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Cooperation Partnerships Briefing Sheet: KA220 Applications

In this briefing sheet, detail is provided on the **objectives, priorities and activities** of COOPERATION PARTNERSHIPS (KA220), under indirect management, along with examples of possible project types.

Introduction

Under the heading of *Partnerships for Cooperation*, two types of partnership project exist, namely: SMALL-SCALE PARTNERSHIPS and COOPERATION PARTNERSHIPS. This briefing sheet focuses specifically on COOPERATION PARTNERSHIPS.

COOPERATION PARTNERSHIPS aim to allow organisations to increase the quality and relevance of their activities, to develop and reinforce their networks (of partners) and to increase their capacity to operate jointly, at transnational level, through boosting internationalisation, exchanging or developing new methods and practices, and sharing and confronting ideas.

COOPERATION PARTNERSHIPS aim to support the development, transfer and/or implementation of innovative practices as well as the implementation of joint initiatives promoting cooperation, peer learning and exchanges of experience at European level. Results of COOPERATION PARTNERSHIPS should be re-usable, transferable, up-scalable and, where possible, have a strong transdisciplinary dimension. Selected projects will be expected to share the results of their activities at local, regional, national and transnational levels.

COOPERATION PARTNERSHIPS are anchored to the policy frameworks and priorities of each Erasmus+ sector and field of activity, both at European and national level, while aiming to produce incentives for cross-sectoral and horizontal cooperation on themes of common interest.

OBJECTIVES

- increasing quality in the work, activities and practices of the organisations and institutions involved, opening up to new actors, not naturally included within one sector or field;
- building the capacity of organisations to work transnationally and across fields and sectors;
- addressing common needs and priorities in the fields of education, training, youth and sport;
- enabling transformation and change (at individual, organisational or sectoral level), leading to improvements and new approaches, in proportion to the context of each organisation.

SELECTION, MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

COOPERATION PARTNERSHIPS in the fields of ADU, HED, SCH, VET and YOU mostly follow the *indirect management* process, in which appointed Erasmus+ National Agencies are responsible for assessment, selection and contracting actions. COOPERATION PARTNERSHIPS in the field of Sport (SCP) and COOPERATION PARTNERSHIPS submitted by a European NGO (ENGO) rely on a *direct management* process, in which the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) is responsible for assessment, selection and contracting actions. This briefing sheet relates solely to COOPERATION PARTNERSHIPS following the *indirect management* process for assessment, selection and contracting.

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PROJECT APPLICATIONS, DURATION AND FUNDING

For applications submitted to Erasmus+ National Agencies, the same organisation (based on a single Organisation ID) is limited to a maximum of ten applications, per deadline, as applicant or partner, across all fields of activity. To be eligible as an applicant, organisations must have been legally established, in an EU Member state or third country associated to the Erasmus+ Programme, or in any non-participating third country within regions 1-3 (excluding Belarus which is not eligible to participate in this action) for at least two years prior to the application deadline.

Decentralised COOPERATION PARTNERSHIPS can last between 12 and 36 months and can access a lump sum of either €120,000, €250,000 or €400,000. The project duration and the proposed lump sum must be confirmed in the application and each should be consistent with the targeted objectives and activities.

SECTORS AND FIELDS

COOPERATION PARTNERSHIPS following the indirect management process can be financed in any of the following sectors or fields: Adult Education (ADU), Higher Education (HED), School Education (SCH), Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Youth (YOU).

Participating Organisations

APPLICANT ORGANISATIONS

Any public or private organisation that is established in an EU Member State or third country associated to the Erasmus+ Programme can be the applicant. The applicant applies on behalf of all participating organisations.

Higher education institutions in EU Member States and third countries associated to the Erasmus+ Programme must hold a valid Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) if they wish to participate in a COOPERATION PARTNERSHIP, as an applicant or a core partner.

Informal groups of young people are not considered as an organisation and therefore not eligible to participate in COOPERATION PARTNERSHIPS, neither as applicants nor as partners.

PARTNER ORGANISATIONS (CORE)

A COOPERATION PARTNERSHIP is a transnational project and must involve a minimum of three organisations from three different countries, including the applicant organisation, which must be from EU Member States, or third countries associated to the Erasmus+ Programme.

There is no maximum number of participating organisations in a COOPERATION PARTNERSHIP.

Irrespective of the field that expects to be impacted, COOPERATION PARTNERSHIPS are open to any type of organisation that is active in any field of education, training, youth, sport or other socio-economic sectors, as well as to organisations carrying out transversal or multi-field activities. All participating organisations must be identified at the point of application.

As a general rule, COOPERATION PARTNERSHIPS target cooperation between organisations in EU Member States and/or third countries associated to the Programme. Organisations from third countries not associated to the Erasmus+ Programme - limited to regions 1-3 only and excluding Belarus which is not eligible to participate in this action - can be involved as partners, but not as applicants, if their participation brings an essential added value to the project, and as long as minimum participation requirements (three organisations from three participating countries) are met.

Higher education institutions in third countries not associated to the Erasmus+ programme do not require an ECHE, to participate as a partner, but must agree to observe ECHE principles.

Depending on the priority and the objectives addressed by the project, COOPERATION PARTNERSHIPS should involve the most appropriate and diverse range of partners to benefit from complementary profiles and experience, and specific expertise, in producing relevant and high-quality project results.

PARTNER ORGANISATIONS (ASSOCIATED)

In addition to formally-participating organisations (applicant; core partners from EU, associated and eligible non-associated countries in regions 1-3), COOPERATION PARTNERSHIPS can also involve other public or private sector partners who might help to deliver one or more tasks or activities, or to promote the project and its achievements. Contractually, these organisations are referred to as *associated partners* for whom there is no funding provided from the Erasmus+ programme. In all cases, the participation and role of *associated partners* should be clearly described in the proposal.

Activities

COOPERATION PARTNERSHIPS aim to allow organisations to increase the quality and relevance of their activities, to develop and reinforce networks and to increase their capacity to operate at transnational level, through boosting internationalisation, exchanging or developing new methods and practices and sharing and confronting ideas.

Whilst the previous programme was fairly directive about the types of activities that could be financed in a COOPERATION PARTNERSHIP, the introduction of lump sum financing and a user-defined work programme means that the type and range of activities is much less regulated, with applicants able to decide on the type and level of activities that they will deliver in their project. In addition to actions centred on management and coordination, possible activities, might include (among others):

- curriculum and/or learning programme design;
- creation of learning resources;
- development of digital tools and platforms;
- design and delivery of campaigns and events aimed at promoting and sharing end project results;
- validation of new products and resources through pilot actions involving educators and learners;
- actions centred on facilitating access to education and training for learners with specific or additional needs;
- transnational learning, teaching and training activities, in so far as they bring added value to the project.

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In terms of delivery, a COOPERATION PARTNERSHIP should normally consist of the following four stages, with some planning activities expected to take place even prior to the proposal being selected for funding:

- PLANNING: defining needs, objectives, timing, expected outcomes, activity formats, etc;
- PREPARATION: planning activities; confirming target audiences, developing work programme, outlining practical arrangements, signing agreements with partners etc;
- IMPLEMENTATION: delivery of all planned activities;
- FOLLOW-UP: outcome and impact evaluation (different levels), sharing and use of project results.

Participating organisations and key beneficiaries should take an active role in project delivery.

Plans for the use of digital tools and learning methods should be fully detailed, as should plans for eco-friendly project delivery and for incorporating green practices into the different project phases.

All of the activities of a COOPERATION PARTNERSHIP must take place in the countries of the participating organisations (applicant, core partners, associated partners). Where duly justified, activities can also take place in the cities where EU institutions are located, namely: Brussels, Frankfurt, Luxembourg, Strasbourg and The Hague.

Activities centred on sharing and promoting results can also take place in other EU Member States, third countries associated to the Programme or eligible third countries not associated to the Programme (e.g. during relevant thematic or transnational events), where duly justified.

Priorities

To be considered for financing, COOPERATION PARTNERSHIPS must address at least one horizontal priority and/or one specific priority relevant to the field of education, training and youth that is mostly expected to be impacted. The field of activity must also be selected at the point of application.

COOPERATION PARTNERSHIPS should additionally consider how they will address (one or more) Erasmus+ horizontal priorities, as listed below.

Erasmus+ National Agencies can also decide to give greater consideration to priorities that are particularly relevant in their own national context, albeit with a requirement to keep potential applicants informed of this additional focus.

HORIZONTAL PRIORITIES APPLYING TO ALL ERASMUS+ SECTORS

- inclusion and diversity;
- digital transformation through developing digital skills and readiness, resilience and capacity;
- environment and fight against climate change;
- common values, civic engagement, preparedness and participation.

Further detail on horizontal priorities can be found in the *Erasmus+ Programme Guide*.

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SECTOR-SPECIFIC PRIORITIES IN THE FIELD OF ADULT EDUCATION (2026)

- increasing accessibility, quality, take-up and recognition of adult education;
- promoting local learning centres and innovative learning spaces;
- fostering the upskilling and reskilling of adults;
- supporting response of European education and training systems to war in Ukraine.

SECTOR-SPECIFIC PRIORITIES IN THE FIELD OF HIGHER EDUCATION (2026)

- rewarding high-quality learning, teaching and skills development;
- supporting STEM and the participation of women in STEM;
- promoting interconnected higher education systems;
- supporting HE institutions in their cooperation with Ukrainian counterparts to respond to the war in Ukraine.

SECTOR-SPECIFIC PRIORITIES IN THE FIELD OF SCHOOL EDUCATION (2026)

- developing basic skills and key competences, tackling learning disadvantage and preventing early school leaving;
- promoting wellbeing at school;
- supporting teachers, school leaders and other teaching professions;
- improving interest, participation and achievement in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and STEAM education, and fostering girls' interest in STEM;
- developing high quality early childhood education and care systems;
- supporting response of European education and training systems to war in Ukraine.

SECTOR-SPECIFIC PRIORITIES IN THE FIELD OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (2026)

- adapting vocational education and training to labour market needs and tackling low proficiency in basic skills;
- increasing the flexibility of opportunities in vocational education and training;
- contributing to innovation and quality in vocational education and training;
- increasing the attractiveness of VET, in particular STEM, and promoting VET internationalisation;
- supporting response of European education and training systems to war in Ukraine.

SECTOR-SPECIFIC PRIORITIES IN THE FIELD OF YOUTH (2026)

- strengthening basic skills and young people's sense of initiative and entrepreneurship;
- increasing quality, innovation and recognition of youth work;
- supporting response of the Youth field in Europe to war in Ukraine.

Further detail on sector-specific priorities can be found in the *Erasmus+ Programme Guide*.

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Examples of Cooperation Partnerships

Enhancing Retirement Planning
Cognisant of the fact that increased life expectancy, in many industrialised countries, will lead to a longer period of retirement, partners from three European countries target improved preparation for those about to enter this 'third age'. Having confirmed the state-of-play in the participating countries, and the expectations of those about to enter retirement, partners will develop a series of common guidelines for use by professionals working to support planning for active retirement. Primary target audiences are broad and include employers, unions, professional associations, and local and regional authorities, among others. Guidelines will be developed and piloted with end users in each of the partner countries with a view to aiding and improving pre-retirement planning through future course delivery within and beyond the participating institutions and countries. Project partners are all affiliated with the University of the Third Age (U3A), providing a vehicle for wider dissemination and exploitation.

Modernising Music Education
Recognising difficulties faced by qualified musicians in accessing relevant employment, and aware of the often-excessive numbers of applicants applying for a limited number of posts in the music industry, partners from four European countries will work together to modernise curricula in the field of music education (Masters-level). Actions centre on stakeholder consultation and practice-based research as well as curriculum development and testing with multiple student cohorts. Delivery will additionally extend to student and staff mobility and will centre on the hosting of two blended intensive study programmes and two staff development courses. Participating staff will be further encouraged to contribute to a platform for professional integration, entrepreneurship and collaborative (cross-arts) practice. Student beneficiaries, and future graduates, can expect to benefit from increased employment opportunities, as skilled yet flexible musicians, and from improved leadership and entrepreneurship skills. Project results will take the form of updated curricula to be delivered by participating institutions and wider partners.

Tackling Early School Leaving: Improved Opportunities for Teachers and Pupils
Bringing together a range of organisations working within and beyond the field of school education, the focus is on effectively addressing early school leaving in the participating countries and regions. Ultimate beneficiaries are pupils perceived to be at risk of early school leaving. Initial targets for the project are teaching staff in the four participating countries, working in different learning environments, with activities centred on: the development and delivery of in-service training (with a focus on pupil support and retention strategies); the production of guidelines and case studies; and the creation of a digital open access platform to encourage professional discussion and knowledge sharing among teachers and other educational practitioners. The digital platform will facilitate sharing and promotion and will be used alongside existing partner networks to market the end project results.

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Targeted Learning for Automation, Truck Maintenance and Welding
Partners from seven European countries project come together to enhance the quality and attractiveness of VET through promoting the use of learning outcomes in work-based learning and in the design and delivery of national and international work placements. Building on past successes and extending to new countries and sectors, units of learning outcomes will be developed for automation, truck maintenance and welding programmes delivered outside of formal learning environments. Newly-participating partners will directly involve VET learners in testing the relevance, usefulness and ease-of-delivery of the developed units of learning outcomes, and will seek feedback from learners to ensure the usefulness and accessibility of the end project results. In the longer-term, the developed units will facilitate the delivery of occupationally-relevant learning across multiple learning environments.

EXAMPLE FOR YOUTH

Youth Employability and Capacity-building Scheme
This multi-actor partnerships brings together formal education and training providers from five European countries with those delivering capacity-building programmes in youthwork surroundings. Recognising the value of learning in all environments, including as a means of enhancing the employability of young people, objectives centre on the professionalisation of learning in non-formal learning environments, with youth workers and young people expected to play a dual role in the project, initially as learners (training-of-trainers activity), then as educators and multipliers. Among the targeted results is a model and standard for future blended/digital course provision in youthwork settings, and a network of trained youth workers and young people able to develop future training in line with the developed model. Partners also confirm ambitions for the use of existing European tools and frameworks for capturing and recording learning achievement.

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