagiarism where the AI tool may have reproduced substantial text from other sources. Check the original sources to be sure you are not plagiarizing someone else's work.

• Acknowledge the limitations of the AI tool in the proposal preparation, including the potential for bias, errors, and gaps in knowledge.

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

  – Topic Q&A on the Topic page (for call-specific questions) - to be published in 2026

  – 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.

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). If affiliated entities participate in your project, please do not forget to provide documents demonstrating their affiliation link to your organisation as part of your application.

- **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).

- **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).

- **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 cumulation of funding/no double funding—** It is strictly prohibited to cumulate funding from the EU budget (except under 'EU Synergies actions'). Outside such Synergies actions, any given action may receive only ONE grant from the EU budget and cost items may under NO circumstances be declared under two EU grants; projects must be designed as different actions, clearly delineated and separated for each grant (without overlaps).

- **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 funding for them).

  Organisations may participate in several proposals.

  BUT: if there are several proposals for *very similar* projects, only one application will be accepted and evaluated; the applicants will be asked to withdraw the others (or they 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.