



Erasmus+ Programme (ERASMUS)

Call for proposals

Partnerships for Excellence – European Universities - ERASMUS-EDU-
2024-EUR-UNIV

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EUROPEAN EDUCATION AND CULTURE EXECUTIVE AGENCY (EACEA)

EACEA.A - Erasmus+, EU Solidarity Corps
EACEA.A.1 - European Higher Education

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

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0. Introduction

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

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

- Regulation 2018/1046 ([EU Financial Regulation](#))
- The basic act (Erasmus+ Regulation 2021/817¹).

The call is launched in accordance with the Erasmus+ 2024 Work Programme² and will be managed by the **European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)** ('Agency').



Please note that this call is subject to the final adoption of the budget by the EU budgetary authority. In case there are substantial changes, we may have to modify the call (or even cancel it).

The call covers the following **topics**:

- **ERASMUS-EDU-2024-EUR-UNIV-1 – European Universities – Development of deep institutional transnational cooperation**
- **ERASMUS-EDU-2024-EUR-UNIV-2 – European Universities – Community of practice**

Each project application under the call must address only one of these two topics.

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).
 - Timetable and available budget (sections 3 and 4).
 - Admissibility and eligibility conditions (including mandatory documents; sections 5 and 6).
 - Criteria for financial and operational capacity and exclusion (section 7).
 - Evaluation and award procedure (section 8).
 - Award criteria (section 9).
 - Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements (section 10).
 - How to submit an application (section 11).
- the [Online Manual](#) outlines the:
 - Procedures to register and submit proposals online via the EU Funding & Tenders Portal ('Portal').
 - Recommendations for the preparation of the application.
- the [AGA – Annotated Grant Agreement](#) contains:
 - Detailed annotations on all the provisions in the Grant Agreement you

1 Regulation (EU) 2021/817 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021 establishing Erasmus+: the Union Programme for education and training, youth and sport and repealing the Regulation 1288/2013 (OJ L189/1).

2 COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION of 18.9.2023 on the financing of Erasmus+: the Union Programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport and the adoption of the work programme for 2024.

will have to sign in order to obtain the grant (*including cost eligibility, payment schedule, accessory obligations, etc*).

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

1. Background

Heads of state and government called in the [European Council Conclusions of 14 December 2017](#) on the Member States, the Council and the European Commission, in line with their respective competences, to take work forward in encouraging the emergence of 'European Universities'. The Member States' support for the initiative has been reiterated, notably in the February 2021 [Council Resolution on a 'Strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond \(2021-2030\)'](#) that states that "*higher education institutions will be encouraged to find new forms of deeper cooperation, namely by creating transnational alliances, (...) and through the full roll-out of the European Universities initiative.*" The [Council Conclusions on the European Universities initiative](#), adopted on 17 May 2021, invited Member States and the Commission to "*consider more sustainable funding instruments for the 'European Universities'*", while taking into account the diversity of the cooperation models.

European Universities are a key flagship of the [European strategy for universities](#), presented on 18 January 2022, which sets out the objective to expand to 60 European Universities with more than 500 higher education institutions by mid-2024, with an Erasmus+ indicative budget totalling EUR 1.1 billion for 2021-2027. [The Council conclusions on a European strategy empowering higher education institutions for the future of Europe](#), adopted on 5 April 2022, highlight that "unlocking the full added value of alliances of higher education institutions such as the 'European Universities' calls for further support at European and, where appropriate, national level through a step-by-step approach" and that "alliances of higher education institutions, such as the 'European Universities', can demonstrate the potential of extensive and long-term institutional higher education cooperation" and "have the potential to generate real European added value by achieving critical mass on a European scale through the long-term commitment of all involved parties". The higher education sector, including European Universities, has also a key role to play in the implementation of the [new European Innovation Agenda](#) presented on 5 July 2022.

The Commission has co-created the European Universities initiative with Member States and stakeholders as of 2018 and launched under Erasmus+ four calls for proposals in 2019, 2020, 2022 and 2023. Currently, 50 European Universities have been selected and are up and running³ collectively involving more than 430 higher education institutions of various sizes and types located across Europe, triggering unprecedented levels of institutionalised cooperation, making it systemic, structural and sustainable.

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

Objectives

The European Universities initiative is pivotal to achieving the ambitious vision of an innovative, globally competitive, and attractive European Education Area by 2025, in full synergy with the European Research Area and the European Higher Education Area, by transforming the institutional cooperation between higher education institutions and bring it to the next level. It mobilises **all four missions of higher education institutions: education, research and innovation and service to**

³ Call results 2019: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_19_3389;
Call results 2020: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_1264;
Call results 2022: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_4702;
Call results 2023: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_3634.

society. They will **test diverse innovative and structural models** for implementing and achieving **systemic, structural, and sustainable cooperation**, in full respect of **higher education landscape diversity**. They will serve as **inspiration for the wider higher education sector**.

As such, European Universities aim at achieving the following **main objectives**:

- **Promote common European values** as enshrined in article 2 of the Treaty on European Union and a **strengthened European identity** by bringing together a new generation of Europeans who are able to cooperate and work within different European and global cultures, in different languages, and across borders, sectors and academic disciplines.
- Reach a substantial leap in **quality, performance, attractiveness, and international competitiveness** and enable **deep institutional transformation** of involved **European higher education institutions** and contribute to the European knowledge economy, employment, creativity, culture, and welfare by making best use of innovative pedagogies and striving to make the knowledge square⁴⁴ a reality. European Universities will be key drivers to boost the quality of higher education and where possible to strengthen its links to the research and innovation landscape in Europe and its outreach towards the society and economy.

The **scope of this call for proposals** is to support on one hand higher education institutions in gradually achieving their long-term ambitious vision towards becoming a fully-fledged European University and on the other hand to empower European Universities to share and benefit from each other experiences and to act as role models for the wider higher education sector.

This objective will be achieved through a **twofold approach**:

- **Topic 1:** this call topic will provide support for applicants **wishing to establish deep institutional transnational cooperation** in a 'European Universities' alliance.
- **Topic 2:** this call topic will provide support for applicants **to set-up a Community of Practice of European Universities alliances**.

Themes and priorities (scope)

Main priorities:

Topic 1: Development of a deep institutional transnational cooperation

In 'European Universities', the term "Universities" should be understood in its broadest sense, including all types of Higher Education Institutions.

What are European Universities? European Universities are highly ambitious transnational alliances of higher education institutions developing long-term institutional structural and strategic cooperation, based on common values, and agreed principles, and aiming to achieve sustainability of their cooperation.

The European Universities initiative responds to a **long-term vision that has the potential to transform the institutional cooperation between higher education institutions and bring it to the next level**.

In this context, 'European Universities' will reach the above aims by gradually implementing the following specific objectives:

⁴ A concept understood as the junction of four core domains: education, research, innovation, and service to society - Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on achieving the European Education Area by 2025. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0625&rid=4> .

- ❖ **Develop and implement an integrated long-term joint strategy⁵ for education** with, where possible, links to research and innovation, and service to society, that is responsive to the digital and green transition and key socio-economic challenges, while remaining committed to excellence:
 - Based on a **common vision and shared values**, for pursuing a high level of systemic, structural and sustainable institutional cooperation at all levels of the involved institutions, across all their missions, and across different areas of activity, building on their complementary strengths.
 - Supported by the design and implementation of relevant and efficient **joint management and governance structures⁶**. Students and staff at all levels of the participating organisations are empowered to take an active role in the governance structures of the alliance, where the diversity of the student and staff bodies is reflected.
 - Building on a shared **pool of resources** (financial, human, digital and physical, intellectual and administrative resources, infrastructure, data and services) to ensure joint capacity and capability, reach critical mass and facilitates access to high quality and inclusive education. Where appropriate, pilot or fully implement a common **legal status for the alliance**, to facilitate pooling together resources and activities to reach higher levels of excellence, acting with a legal personality.

- ❖ **Establish a European higher education inter-university 'campus where:**
 - Students, doctoral candidates, and staff benefit from seamless **mobility** opportunities (physical, blended mobility or virtual learning) to study, train, teach, do research, work, or share services in any of the partner institutions. Embedded mobility at all levels, including at Bachelor, Master and Doctoral levels, is a standard feature. At least 50% of the students within the alliance should benefit from such mobility, be it physical, virtual, or blended.

- ❖ **New joint, flexible and innovative curricula** are delivered, where relevant, in the three cycles (Bachelor, Master and Doctoral), based on inter-disciplinary and cross-sectoral approaches, integrating student-centred learning approaches and innovative pedagogies, including the use of the latest digital technologies and the STEAM⁷ approach. While content is personalised, cooperation is global, in particular to develop the green and digital skills that society needs. **Students at all levels are empowered to customise their own flexible curricula**, choosing where and what to study, within the confines of pedagogically sound and logically structured study programmes between the different higher education institutions and other members of the alliance, setting a solid ground for exploring the feasibility of a possible joint degree at all levels, based on co-created European criteria, to be delivered at all levels, based on co-created European criteria, to be delivered at national,

⁵ Such strategy goes beyond any potential existing bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

⁶ Examples: setting up joint boards, developing common pool of physical and virtual intellectual and administrative resources, pooling resources, including common provision of infrastructure, data and services such as student, researcher and staff support, administration and international relations, with digitalised joint processes wherever possible.

⁷ STEAM: Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics. The STEAM approach for learning and teaching links STEM and other fields of study. It promotes transversal skills such as digital competencies, critical thinking, problem-solving, management and entrepreneurial skills as well as cooperation with non-academic partners and responds to economic, environmental, political and social challenges. STEAM encourages the blending of knowledge that is required in the real world and natural curiosity.

regional or institutional level, in accordance with the National Qualifications Frameworks.

- ❖ **Other flexible learning opportunities and alternative learning pathways** are offered to learners at all stages of life, across disciplines and sectors, including small volumes of learning leading to **micro-credentials**⁸.

- **Practical and work-based experience and traineeships** supported by external mentors are provided to foster **entrepreneurial mind-sets** and **civic engagement**, as well as to promote knowledge transfer with surrounding **ecosystems**; employability and flow of talent with other sectors is amplified.
- The student, academic and research body better reflects the social, economic and cultural **diversity** of the global population, including lifelong learners, part- time and non-traditional students. Access, participation and completion of under-represented and disadvantaged groups are ensured. Institutional change is fostered, for example, through the development of inclusive **gender equality and inclusion plans** at institutional level, complemented by actions at the level of the alliance.
- **Diverse career paths** are rewarded and valorised, while the academic, teaching, research careers are strengthened; parity of esteem between teaching and research is ensured when it comes to academic career assessment.
- European Universities are expected to work towards **open science, open education and open data practices**.
- Any other creative and innovative activities that are key to reach the joint long- term strategy are implemented.

- ❖ **Build European knowledge-creating teams (“challenge-based approach”)** of students and academics, possibly together with researchers, entrepreneurs, companies, local and regional actors, and civil society actors – depending on the overall strategy and vision of the alliance – working together to address societal and other challenges of their choice in an inter-disciplinary approach through:

- **Challenge-based approaches** combining shared education, teaching and learning, pedagogical innovation, research and innovation and allowing involved parties to **work jointly and across disciplines** through investigation and invention, thus reinforcing excellence in education and research and engagement with citizens.
- **Innovative learning and training** that develop knowledge and equip students, lifelong learners and researchers with critical thinking, entrepreneurial, creative and transversal skills, and innovative spirit relevant for a fast-changing labour market and profound structural transition-driven changes in markets, technologies and society, including through the transfer of research results back into education e.g., in teaching, re-skilling, through student traineeships in research teams.
- **Innovative solutions** adaptable to different regions in Europe.

⁸ As defined in Council Recommendation of 16 June 2022 on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability (2022/C 243/02), ‘Micro-credential’ means the record of the learning outcomes that a learner has acquired following a small volume of learning. These learning outcomes will have been assessed against transparent and clearly defined criteria. Learning experiences leading to micro-credentials are designed to provide the learner with specific knowledge, skills and competences that respond to societal, personal, cultural or labour market needs. Micro-credentials are owned by the learner, can be shared and are portable. They may be stand-alone or combined into larger credentials. They are underpinned by quality assurance following agreed standards in the relevant sector or area of activity.

In addition, 'European Universities' should progressively build their capacity to act as **models of good practice to further increase the quality, international competitiveness and attractiveness of the European higher education landscape**. European Universities, in cooperation with their national authorities, should commit to work towards relevant policy objectives of the European Education Area, such as: multilingualism; automatic recognition of academic qualifications and learning periods abroad provided for by the participating higher education institutions within the alliance; the implementation of the European Student Card initiative; where relevant, the implementation of a whole institutional approach to sustainability and climate literacy and mainstreaming of education for sustainable development across all levels and disciplines; as well as the Bologna key commitments (quality assurance, recognition, and wherever applicable three cycle degree); and share relevant data with the European Higher Education Observatory. European Universities alliances are also encouraged to work together, for example by forming hubs, together with their innovation ecosystems, to join forces and work on common actions for bringing synergies between education and innovation, as highlighted in the [European strategy for universities](#) and the new [European Innovation Agenda](#).

Topic 2: Community of practice for European Universities alliances

The objective of a community of practice (CoP) for European Universities alliances is to create a collaborative and supportive environment where European Universities alliances can come together to share good practices and experiences within the community of European Universities alliances, as well as for the benefit of the wider higher education sector.

More concretely, the Community of Practice is meant to support closer cooperation between the alliances by facilitating learning, collaboration, and dissemination of results among and beyond the European Universities alliances in order to achieve common goals and enhance alliances' knowledge, skills, and effectiveness, for the benefit of the wider higher education sector.

The specific objectives are:

- Support closer cooperation between the alliances by:
 - Knowledge Sharing and Learning: To facilitate the exchange of knowledge, good practices, and experiences among European Universities alliances, promoting continuous learning and improvement within the community.
 - Skill Development: To provide opportunities for alliances to enhance their competencies in areas related to the European Universities focus, fostering professional growth.
 - Networking and Collaboration: To establish connections and foster collaboration among alliances with similar interests, encouraging synergies, hubs, etc.
 - Innovation and problem solving: To promote creativity and innovation by encouraging members to collectively address common challenges, propose solutions, involving the Commission and Member States where relevant, and explore new approaches, based on the experience of the European Universities alliances.
- Promote and support dissemination of results not only between alliances, but also to the wider higher education sector and enhance the transferability of the results and their uptake by relevant end-users.
 - Knowledge Management: to build shared knowledge, resources, and expertise that can be accessed and used by European Universities alliances and the wider higher education sector to bring transnational cooperation in higher education in Europe to the next level.

Activities that can be funded (scope)

Topic 1: Development of a deep institutional transnational cooperation

Applicants can submit a proposal that aims to set-up alliances going beyond any existing bilateral and multilateral cooperation, through a **step-by-step approach towards deeper institutionalised transnational cooperation and gradually achieving the long-term ambitious vision for European Universities**.

This action will test **different innovative and structural models** for implementing and achieving the **long-term vision that has the potential to transform the institutional cooperation between higher education institutions and bring it to the next level**. They will have the possibility to associate academic and non-academic partners from the world of work and to grow at a later stage.

Higher education institutions will gradually implement the activities that are necessary to achieve their long-term vision, starting by increasing their level of integration. To achieve this objective, they will agree on a **joint mission statement**⁹ endorsed by the relevant decision-making bodies¹⁰ at institutional level of each member of the alliance. This mission statement will entail a **full joint strategy** outlining the long-term vision to drive systemic, structural and sustainable impact at all levels of the institutions (e.g. governance, academics, professional/support staff and students), and across different areas of activity (strong education focus with links where possible to research and innovation and service to society), going beyond the alliance EU funding period and building on their complementary strengths.

As this action follows a bottom-up approach, each alliance will have the flexibility to shape through a step-by-step approach its **joint work plan of activities** that is the most relevant to reach their strategic objectives and that will enable them to achieve the long-term vision of European Universities described above. This joint work plan of activities should be supported by the design of relevant and efficient **common management and governance structures**.

Topic 2: Community of practice

Applicants can submit a proposal that aims to set-up a Community of Practice for the European Universities alliances that will help in building synergies and sharing best practices and experiences within the community and will also benefit the wider higher education sector.

This action will:

- a) **Ensure closer cooperation between the existing and future European Universities alliances**¹¹ and other similar long-standing institutionalised cooperation models.

This action will allow for:

- Setting up of a common flexible structure, including thematic working groups, allowing for efficient interaction and knowledge sharing on relevant academic, pedagogical, and administrative matters, for example linked to student and staff mobility, joint educational opportunities, pedagogical innovation, societal outreach, digitalisation, sustainability or governance.
- Identifying gaps and/or areas to be reinforced in view of maximising synergies and impact.

⁹ The joint mission statement should explain your proposed European University's fundamental purpose. It should go beyond the 4-year funding period, with at least a time horizon up to 10 years after the start. It should also explain how your alliance has the potential to step-by-step transform and enhance the institutionalised cooperation between higher education institutions and bring it to the next level and explain the unique and differentiated vision of the alliance.

¹⁰ This can be done through a simple signature of relevant decision-making bodies (e.g. a signature from the Rector). The Joint Mission Statement is one document endorsed by each partner of the alliance.

¹¹ Including European Universities alliances selected in the forthcoming Erasmus+ calls for proposals.

- Addressing common challenges and identifying possible solutions.
- Establishing a sound management structure allowing for a representation of all involved alliances and preserving the regular channels between the Commission services and the coordinators of all European Universities alliances selected under the Erasmus+ Calls for Proposals for European Universities.

Non-exhaustive indicative list of specific activities could consist of:

- Setting up and running an interactive forum and thematic working groups.
- Actively engaging [existing and future European Universities alliances](#) to participate in the community of practice.
- Initiating and managing discussions on relevant topics, challenges, or emerging trends.
- Encouraging alliances to share their ideas, experiences, and perspectives.
- Using, moderating and animating a user-friendly collaborative platform for the community to facilitate interactions and knowledge-sharing between the alliances with the possibility for interaction with the Commission services, and possibly also Member States.
- As part of this platform, allow for a knowledge repository where members can contribute and access valuable resources, templates, guides, and other material.
- Organising online and or physical webinars/meetings for the representatives of the European Universities alliances and other similar long-standing institutionalised cooperation models to connect, share updates, and discuss common challenges and opportunities.
- Providing direct input to the Commission services on possible solutions to encountered challenges, based on the experience of the European Universities alliances, without aiming to duplicate the complementary work done by European network/stakeholder associations in the higher education sector.

b) Promote and support dissemination of results between alliances and to the wider higher education sector, and enhance the transferability and uptake of the results by relevant end-users.

This action will allow for:

- Scaling up of the communication, promotion and dissemination activities related to the European Universities alliances. This must include a practical and effective approach to amplify the exploitation of the outcomes of the European Universities alliances and to enhance the impact by capturing and exchanging success stories and best practices within the European Universities alliances community and beyond.

Non-exhaustive indicative list of specific activities could consist of:

- Encouraging the sharing of good practices, success stories, and lessons learned among alliances and beyond to inspire and guide others in their endeavours.
- Organising and participating in public/targeted events to showcase the added value of the European Universities alliances to the wider community, where ideas can be shared for mutual enrichment.
- Setting up a dedicated information portal of the community of practice.
- Sharing input from community of practice with the Commission services¹² (e.g. factsheets, testimonials, good practice examples, social media input, etc.).
- Producing a newsletter to share results, events outcomes etc.

¹² Please refer to the Article 16 of the [Annotated Grant Agreement](#) and Annex V where the specific rules on the right to use by the granting Authority are established.

Expected impact

Topic 1: Development of a deep institutional transnational cooperation

The European Universities alliances are expected to **benefit to all involved higher education institutions, higher education systems, EU Member States, and the broader society and HEIs ecosystem.**

European Universities are expected to trigger the following impact:

- Play a critical role in promoting the European way of life, and in achieving the European Education Area and the European Research Area, in synergy with the European Higher Education Area.
- Contribute to a more united, innovative, digital, connected, and green Europe, open to the wider world, by increasing the resilience, excellence, geographical and social inclusiveness of European higher education institutions.
- Increase the attractiveness and competitiveness of participating higher education institutions on the global scene, by becoming stronger together through deeper transnational cooperation and seamless mobility of students, academics, and researchers, and creating and sharing knowledge, developing new concepts, technologies, and innovation at unprecedented speed.
- Promote European values, foster respect of academic freedom and institutional autonomy and strengthen the European identity for all learners, teachers, researchers, and staff to cooperate and co-create knowledge within different European and global cultures, in different languages, across borders, sectors and academic disciplines.
- Act as actors of change for the digital and green transitions, for Europe's recovery and future resilience.
- Boost the excellence dimension of higher education, research, and innovation, while promoting gender equality, inclusiveness, diversity, and equity.
- Trigger a much deeper level of transnational institutional cooperation between higher education institutions, leading to long-term structural institutional transformation with positive impact on higher education learning and teaching, fostering joint educational activities and allowing for more inclusive and enhanced flexible learning approaches. Improve students', staff, researchers and lifelong learners' skills and employability perspectives, including entrepreneurial, transversal, intercultural, digital and green skills, and fuel innovation through a flow of creative talents to support the establishment and scaling up of start-ups and SMEs in Europe, notably by setting up and reinforcing technology transfer, or sharing knowledge and technology transfer capacity, thus potentially supporting the development of emerging novel concepts likely to lead to breakthroughs or market creative innovations.
- Make lifelong learning a reality in higher education, by offering diverse education opportunities and introducing innovative and student-centred pedagogies, jointly delivered across European inter-university campuses, where a diverse student body can build flexible learning paths at all levels of their studies and career.
- Advance knowledge and enable talent circulation, thus fostering education, social and technological innovation to address societal challenges, and build a more sustainable future.
- Contribute to regional development and positively impact the local communities and ecosystems through education and training, research and knowledge exchange, contributing to improvements in societal well-being.
- Act as catalysts for the launch of new instruments and legal frameworks to accelerate the transformation of all universities across Europe.

Topic 2: Community of practice

The community of practice is expected to trigger the following impact:

- Facilitate and support the European Universities alliances towards deeper transnational institutional cooperation.
- Boost new ways of cooperation to enhance synergies between the European Universities community and beyond.
- Scale up the outcomes of the European Universities alliances by creating and implementing a robust and meaningful approach for dissemination of results between European Universities, but also beyond for the benefit of the wider higher education sector.
- Enhance the transferability of the results and their uptake by relevant end-users.
- Address common challenges and engage directly with the Commission services on possible solutions based on the experience of the European Universities alliances, without aiming to duplicate the complementary work done by European network/stakeholder associations in the higher education sector.

3. Available budget

The total budget earmarked for the co-financing of projects under this call for proposals is estimated at **EUR 189 200 000**.

Topics	Topic indicative budget
1- Development of deep institutional transnational cooperation	187.7 MEUR
2- Community of practice	1.5 MEUR

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

Call topic 1 will allow to expand to at least 60 European Universities alliances by mid-2024. On top of EUR 182 700 000 initial budget for this call topic 1 from Erasmus+, additional funding of EUR 5 000 000 has been made available for this call through the Instrument for Pre-Accession assistance (IPA III) to further support the participation as full partners of higher education institutions from the Western Balkans countries not associated to the Erasmus+ programme¹³, leading to a total budget for this call topic 1 of EUR 187 700 000.

Information on any additional funds available will be published on the Funding and Tender Opportunities Portal (FTOP).

¹³ Commission Implementing Decision C(2022) 8947 of 30/11/2022 amending “Implementing Decision C(2021) 9716 final adopting a financing of the multi-country multiannual action plan in favour of the Western Balkans and Turkey for 2021-2022”.

4. Timetable and deadlines

Timetable and deadlines	
Publication of the call:	3 October 2023
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	<u>06 February 2024 – 17:00:00 CET</u> (Brussels)
Evaluation:	February-June 2024 (indicative)
Information on evaluation results:	End of June 2024 (indicative)
Grant Agreement signature:	September - November 2024 (indicative)

5. Admissibility and documents

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

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

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

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

- Application Form Part A — contains administrative information about the participants (future coordinator, beneficiaries and affiliated entities) and the summarised budget for the project (*to be filled in directly online*).
- Application Form Part B — contains the technical description of the project (*to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed and then assembled and re-uploaded*).
- Part C (*to be filled in directly online*) containing additional project data (*only applicable for topic 1*).
- **Mandatory annexes and supporting documents** (*to be uploaded*):
 - Detailed budget table (template available in the Submission System).
 - List of previous projects (key projects for the last 4 years) (template available in Part B) (*only applicable for topic 1*).
 - Other annex: the joint mission statement (*Only applicable for topic 1, see section 2*).

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).

Please note that the amounts entered into the summarised budget table (filled in directly online) must correspond to the amounts calculated in the detailed budget table.

In case of discrepancies, the amounts in the online summarised budget table will prevail.

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

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

Proposals (Part B) are limited to maximum **120 pages for topic 1 and to maximum 60 pages for topic 2**. Evaluators will not consider any additional pages.

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

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

6. Eligibility

Eligible participants (eligible countries)¹⁴

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

- Be legal entities (public or private bodies).
- Be established in one of the eligible countries, i.e.:
 - EU Member States (including overseas countries and territories (OCTs)).
 - Non-EU countries: third countries associated to the Erasmus+ Programme (including EEA countries), countries which are in ongoing negotiations for an association agreement to the Erasmus+ programme and where that agreement enters into force before the grant signature ([list of participating countries](#)) and .
 - Non-EU countries: Western Balkans third countries not associated to the programme¹⁵.

The applicants (potential beneficiaries) must be:

- Higher Education Institutions holding a valid Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) and any entities affiliated to them.
- Any other organisation consisting of the above referred higher education institutions - specifically set up with the purpose of implementing deep institutional transnational cooperation, including joint educational activities¹⁶.

¹⁴ Northern Europe: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Iceland, Norway. Western Europe: Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Lichtenstein. Central and Eastern Europe: Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, North Macedonia, Serbia Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Kosovo (This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.). Southern Europe: Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain, Turkey. These countries include the outermost regions as referred to in Article 349 TFEU.

¹⁵ Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Kosovo (This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.)

¹⁶ Associated partners can also be involved in such organisation having its own legal entity, provided that

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*).

Associated partners DO NOT receive EU funding under this grant, but their involvement and role in different activities have to be clearly described in the proposal.

The associated partners can be:

- Any higher education institution established in an EU Member State, or a third country associated to the programme holding a valid ECHE Erasmus Charter for Higher Education.
- Any public/private organisation from an EU Member State, third country associated to the programme or in Western Balkans not associated to the programme active in the field of education and training, research, and innovation or in the world of work.
- Any higher education institution established in a third country not associated to the programme that is part of the European Higher Education Area (Bologna Process) or in Western Balkans not associated to the programme.

Specific cases

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

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

Entities without legal personality — Entities which do not have legal personality under their national law may exceptionally participate, provided that their representatives have the capacity to undertake legal obligations on their behalf and offer guarantees for the protection of the EU financial interests equivalent to that offered by legal persons¹⁷.

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'¹⁸. ⚠ Please note that if the action will be implemented by the members, they should also participate (either as beneficiaries or as affiliated entities, otherwise their costs will NOT be eligible).

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

EU restrictive measures — Special rules apply for certain entities (*e.g. entities subject to [EU restrictive measures](#) under Article 29 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU)*)

¹⁷ See Article 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

¹⁸ For the definitions, see Articles 187(2) and 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

and Article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU)¹⁹ and entities covered by Commission Guidelines No [2013/C 205/05²⁰](#). Such entities are not eligible to participate in any capacity, including as beneficiaries, affiliated entities, associated partners, subcontractors or recipients of financial support to third parties (if any).



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

Consortium composition

Topic 1: Development of new deep institutional transnational cooperation

Proposals must be submitted by a consortium of at least 3 applicants (beneficiaries not affiliated entities), which complies with the following conditions:

- Minimum 3 eligible higher education institutions from 3 different eligible countries.
- A higher education institution may participate as full partner in only one European Universities alliance funded by the Erasmus+ programme at the same time.
- A higher education institution may only participate as full partner in one single European Universities application; they may participate in other applications only as associated partners.

Topic 2: Community of practice

Proposals must be submitted by a consortium of at least 3 applicants (beneficiaries not affiliated entities), which complies with the following condition:

- Minimum 3 eligible higher education institutions from 3 different eligible countries.

Eligible activities

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*).

Financial support to third parties is allowed for grants and prizes under the following conditions:

- The calls must be open, published widely and conform to EU standards concerning transparency, equal treatment, conflict of interest and confidentiality.
- The calls must remain open for at least two months.
- The outcome of the call must be published on the participants' websites, including a description of the selected projects, award dates, project durations, and final recipient legal names and countries.

¹⁹ 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](#).

²⁰ Commission guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#) on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards (OJEU C 205 of 19.07.2013, pp. 9-11).

- The calls must have a clear European dimension.

The maximum amount for the financial support to third parties may not exceed 60,000 EUR. It will be accepted in projects where such support will bring an added value.

Your project application must clearly specify why financial support to third parties is needed, how it will be managed and provide a list of the different types of activities for which a third party may receive financial support. The proposal must also clearly describe the results to be obtained.

Geographic location (target countries)

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

Duration

Projects should normally last 48 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 these projects.

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


The check will normally be done for all beneficiaries, except:

- Public bodies (entities established as public body under national law, including local, regional, or national authorities) or international organisations.
- public legal entities, and institutions and organisations in the fields of education and training, youth and sport that have received over 50% of their annual revenue from public sources over the last two years.
- If the 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 responsibilities for all beneficiaries or joint and several liability of affiliated entities (*see below, section 10*).
 - Pre-financing paid in instalments.
 - (One or more) pre-financing guarantee (*see below, section 10*).
- or
- Propose reduced or no pre-financing.
 - Request that you are replaced or, if needed, reject the entire proposal.

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

Operational capacity

Applicants must have the **know-how, qualifications** and **resources** to successfully

implement the projects and contribute their share (including sufficient experience in projects of comparable size and nature).

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

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

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

- Profiles (qualifications and experience) of the staff responsible for managing and implementing the project.
- Description of the consortium participants.
- List of previous projects (key projects for the last 4 years).

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 participate²¹:

- 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 misconduct²² (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant).
- Committed fraud, corruption, links to a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant).
- Shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement, prize, expert contract, or similar (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant).
- Guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Regulation No [2988/95](#) (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant).

²¹ See Articles 36 and 141 of EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

²² Professional misconduct includes violation of ethical standards of the profession, wrongful conduct with impact on professional credibility, false declarations/misrepresentation of information, participation in a cartel or other agreement distorting competition, violation of IPR, attempting to influence decision-making processes or obtain confidential information from public authorities to gain advantage.

- Created under a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or other legal obligations in the country of origin or created another entity with this purpose (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant).

Applicants will also be refused if it turns out that²³:

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

8. Evaluation and award procedure

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

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

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

The proposals which have been assessed and scored as high quality (above 80 points) but that can not be funded under Erasmus+ due to lack of available budget under this call for proposals will be awarded with a Seal of Excellence. The Seal of Excellence is a quality label that recognises the quality of the concerned proposals and facilitates the search for alternative funding at national level,

²³See Article 141 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

thereby helping other funding bodies to take advantage of the high-quality evaluation process under this call.

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

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

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

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9. Award criteria

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

TOPIC 1	
1. Relevance (maximum 25 points)	
Level of ambition and innovative approach of the proposal	<p>Extent to which the proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addresses the objectives and the scope of the call, including long term vision of the European Universities initiative and its potential to transform and further deepen, strengthen, intensify and expand institutionalised cooperation between the partners of the proposed alliance, as compared to the current state of play; • Contributes to the themes and priorities of the call; • Presents a highly relevant joint long-term mission statement explicitly endorsed by relevant decision-making bodies; • Provides a sound needs analysis; • Presents an ambitious and innovative approach to develop and strengthen new, systemic, structural, and sustainable models for cooperation and in the provision of education, linking it where possible to research and innovation, including how research results and innovation will feed back into education.
European added value	<p>Extent to which the proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes to the development of the European Education Area, in synergy with the European Research Area, including through the implementation of the relevant actions of the European strategy for universities and the new European Innovation Agenda, possibly in cooperation with other European Universities; • Demonstrates transnational dimension, in particular for students; • Contributes to regional development, for example through the engagement of the alliance's members in their regional ecosystems and with their local communities; • Benefits other higher education institutions in Europe and beyond, by driving inclusion and excellence; • Contributes to 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.
2. Quality (maximum 50 points)	
2.1. Project design and implementation <i>(Maximum 25 points)</i>	<p>Extent to which the proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes the approach and methodology to implement the joint long-term strategy of the proposed European University alliance and demonstrates that this approach is the most suitable to achieve the objectives; • Demonstrates consistency between the joint long-term strategy, the joint structures, and the joint activities in line with the level of ambition of European Universities; • Establishes a European higher education inter-university campus that fosters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ mobility (physical, virtual, blended; short and long term) for students, academics and professional staff and researchers and promote all types of mobility within the alliance, including mobility to and from organisations other than higher education institutions; ○ high quality education, including through the use of challenge- based and interdisciplinary approaches, innovative

	<p>pedagogical models to develop forward-looking skills and competences, making best use of digital technologies, blended learning and work-based learning;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the social diversity of the student, academics and researchers’ body and supporting measures to promote the inclusion, access, participation and completion of under-represented groups and people with fewer opportunities, as well as support for gender equality in higher education. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds European knowledge–creating teams of students and academics, possibly together with researchers, entrepreneurs, companies, local and regional actors, and civil society actors, including interdisciplinary challenge-based approaches, innovative learning, training and transferable solutions, fostering societal engagement of students and staff as well as their entrepreneurial key competences; • Describes the implementation measures and methods to ensure effective project management, appropriate quality assurance mechanisms, and evaluation methods for progress monitoring, including measurable quantitative and qualitative indicators, taking into account the feedback from students and staff; • Provides a clear and feasible work plan, including work packages, tasks, deliverables, milestones, and resources, within defined timelines, in order to achieve the objectives; • Demonstrates cost effectiveness and sound financial management; • Provides a risk management strategy including appropriate mitigation measures.
<p>2.2 Partnership and cooperation arrangements</p> <p><i>(Maximum 25 points)</i></p>	<p><i>Extent to which the proposal:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a clear distribution and division of active roles and responsibilities for all participants, including commitment at highest institutional level; • Demonstrates that each participant complements each other, including in terms of diversity of types of higher education institutions or show that they are collaborating with each other to obtain value added, and are complementary with regard to the joint implementation of the common vision, strategy and common activities, and that the consortium as a whole brings together the necessary expertise; • Gives all staff the opportunity to be part of the co-creation of the alliance, including at a structural organisation level through shared management structures, common provision of services, databases, human resources and scientific infrastructure. Demonstrates involvement of students in the co-creation of the alliance and in the joint structures; • Describes clear management and governance structures, and relevant decision-making mechanisms, including transparent procedures, conflict resolution and communication measures; • Intends to maximise the benefits of the integrated cooperation by reducing existing administrative barriers and obstacles. <p>Geographical balance</p> <p><i>Extent to which the proposal:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes as full partners a large number of higher education institutions from different eligible geographical regions²⁴, and ensures

²⁴Northern Europe: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Iceland, Norway.

Western Europe: Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Lichtenstein.

Central and Eastern Europe: Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, North Macedonia, Serbia Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Kosovo (This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence).

Southern Europe: Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain, Turkey.

These countries include the outermost regions as referred to in Article 349 TFEU.

	<p>a wide geographical coverage;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has motivated the geographical composition of the alliance and how it enables partners from different European regions to strengthen their institutional capacity.
<p>3.Impact (maximum 25 points)</p>	
	<p><i>Extent to which the proposal:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addresses and demonstrates progresses towards the expected impact listed in section 2 of this call; • Demonstrates the capacity of the alliance to act as role model: the extent to which results and good practices generated by the alliance will be shared and have the potential to be mainstreamed in other higher education institutions with whom they cooperate beyond the alliance in Europe and beyond; • Provides a clear plan for communication and dissemination of results and sharing best practice, including the use of appropriate communication channels to maximise the impact; • Contributes to Open Education, Open Science and Citizen Science resources by demonstrating how data, materials, documents, audiovisual and social media activities will be made available in line with FAIR principles (findable, accessible, interoperable and re-usable) to other higher education institutions and European Universities in Europe, whenever relevant; • Presents a long-term strategy for sustainability and demonstrates how the results will be sustained beyond the EU funded period, including possible synergies/complementarities with other initiatives and further use of outcomes by relevant end users.

TOPIC 2	
1. Relevance (maximum 25 points)	
	<p>Extent to which the proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addresses the objectives and the scope of the call; • Contributes to the themes and priorities of the call; • Provides a sound needs analysis, in line with the objectives of the call; • Contributes to 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.
2. Quality (maximum 50 points)	
<p>2.1. Project design and implementation <i>(Maximum 25 points)</i></p>	<p>Extent to which the proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes the concept and methodology and demonstrates that this approach is the most suitable to achieve the objectives; • Describes convincing implementation measures and methods to ensure effective project management, appropriate quality assurance mechanisms, and evaluation methods for progress monitoring, including measurable quantitative and qualitative indicators; • Provides a clear and feasible work plan, including work packages, tasks, deliverables, milestones, and resources, within defined timelines, in order to achieve the objectives; • Demonstrates cost effectiveness and sound financial management; • Provides a risk management strategy including appropriate mitigation measures.
<p>2.2 Partnership and cooperation arrangements <i>(Maximum 25 points)</i></p>	<p>Extent to which the proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a clear distribution and division of roles and responsibilities for all participants; • Demonstrates that each participant complements each other, and that the consortium as a whole brings together the necessary expertise; • Demonstrates how each participant contributes to deliver jointly on objectives and activities; • Describes clear management structures, and relevant decision-making mechanisms, including transparent procedures, conflict resolution and communication measures.
3. Impact (maximum 25 points)	
	<p>Extent to which the proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addresses and demonstrates progress towards the expected impact listed in section 2 of this call; • The proposal ensures a tangible impact on its target groups and relevant stakeholders at local, national, or regional level. It includes measures, as well as goals and indicators to monitor progress and assess the expected impact (short-and long-term); • Demonstrates how the effects will benefit the wide range of relevant stakeholders/targets groups, including in terms of results transferable to the wider higher education sector; • Provides a clear plan for communication and dissemination of results and sharing best practice, including the use of appropriate communication channels to maximise the impact; • Demonstrates how the results will be sustained beyond the EU funded period, including possible synergies/complementarities with other initiatives and further use of outcomes by relevant end users.

Topic 1

Award criteria		Minimum pass score	Maximum score
Relevance		17	25
Quality	Project design and implementation	17	25
	Partnership and cooperation arrangements	17	25
Impact		17	25
Overall (pass) scores		80	100

Maximum points: 100 points.

Individual thresholds per criterion: 17/25

points. Overall threshold: 80 points.

Topic 2:

Award criteria		Minimum pass score	Maximum score
Relevance		17	25
Quality	Project design and implementation	17	25
	Partnership and cooperation arrangements	17	25
Impact		17	25
Overall (pass) scores		80	100

Maximum points: 100 points.

Individual thresholds per criterion: 17/25

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 call budget. Other proposals will be rejected.

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

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

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

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

Starting date and 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. Retroactive application can be granted exceptionally for duly justified reasons but never earlier than the proposal submission date.

Project duration: Normally 48 months (extensions are possible, if duly justified and through an amendment).

Milestones and deliverables

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

Form of grant, funding rate and maximum grant amount

The exact 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*).

Topic 1 project budget (maximum grant amount):

Total number of HEIs which are full partners	Maximum EU Grant
9 or more	14.40 MEUR
8	8.64 MEUR
7	7.56 MEUR
6	6.48 MEUR
5	5.40 MEUR
4	4.32 MEUR
3	3.24 MEUR

The maximum EU grants are based on the number of partners. However, it is entirely discretionary for each alliance to distribute in the proposal the total budget among the partners.

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%.

Topic 2 project budget (indicative grant amount):

Estimated total number of projects	Indicative EU Grant
1	1.50 MEUR

The grant awarded may be lower than the amount requested.

The grant will be a lump sum grant²⁵. 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.

Specific cost eligibility rules for this call:

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](#))

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 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

²⁵ [Decision](#) of 24 March 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions and unit contributions under the Erasmus+ Programme 2021-2027.

(recovery).

All payments will be made to the coordinator.

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

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

Pre-financing guarantees

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

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

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

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

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

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

Certificates

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

Liability regime for recoveries

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

For beneficiaries, it is one of the following:

- limited joint and several liability with individual ceilings — *each beneficiary up to their maximum grant amount*
 - unconditional joint and several liability — *each beneficiary up to the maximum grant amount for the action*
- or
- individual financial responsibility — *each beneficiary only for their own debts.*

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

Provisions concerning the project implementation

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

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

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

- Additional communication and dissemination activities: Yes.

Specific rules for carrying out the action: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 18 and Annex 5).*

- EU restrictive measures: Yes

Other specificities

N/a.

Non-compliance and breach of contract

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



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

11. How to submit an application

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

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

a. Create a user account and register your organisation

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

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

b. Submit the proposal:

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

Submit your proposal in 4 parts (*see section 5*) as follow:

- 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 might be considered incomplete and thus inadmissible.

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

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

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

12.Help

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

- [Online Manual](#).
- FAQs on the Topic page (for call-specific questions in open calls; not applicable for actions by invitation).
- [Portal FAQ](#) (for general questions).

Please also consult the Topic page regularly since we will use it to publish call updates.

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- EUROPEAN-UNIVERSITIES@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EACEA-EUROPEAN-UNIVERSITIES@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. Each beneficiary must sign a mandate to confer to the coordinating organisation the coordination responsibility and to act on their behalf during the project implementation. In mono-beneficiary grants, the single beneficiary will automatically be coordinator.
- **Beneficiary** – are participating organisations that contribute actively to the achievement of the objectives of the alliance.
- **Affiliated entities** — Applicants may participate with affiliated entities (i.e., entities linked to a beneficiary which participate in the action with similar rights and obligations as the beneficiaries, but do not sign the grant and therefore do not become beneficiaries themselves). They will get a part of the grant money and must therefore comply with all the call conditions and be validated (just like beneficiaries); but they do not count towards the minimum eligibility criteria for consortium composition (if any).
- **Associated partners** — Applicants may participate with associated partners (i.e., partner organisations which participate in the action but without the right to get grant money). They participate without funding and therefore do not need to be validated.
- **Consortium agreement** — For practical and legal reasons it is recommended to set up internal arrangements that allow you to deal with exceptional or unforeseen circumstances (in all cases, even if not mandatory under the Grant Agreement). The consortium agreement also gives you the possibility to redistribute the grant money according to your own consortium-internal principles and parameters (for instance, one beneficiary can reattribute its grant money to another beneficiary). The consortium agreement thus allows you to customise the EU grant to the needs inside your consortium and can also help to protect you in case of disputes.

- **Balanced project budget** — Grant applications must ensure a balanced project budget and sufficient other resources to implement the project successfully (*e.g., own contributions, income generated by the action, financial contributions from third parties, etc*). You may be requested to lower your estimated costs if they are ineligible (including excessive).
- **No-profit rule** — Grants may NOT give a profit (i.e., surplus of revenues + EU grant over costs). This will be checked by us at the end of the project.
- **No double funding**— There is a strict prohibition of double funding from the EU budget (except under EU Synergies calls). Outside such Synergies calls, any given action may receive only ONE grant from the EU budget and cost items may under NO circumstances declared to two different EU actions.
- **Completed/ongoing projects** — Proposals for projects that have already been completed will be rejected; proposals for projects that have already started will be assessed on a case-by-case basis (in this case, no costs can be reimbursed for activities that took place before the project starting date/proposal submission).
- **Combination with EU operating grants** — Combination with EU operating grants is possible, if the project remains outside the operating grant work programme and you make sure that cost items are clearly separated in your accounting and NOT declared twice (see [AGA — Annotated Model Grant Agreement, art 6.2.E](#)).
- **Multiple proposals** — Applicants may submit more than one proposal for *different* projects under the same call (and be awarded a funding for them).

Organisations may participate in several proposals.

BUT: if there are several proposals for *very similar* projects, only one proposal will be accepted and evaluated; the applicants will be asked to withdraw one of them (or it will be rejected).

- **Resubmission** — Proposals may be changed and re-submitted until the deadline for submission.
- **Rejection** — By submitting the application, all applicants accept the call conditions set out in this 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](#).