

In this briefing sheet, detail is provided on National Agency expectations for assessment comments being prepared and submitted by experts, with examples of positive and less positive comments also provided.

Background and Introduction

COOPERATION PARTNERSHIP applications are required to be assessed by at least two experts (one of which must be external to the National Agency). SMALL-SCALE PARTNERSHIP applications rely on the award of smaller lump sum grants (€30,000; €60,000) and are required to be assessed by only one expert, who can be internal or external to the National Agency.

This initial phase of assessment is referred to as the INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENT phase.

For COOPERATION PARTNERSHIPS involving more than a single expert, a CONSOLIDATION phase also exists. CONSOLIDATION can take place face-to-face or virtually but, in all cases, requires experts to agree on a single set of comments and scores for each funding proposal. A consolidation should result in a single set of harmonised comments which present a single expert perspective for each assessment criterion. A consolidation should also present a single set of scores which must be consistent with the final set of comments rather than being a purely mathematical average of the scores awarded by individual assessors.

Individual and/or consolidated assessments are subject to additional checks by National Agency staff, ensuring that they meet a minimum set of standards, being Coherent, Comprehensive, Consistent, Courteous and Concise (the Five Cs):

Coherent	Comprehensive	Consistent	Courteous	Concise
comments should be easy to understand (even for a reader that has not read the application) and should provide feedback that the applicant will understand and can learn from	comments should be provided for each of the award criteria and should incorporate most, if not all, of the composite elements	comments should be consistent with the scores that have been awarded for each criterion and should be aligned with the predefined scoring bands for each action	comments should always be polite and respectful, and should avoid first person reference (e.g. I think that...)	comments should be of a standard size, as determined by the NA (e.g. 3000 characters per criterion); experts should avoid repeating that which is written in the application

National Agency staff must ensure that final assessment data (comments and scores) can be used to inform their National Selection Committee and provide feedback to applicants. Consequently, NA staff might request that an assessor revisits or revises their assessment where the Five Cs are not satisfactorily met. In no situation should the National Agency propose changes to scores, asking instead that assessors, themselves, ensure consistency between scores and comments.

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Example Comments: Positive Assessment

☞ RELEVANCE

The proposal is **relevant** and **aligns well** with the objectives of the selected action, with clear ambitions for university-industry collaboration, which is a confirmed priority.

Partner profiles are **clearly** outlined and positively extend to higher education and the targeted sector. Industry collaboration relies on the direct involvement of small and large enterprises throughout the project lifetime, which is **encouraging**. Plans for the identification and engagement of enterprises are **well explained** from the perspective of the participating regions and countries. The proposed actions are **clearly aligned** with the work and focus of the participating institutions, with **definite potential** to inform change and improvement in future higher education programme delivery.

Needs analysis activity is **well detailed** and **positively** extends to all partner countries, with ultimate beneficiaries equally **well described**. **Relevant** national and European policies and priorities are **appropriately referenced** and the expected contribution of the targeted actions is **appropriately detailed**.

Synergies with other educational sub-fields are not specifically targeted, yet there is **definite potential** for wider application of the developed model and resources to other areas, especially vocational education and training, which is **positive**.

The targeted innovations are **well argued**, with **credible insight** into the targeted outputs and deliverables and with a **sufficient** overview of how these expect to add value to existing provision.

It is **clear** to see how the targeted actions and results will complement and **positively** enhance existing practices both within and beyond the participating institutions.

European added-value is **well explained** and **achievable**, with partners confirming **valid** ambitions for addressing a common European challenge for improving the employability of new (or recent) graduates.

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☞ QUALITY OF PROJECT DESIGN

Goals and objectives are clearly defined and a convincing work programme and methodology is outlined, through which the targeted project objectives can be successfully achieved. Alignment with the work of the participating partners, and with their learner audiences, is convincingly explained.

Methodologically speaking, the overall vision for project delivery is clearly explained and all expected work phases are present with a realistic schedule presented for programme design, development and testing. End beneficiary involvement is positively envisaged at key stages. Costs presented for each of the different work packages are convincingly detailed and not excessive when taking into account the range, depth and achievability of the proposed actions and outputs. Quality assurance and evaluation plans are clearly explained and positively extend to internal (peer) and external (beneficiary) audiences. Indicators and targets are convincingly presented, and appropriate insight is given into measures that will be employed with a view to determining progress and achievement. Management structures are definitively described and a clear overview is given into the targeted management and coordination efforts.

Pilot testing plans complement wider development activities, with credible efforts to engage core student audiences as well as those with lesser experience in transnational collaboration. Efforts to engage learners with fewer opportunities are inherent to the overall project design and this is positive to see.

The role that digital tools and technologies will play is clearly described, with appropriate insight given into the targeted technologies and platforms and the role that each will play in facilitating learner and partner engagement.

It is encouraging to see efforts made to employ digital and virtual technologies in coordination, collaboration and promotional activities, balancing this with physical engagement plans and meeting programme expectations for eco-friendly project design.

Educator and student training actions are positively envisaged as a means of trialling the developed model and resources and participation targets are sufficient to provide a means of improving and validating the end project results. Beneficiary support and recognition plans are consistent with the type and nature of their engagement, which is predominantly short-term.

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☞ QUALITY OF THE PARTNERSHIP

A good mix of partners is brought together and the relevance of the participating organisations is clear and well stated, confirming the necessary skills and expertise for delivering the targeted actions, outputs and events.

Newcomer participation is confirmed for many of the listed enterprise partners, positively extending outreach and engagement in the Erasmus+ programme.

Task allocation is convincingly explained and aligns well with the experience and expertise of education and industry partners, which confirming the overall commitment of all partners. Key staff profiles are well described and confirm the required expertise to enable successful project delivery.

Cooperation and communication plans are clearly stated and appropriately extend to physical meetings and events and to the additional use of virtual and digital technologies for collaboration, engagement and promotional activities.

A single partner participates from a third country not associated to the programme (Canada) for which there are credible arguments presented in terms of the essential contribution and overall added-value of their participation, clearly detailing the role that this partner they will play helping to deliver the proposed model and resources.

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IMPACT

Valid insight is given into plans for integration of the end project results into the programme provision of educational partners and into work-based learning practices led by (participating and wider) enterprise partners, which is encouraging.

Impact potential is clearly detailed, and credible insights are given into the mechanisms and processes that will be adopted with a view to measuring and recording impact on primary and secondary beneficiaries. Impact on non-participating organisations and institutions, and on the targeted sector as a whole, is also well considered.

Transfer goals are clearly stated and credible, with examples of wider use outlined and with a positive outreach ambitions among participating and wider European countries.

Concrete and convincing steps are outlined to allow key results to be promoted and shared with internal and external stakeholder audiences. Promotional tools, channels and approaches are well described and appropriate, detailing relevant stakeholder audiences in each partner country. Appropriate commitment exists for publicly acknowledging EU financing.

Open access is clearly addressed, with credible ambitions for release of the developed resources as open source materials.

In terms of sustainability, a convincing level of detail is provided on plans for continued hosting and maintenance of the developed resources over a five-year post-project period. Appropriate plans exist for the joint-development of a sustainability strategy, with the required insight and assurance given for ensuring open and continued access to the end project results.

NOTE: in a **favourable or highly-scored assessment**, POSITIVE words or phrases are mostly used (for example: relevant; consistent; well-explained; clear; coherent; credible; achievable; appropriate; convincing; positive; definitive; well-defined).

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Example Comments: Less Positive Assessment

☞ RELEVANCE

Alignment with the objectives of the selected action is **not sufficiently** addressed, with **limited insight given** into expected innovation and modernisation in the targeted educational field.

The relevance of partners to the targeted field and domain is **not in all cases well explained** and there is **little said** of plans for accessing and engaging industry partners in the participating regions and countries. **Insufficient** insight is given into how the proposed actions aligns with the work and focus of the participating institutions from both education and industry.

Needs are **adequately** argued and referenced from a broader European perspective, yet **it remains unclear** how platform and content development will complement existing course/programme delivery in the participating countries and institutions. References to a lack of efficient and accessible training are **not sufficiently substantiated**, with **little said** of specific gaps.

Synergies with other educational sub-fields are not specifically targeted. Whilst some potential exists for wider application and use of the targeted model and resources, this aspect is **not sufficiently explored**.

Innovation, complementarity and forward progression are **not sufficiently defined or described**.

Arguments for European added-value centre mainly on confirming education/enterprise collaboration as a common European development priority, yet with **limited insight given** into the specific benefits of transnational collaboration.

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☞ QUALITY OF PROJECT DESIGN

Specific and measurable project objectives are not presented and there are areas of the work programme that remain unclear and lacking in detail, including in terms of how the targeted actions expect to align with specific areas of existing course and programme provision.

A clear overall project design and methodology is lacking and there is insufficient detail given for each of the planned activities, outputs and events. Whilst positive to see plans for the translation and localisation of content, the proposal does not adequately explain the source of all future learning content. Scheduling is valid yet plans for end beneficiary involvement and engagement are not fully detailed. A lack of detail within individual work packages, and the inclusion of relatively few indicators, makes value-for-money difficult to gauge. Some effort is made to define management and internal monitoring actions and approaches yet external validation ambitions are not fully considered, which is an important omission.

Pilot testing plans are valid and important yet not fully detailed and there are no obvious plans for addressing or engaging learners with fewer opportunities.

Whilst clear to see the necessity of using a content management system, the need for developing a bespoke digital platform is not well argued and how this will be used to support guided and self-directed learning, in the longer-term, is not fully explained. The role of digital technologies in facilitating partner collaboration is appropriately considered and explained.

No insight is given into eco-friendly aspects of the overall project design.

Learning, teaching and training activities provide a valid means of alpha testing the developed learning content, yet the timing of this event, towards the end of project, is difficult to align with ambitions for informing change and improvement. Plans for the selection of participants and for the recognition of learning achievement are also not fully outlined.

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☞ QUALITY OF THE PARTNERSHIP

Overall outreach to education and industry is **valid**, yet only **limited insight** is given into the specific experience and expertise of the listed partners. **Positive** is the fact that partners represent the targeted sector, although there is a definite **weighting** towards vocational education and training which is **not convincingly argued** in terms of how this expects to deliver change and improvement in the selected field and sector.

Newcomer participation is repeatedly referenced yet **not convincingly aligned** with the profiles of enterprise partners.

Task allocation is **imbalanced** with mostly educational partners involved in the targeted actions, outputs and events. Key staff for educational partners are **adequately presented** and **appropriate**. **Less is said** of key staff profiles and of specific interest and expertise among enterprise partners.

Communication and collaboration plans are **adequately** described and **mostly convincing**, including mechanisms for decision-making and conflict resolution. Specific communication platforms are **not detailed**.

A single partner participates from a third country not associated to the programme (Canada), yet **insufficient** argument is provided in favour of the essential contribution and overall added-value associated with their participation. The role and contribution of the Canadian partner is **not convincingly explained**.

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👉 IMPACT

Whilst having **valid plans** for integrating the targeted model and resources into formal educational programme provision, use and integration of the developed resources by enterprise and industry partners is **not well explained**.

Impact is **not fully addressed**, with **insufficient** insight given into mechanisms and processes that will be adopted with a view to measuring and recording impact on primary and secondary beneficiaries. Impact on non-participating organisations and institutions is also **not fully considered**.

Transfer plans are **not fully described**, with **little said** of wider outreach and exploitation ambitions in participating and wider European countries.

An **appropriate** range of promotional tools and platforms is envisaged for use during the lifetime of the project. Specific stakeholder and user audiences, in participating and wider countries, are **not well defined**. References to beneficiaries in the selected field and sector are **lacking in detail**. A commitment to publicly acknowledging EU financing is **not provided**.

Sustainability actions centre mainly on plans for commercialisation of the developed model and resources with **insufficient insight** given into open access planning, and with **no real detail** provided on options for continued access to the developed resources beyond the lifetime of the project.

NOTE: in a **less-favourable or lower-scored** assessment, both POSITIVE (for example; relevant; valid; consistent; appropriate; clear) and LESS-POSITIVE (for example: unclear; inconsistent; insufficient; lacking; unconvincing) words or phrases can be used.

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