Erasmus+ 2021-2027

Methodological seminar

Capacity Building in Higher Education

How to prepare a competitive proposal

What is a succesful application ?

It is not just **succeeding in being selected, but in delivering the expected results**

- ✓ leading to an effective implementation

- ✓ producing the expected changes

- ✓ keeping the results alive after the funding period

Smooth implementation highly depends on the amount of time you invest in the preparation, as at this stage you are able to wipe out many potential obstacles

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Purpose

Focus on the needs of the third countries not associated to the E+ programme

Targeting the priorities of the third countries not associated to the programme and matching them with the EU priorities for these countries

Maximising benefit to third countries not associated to the Programme

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Strand 1. Fostering access to cooperation in Higher Education

Target groups

- HEIs from least developed countries

- HEIs located in remote regions/areas

- Newcomers or less experienced

- Individuals with fewer opportunities.

Activities

1. Enhance management or administrative capacities

2. Ensure high quality and relevant education

3. Increasing the accessibility of the students/staff with fewer opportunities

Funding and duration

- 24 or 36 months

- 200.000 and 400.000 Euro

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1. Enhancing the management/administrative capacity

Reforming and modernising university governance	**reforming and modernising the university governance**, including the enhancement of services in particular for the benefit of students (student guidance, counselling and job orientation etc.);
International Relation Offices	establishing or strengthening **international relations offices** and elaborating internationalisation strategies;
Quality Assurance	establishing new or developing existing **quality assurance units** and processes/strategy within HEIs;
Capacity	creating or increasing the **capacity of planning and evaluation units**;
Mobility	building capacities to **support students and staff mobility activities.**

2. Ensure high quality and relevant education

➢ modules or **study programmes**, technical or professional orientations of programmes

➢ establishing **intensive study programmes** bringing together students and teaching staff from participating HEIs for shorter study periods

➢ developing capacities **for postgraduate student and academic staff** as well as promoting postgraduate students and/or staff mobility;

➢ implementing **training courses for HEI staff**.

3. Increasing the accessibility of individuals with fewer opportunities

➢ Developing **remote and inclusive learning pathways** by relying on digital technology and e-learning for vulnerable students;

➢ Updating the **digital technology to develop specific services** aiming at ensuring equal and fair learning opportunities to students with disabilities;

➢ Promoting initiatives aiming at **positive discrimination by empowering women and ethnic/religious minorities**;

➢ Develop initiatives addressing and reducing barriers faced by disadvantaged groups in accessing learning opportunities;

➢ Contributing to creating **inclusive environments that foster equity and equality**, and that are responsive to the needs of the wider community

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Strand 2. Partnerships for transformation

Target groups

- HEIs
- Local actors with a link to industry and business sectors
- Individuals: students, staff, learners in general
- Bodies responsible for HE at local and national level

Activities

- Innovation in higher education
- Promoting reforms in HEIs

Duration

- 24 or 36 months, to be defined at application stage

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Promoting reforms in HEIs

Institutional reforms

New governance and management systems and structures, digital skills, modern university services, quality assurance processes, professional development of academic, technical and administrative staff

Entrepreneurial skills and mind-set

Entrepreneurship education and the **practical application** of **entrepreneurial skills**, improved competencies and specific Hubs/Centres within the HEIs

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Innovation in higher education

Design of innovative curricula or introducing innovative elements in the existing curricula

Innovative learning and teaching methods (i.e. learner-centred and real problem-based teaching)

Active **engagement with the business world and with research:** organisation of educational programmes and activities with and within enterprises

Network effectively on the international scene on scientific and technological innovation

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Strand 3: Fostering sustainable reforms

➢ Support **reforms** to develop adequate systems of **higher education**

➢ Respond to the **needs** of eligible third countries

➢ Address the social and labour market of **eligible third countries**

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Types of projects

National projects	Multi-country regional projects	Multi-country cross-regional projects
HEIS from one third country not associated to the Erasmus+ programme	HEIs from several countries not associated to the Erasmus+ programme from one Region	HEIs from countries not associated to the Erasmus+ programme belonging to several Regions
At least 2 institutions from two countries associated to Erasmus+ (EU Member States and associated countries)		

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Points to consider when writing a proposal in HE

As an applicant interested in CBHE, what should I start with?

✓ At first you need a concrete **project idea** in line with the CBHE objectives;

✓ Once the idea is defined, **start locally** in your institution consulting colleagues and departments with experience in international projects;

✓ Find the **right partners** for establishing an international partnership based on trust and shared objectives;

✓ Read the entire CBHE **documentation** available;

✓ Consult the **Erasmus+ National Agencies**, the **National Erasmus+ Offices** and the **EU Delegations** on the specificities of their Countries.

Project idea

To be competitive the project idea should:

✓ **Fit** with the **CBHE objectives, priorities and requirements**;

✓ Reflect the **internationalisation strategy** of your institution and of your partners;

✓ Be supported by the **hierarchy** of your institution and benefit from the previous institutional experience in CBHE but also in other international projects;

✓ Be **innovative** in comparison with other existing CBHE projects.

Start locally

✓ Check the **internationalisation strategy** of your institution and of your partners;

✓ Ask for the support of the **hierarchy** of your institution;

✓ Check if your colleagues have **previous experience** in CBHE or in other international projects;

✓ Involve all the departments that might contribute to your project from the beginning;

✓ Ask your partners to follow the same approach.

Consult the other Erasmus+ actors:

✓ **National Erasmus+ Offices**

✓ **Erasmus+ National Agencies in the Programme Countries:**

https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/contacts/international-erasmus-plus-contact-points_en

✓ **EU Delegations:**

https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/area/geo_en

What is new in the submission process?

Admissibility

General admissibility conditions

- Applications must be submitted before the call deadline, **electronically** via the Funding & Tenders Opportunities Portal (FTOP)
- Applications must be **complete, readable, accessible and printable**, complete with attachments.

Proposal page limit
Substantial reduction in maximum length:
- Max 140 pages

Attachements

- no mandates to be signed by partners
- signature of declaration on honour on line

Eligibility criteria

- Who can apply?
- Types of organisations
- Number and profile of participating organisations
- Duration of the project
- Grant size

Overarching priorities

Smart
- digital technology in the poorest countries by building foundations for digital skills

Green deal
- enabling a profound change in institutions and peoples' behaviour and skills

Inclusion and diversity
- making education systems more equitable

Values
- laying the foundations for strengthening active citizenship and building specific expertise of future policy-makers in areas such as democracy, human rights and multilateralism

Growth & Jobs
- foundational skills, 'soft' skills (e.g. problem solving, communication), and Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths (STEAM), Education and employability

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Priorities: overarching & per Region (for Strand 1 and 2)

Applicants define the priorities they are addressing in Part C of the application form

➢ **EU NEIGHBOURING REGIONS – REGIONS 1 TO 4**

  ▪ **Western Balkans, Neighbourhood East, South-Mediterranean countries, Russian Federation**

▶ One of the overarching priorities of the European Union (**one choice only**)

▶ One of the sub-priorities related to the overarching priority chosen (**one choice only**)

• **Exception**: no sub-priorities for Region 4 - Russian Federation

➢ **INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP REGIONS – REGIONS 5 TO 11**

  • **Asia, Central Asia, Middle East, Pacific, Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, Caribbean**

▶ One of the overarching priorities of the European Union (**one choice only**) as defined for each of those Regions

▶ No sub-priorities defined for these Regions

Award criteria

Relevance of the project
max 30 points

Quality of the project design and implementation
max 30 points

Quality of the partnership and the cooperation arrangements
max 20 points

Sustainability, impact and dissemination of the expected results
max 20 points

► To be considered for funding, proposals must score at least 60 points in total and at least half of the maximum points for each award criterion.

► In case of ex aequo proposals, priority will be given to projects scoring highest under the criterion "Relevance of the project" and then "Sustainability, impact and dissemination of the expected results".

Award criteria

Relevance of the project

Purpose

- Relevant to objectives and activities of CBHE and specificities of the Strand,
- Adequate response to current needs of the target country(ies) or Region(s) and of the target groups,
- The extent to which the proposal addresses the EU overarching priorities.

Objectives

- Based on a sound needs analysis; clearly defined, specific, measurable, achievable, realistic,
- They address issues relevant to the participating organisations and development strategies for higher education in the eligible third countries not associated to the programme.

Link to EU policy and initiatives

- The proposal takes into account and enhances complementarity/synergies with other interventions funded by the EU and other entities.

EU added value

- The proposal demonstrates that similar results could not be achieved without the cooperation of HEIs from the EU Mem.

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AVOID MOST COMMON WEAKNESSES

Relevance

Make an Institution-specific need analysis

A generic need analysis which does not differentiate between different partner countries involved, nor between different HEIs in the same country

Draft a factual and complete need analysis

Need analysis without specific and recent data sources (statistics from an official publication, findings from a survey on a specific topic), without a clear link to the planned outcomes

AVOID MOST COMMON WEAKNESSES

Identify with good precision the target groups/beneficiaries in the Partner Country/ies

Target groups identified vaguely and/or not quantified makes it difficult to demonstrate (and assess) the potential impact of the project

Identify the priority addressed by your project and link it with the Partner Country national or institutional strategy/ies

Make sure your proposal shows clearly how both its objectives and results address the chose priority as application not addressing national or regional priorities cannot be funded.

Involve other Ministries than MES when appropriate for the subject

Without key stakeholders in the sector you cannot ensure good results

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Award criteria

Quality of the project design and implementation

Coherence
- Consistency between project objectives, methodology, activities and the budget proposed,
- Coherent and comprehensive set of appropriate activities to meet the identified needs and the expected results.

Methodology
- The logic of the intervention is of good quality, planned outputs and outcomes are coherent and feasible, and key assumptions and risks have been clearly identified.

Work plan
- Quality and effectiveness of the work plan are in line with their objectives and the deliverables,
- the relation between the resources and the expected results is adequate and the work plan is realistic, with well-defined activities, time-lines, clear deliverables and milestones.

Budget
- Cost efficiency and appropriate financial resources for a successful implementation of the project,
- The estimated budget is neither overestimated nor underestimated.

Quality control
- Control measures (continuous quality evaluation, peer reviews, benchmarking activities, mitigating actions etc.) and quality indicators ensure a project implementation of high quality.

Environmental sustainability
- The project is designed in an eco-friendly way.

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AVOID MOST COMMON WEAKNESSES

Ensure consistency between the LFM, the Work Plan and the WP descriptions

Many times the various parts are written by different persons without a final revision and discrepancies are evident (in the duration of activities, content, etc)
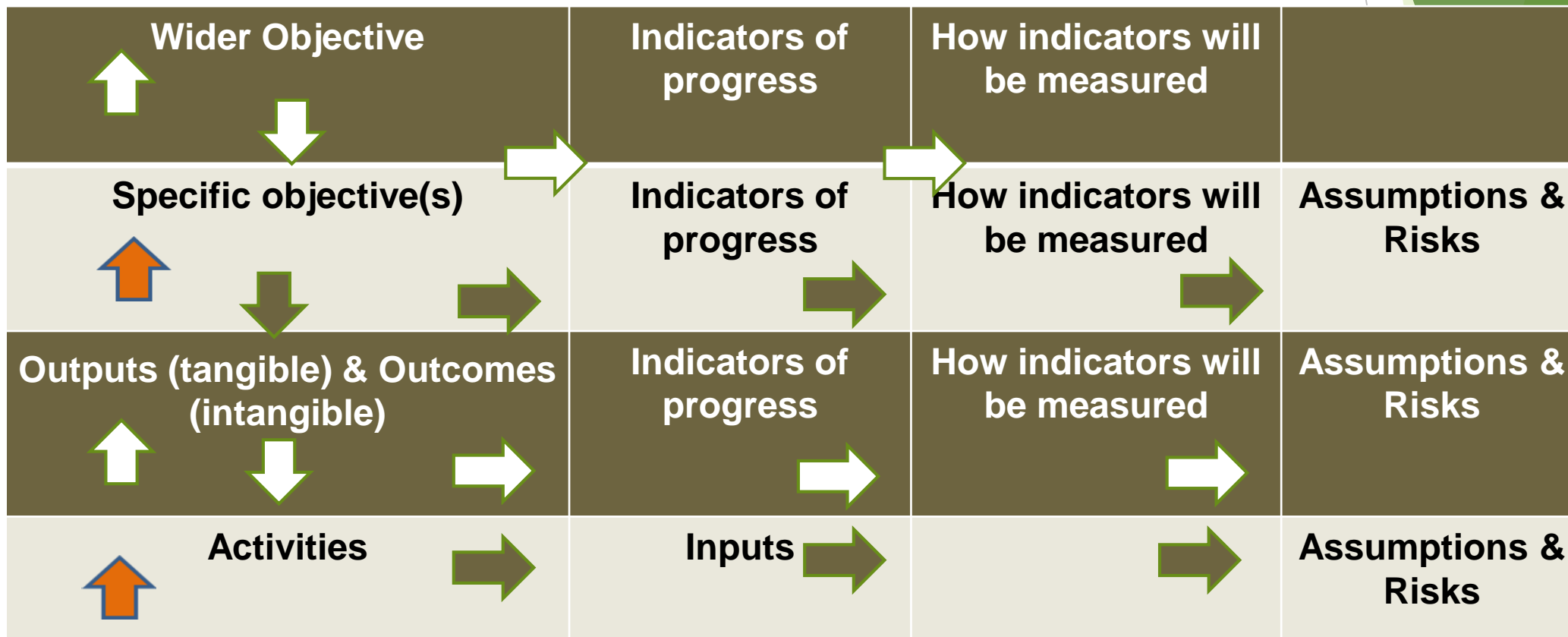
Ensure cost-effectiveness

Budget is inappropriate in one or more chapters. Ex: too many meetings or training events in Programme Countries, too many days for quality assurance

Avoid generic equipment

Precise and specific the equipment demonstrates you have reflected on the matter and come to clear conclusions. By experience we know that foreseeing 10 pc, 1 printing, 1 video-conference system for each HEIs means the consortium has not seriously addressed the matter

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Ensure coherence in the Logical Framework Matrix logic:

Wider Objective	**Indicators of progress**	**How indicators will be measured**	
Specific objective(s)	**Indicators of progress**	**How indicators will be measured**	**Assumptions & Risks**
Outputs (tangible) & Outcomes (intangible)	**Indicators of progress**	**How indicators will be measured**	**Assumptions & Risks**
Activities	**Inputs**		**Assumptions & Risks**

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Ensure coherence in LFM intervention logic

Medium, long run To reduce unemployment of graduates in Ethiopia	% of graduates employment 10 months after the new diploma	Regional and university statistic	
Expected at the end of the project Creation of 8 new curricula addressing professional profiles requested by the labour market	25 students enrolled in each new curriculum	How indicators will be measured	Assumptions & Risks
Accreditation and implementation of 8 new Bachelors co-designed by academia and enterprises (2 x HEIs) Creation of new teaching materials Students placement system	20 teachers trained in each HEI 20% of e-learning courses 20 new textbooks drafted All enrolled students having attended an internship	How indicators will be measured	Assumptions & Risks
Meetings with enterprises Teachers training Drafting accreditation documents Drafting new manuals Sep up of a placement mechanism	Inputs		Assumptions & Risks

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Award criteria

Quality of the partnership and the cooperation arrangements

Management

- •Solid arrangements are foreseen,
- •Timelines, governance structures, collaboration arrangements and responsibilities well defined and realistic.

Composition

- • Appropriate mix of organisations with the necessary competences relevant to the objectives of the proposal and to the specificities of the Strand,
- • most appropriate and diverse range of non-academic partners.

Tasks

- •Roles and tasks are assigned on the basis of the specific know-how, profiles and experience of each partner.

Collaboration

- •Effective mechanisms to ensure efficient collaboration, communication and conflict resolution between the partner organisations and any other relevant stakeholders.

Commitment

- •The contribution from the project partners is significant, pertinent and complementary,
- • the proposal demonstrates the partners' involvement, commitment and ownership of the project's specific objectives and results, in particular from the third countries not associated to the programme.

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AVOID MOST COMMON WEAKNESSES

Partnership and cooperation arrangements

Expertise of Partners' staff should focus on what is specifically related to the project

Presentation of the partners and their key staff are generic, we find the same presentation of the university in all the submitted applications, regardless of the subject, faculty or department involved. Presentations are more convincing if customised and providing facts and figures specifically related to the project.

Ownership of results is guaranteed by the number and profile of people involved in partner countries institutions

A sufficient number of staff should be involved at each partner country institution. In general teams are not enough staffed and we observe the same staff in many different projects. Newcomers are recommended. A mix of senior and junior staff is highly recommended.

AVOID MOST COMMON WEAKNESSES

Partnership and cooperation arrangements

Ensure a balanced distribution of responsibilities, tasks and budget

The role of the Applicant/Coordinator is often too dominant and does not guarantee a sense of ownership across the consortium

Describe with precision the management arrangements (decision-making process, bodies to be established, communication channels)

No specific provisions on this matter demonstrate lack of awareness in the consortium about the difficulties of international and cross cultural projects and/or an insufficient preparation of the consortium to start immediately the activities.

Communication is never too much

A significant part of the problems incurred by projects depends on insufficient communication. In addition to general/global communication, consider planning periodical bilateral sessions with each partner

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Award criteria

Sustainability, impact and dissemination of the expected results

Exploitation

- How the outcomes of the project will be used by the partners and other stakeholders; how multiplier effects will be ensured and it provides means to measure exploitation within the project funding time and after.

Dissemination

- Clear and efficient plan for the dissemination of results, appropriate activities and their timing, tools and channels to be spread effectively to all relevant stakeholders and non-participating audience, reaching out and attracting relevant stakeholders to the outcomes within and after the project's funding time.

Impact

- Tangible impact on its target groups and relevant stakeholders at local, national or regional level,
- Measures, goals and indicators to monitor progress and assess the expected impact at individual, institutional and systemic level.

Open access

- Materials, documents and media produced freely available and promoted through open licenses and without disproportionate limitations.

Sustainability

- How the project results will be sustained financially and institutionally and how the local ownership will be ensured.

AVOID MOST COMMON WEAKNESSES

Impact and Sustainability

Describe concretely the measures ensuring that the results of the project will last beyond the project lifetime

The impact of the project has to be demonstrated at different levels: institutional, financial and policy level. Specific measures should be envisaged for **each** level.

Involve the Ministry for dissemination also if it is not a partner

For dissemination or mainstreaming of results it is logical to involve the MoHE and the NEO

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Impact and sustainability

IMPACT	Concrete benefits to the target groups at various levels (faculty / institutional, local, regional, national) / beneficial changes brought by the project <u>during its lifecycle and after its completion</u>
DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION	• Dissemination: Activities / measures aimed at spreading information about the project / raising awareness / making the project result **visible** beyond the circle of direct participants • Exploitation: Activities / measures aimed at mainstreaming and make the project results **used** beyond the circle of direct beneficiaries Both increase the project impact and contribute to its sustainability
SUSTAINABILITY	Activities / measures ensuring that the results of the project will last beyond the project lifetime

A COMPETITIVE APPLICATION…

- Demonstrates that the **combination of all its elements** will produce **concrete and sustainable results** for the benefit of all the parties concerned

- has been **prepared and agreed jointly** by all **consortium partners**

- has received the **full institutional commitment** and support of **all consortium partners**

- is **ready to start** immediately after the selection decision

KEY WORDS for a competitive application

- **Coherent** in its entirety; avoid contradictions; avoid "patchwork"

- **Concrete:** use examples, justify your statements, bring evidence

- **Clear:** follow the questions and answer them in the right order

- **Simple language:** Also complex subjects can be explained in a plain language. Keep most sentences 10-15 words long.

- **Explicit:** do not take anything for granted; do not assume experts will always understand; avoid abbreviations or explain them the 1st time

- **Rigorous:** the application is the basis on which your project will be implemented; it is also the cornerstone of your partnership commitment

- **Focused:** stick to what is asked

- **Complete:** ensure you have followed all the instructions and that the proposal fulfils all the mandatory requirements

Timeline

| Publication: second half of November 2021 | Deadline: 17 **February 2022** | Evaluation process: **March - July 2022** | Information to applicants: **August** 2022 | Start of projects: end 2022 |

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