

In this briefing sheet, detail is provided on specific elements of the budget that need to be reviewed, and commented on, when assessing an application for a Cooperation Partnership or Small-Scale Partnership.

Introduction

This briefing sheet focuses on budget assessment for COOPERATION PARTNERSHIPS and SMALL-SCALE PARTNERSHIPS

Whilst there is no separate quality assessment criterion for budget assessment, it is important to assess whether the planned actions are **cost-effective** and whether **appropriate resources** are allocated to the planned activities. In all cases, it should be clear that the planned actions, events and outputs will deliver positive and lasting benefits to the participating institutions, targeted beneficiaries and/or field of operation, ensuring good value-for-money and satisfying the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. This is an important aspect that is assessed under the heading of **Quality of Project Design** and which extends to all areas of the project, from management to implementation, evaluation, promotion and transfer.

Budget Assessment for Cooperation Partnerships

There is no longer a requirement for applicants to use fixed rates or unit costs when preparing a project budget.

Instead, COOPERATION PARTNERSHIPS rely on **lump sum financing** for the partnership as a whole, with applicants required to choose one of three lump sums (€120,000, €250,000 or €400,000) at the point of application. The choice of lump sum should be based on an **estimation of costs** for delivering the planned activities. In all cases, the lump sum is seen as a **contribution** to the cost of project delivery, with additional costs expected to be covered by the participating organisations. The evaluator must be convinced that the value of the targeted activities is **higher** than the amount requested.

Whilst there is no predefined alignment between the lump sum amount and the project duration, the selected amount should always be **consistent** with the number, scope, magnitude and complexity of the proposed project activities as detailed in the workplan. Where a budget is **disproportionate** to the targeted actions, the assessor should be less positive in their assessment comments and score. Where a project is selected for funding, the lump sum amount becomes the overall grant amount.

Whilst this is a **relatively new model of financing**, some aspects are not so different from budget assessment undertaken in previous programmes. For example, reviewing the planned activities, reflecting on the value and cost-effectiveness of the targeted outputs (number, language, medium, outreach, functionality) and confirming the benefits and overall breadth of stakeholder and beneficiary engagement in the targeted actions.

There is an additional need for applicants to include **arguments for cost effectiveness** for each of the planned work packages. The lump sum financing model provides applicants with much greater freedom in terms of the types of activities that they might finance and the methods that they use for cost estimation, with only a single ceiling applied (maximum of 20% under project management). Whilst there is no requirement for the applicant to provide a detailed breakdown of the budget, there is a need to justify the amounts being requested and this might result in specific budgetary details being provided in some cases.

Key Action 2:
Cooperation
Partnerships and
Small-Scale
Partnerships

BUDGET
ASSESSMENT


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To allow the value and cost-effectiveness of the proposed actions to be determined, applicants must also provide a **clear description of the targeted activities**, confirming the roles that partners will play and any ambitions for stakeholder and end beneficiary involvement, whilst detailing estimated costs for each of the planned activities.

Targets and indicators also play an important role in helping to determine the number, scope, magnitude and complexity of the proposed activities and, ultimately, in helping to measure successful achievement of the overall project objectives.

In all cases, assessors must comment on the **appropriateness of resource allocation** to the planned activities and on **overall cost-effectiveness**. There might be instances where some activities are well argued and other activities are less well argued yet a single opinion is needed on cost-effectiveness at the level of the overall project and partnership. An example is how this might be considered during quality assessment is presented in *Figure 1*. It is important, however, to keep in mind that budget and cost-effectiveness is just one of the elements that is being judged under the heading of **Quality of Project Design**.

Figure 1: Example of how cost effectiveness might be collectively considered across multiple work packages and activities

 Erasmus+	VERY GOOD					GOOD					FAIR					WEAK				
	WP1	WP2	WP3	WP4	WP5	WP1	WP2	WP3	WP4	WP5	WP1	WP2	WP3	WP4	WP5	WP1	WP2	WP3	WP4	WP5
Activity 1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Activity 2	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Activity 3	●	●	●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●		●
Activity 4	●		●		●	●		●		●	●		●		●	●		●		●
Activity 5	●		●		●	●		●		●	●		●		●	●		●		●
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● VERY GOOD: workplan convincingly details the number, scope and complexity of the proposed activities and provides the required insight into budget planning and cost-effectiveness, with no areas of concern or weakness. ● GOOD: workplan provides a clear insight into the number, scope and complexity of the proposed activities in (nearly) all cases, yet with room for a few small improvements; workplan provides sufficient insight into budget planning and cost-effectiveness. ● FAIR: workplan provides some insight into the number, scope and complexity of the proposed activities yet there are several areas where detail is lacking or the information is unclear; workplan provides broader insights into budget planning and cost-effectiveness. ● WEAK: workplan does not provide the necessary insight into the number, scope and complexity of the proposed activities; little relevant insight or information is provided on budget planning and cost-effectiveness. 																				

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Budget Assessment for Small-Scale Partnerships

A detailed budget review is not required for SMALL-SCALE PARTNERSHIPS. However, assessors are still required to confirm whether the proposed project and partnership is **cost-effective** and whether **appropriate resources** are allocated to the planned activities, including aspects relating to the integration of results. In all cases, it should be clear that the targeted actions will deliver positive benefits to the participating institutions. This is an important aspect that is assessed under the heading of **Quality of Project Design** and which extends to all areas of project management and delivery.

SMALL-SCALE PARTNERSHIPS rely on **lump sum financing**, for the partnership as a whole, with applicants required to choose one of two lump sums (€30,000 or €60,000) at the point of application. The choice of lump sum should be based on an **estimation of costs** for delivering the planned actions and activities. In all cases, the lump sum is seen as a **contribution** to the cost of project delivery, with additional costs expected to be covered by the participating organisations. The evaluator must be convinced that the value of the targeted activities is **higher** than the amount requested.

Whilst there is no predefined alignment between the lump sum amount and the project duration, the selected amount should always be **consistent** with the number, scope, magnitude and complexity of the proposed project activities as detailed in the proposal. Where a project is selected for funding, the lump sum amount becomes the overall grant amount.

The lump sum financing model provides applicants with much greater freedom on the types of activities that they might finance. However, to allow the value and cost-effectiveness of the proposed actions to be determined, applicants must provide a **clear description of the targeted activities**, as well as a breakdown of how the lump sum will be used to finance the targeted actions and deliverables.

In all cases, assessors must comment on the **appropriateness of resource allocation** to the planned activities and on **overall cost-effectiveness**. Considering the focus of SMALL-SCALE PARTNERSHIPS and their ambitions for engaging newcomers and less-experienced organisations, the workplan and budget will be less detailed than for COOPERATION PARTNERSHIPS and it is important to apply the proportionality principle during budget assessment, confirming whether the budget is cost-effective or not cost-effective and explaining your rationale, rather than going into a more detailed or complex cost-value assessment.

COST-EFFECTIVE

In this case, the budget has been reviewed by the assessor and the proposed costs are felt to be consistent with the proposed actions and activities, being not overestimated or underestimated. Lump sum financing will be provided in full for those projects that are successful.

NOT COST-EFFECTIVE

In this case, the budget has been reviewed by the assessor and the proposed costs are felt to be inconsistent with the proposed actions and deliverables. Instead of proposing budget reductions, this should be reflected in a score below threshold for Quality of Project Design.

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