Erasmus+ Programme (ERASMUS)

Call for proposals

Forward-Looking Projects: School Education, Vocational Education and Training, Adult learning, Digital education

ERASMUS-EDU-2025-PI-FORWARD

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Call: ERASMUS-EDU-2025-PI-FORWARD – Forward-Looking Projects: School Education, Vocational Education and Training, Adult learning, Digital education

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EUROPEAN EDUCATION AND CULTURE EXECUTIVE AGENCY (EACEA)

EACEA.A – Erasmus+, EU Solidarity Corps
EACEA.A.2 – Skills and Innovation

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

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0. Introduction

This is a call for proposals for EU action grants in the field of innovation in education and training under the **Erasmus+ Programme**.

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

- Regulation 2024/2509 (EU Financial Regulation)[1]
- the basic act (Erasmus+ Regulation 2021/817[2]).

The call is launched in accordance with the Erasmus+ 2025 Work Programme[3] 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 2025 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**:

- **Topic 1 - ERASMUS-EDU-2025-PI-FORWARD-SCHOOL-BS: School Education: Enhancing basic skills**

- **Topic 2 - ERASMUS-EDU-2025-PI-FORWARD-VET-VE: Vocational Education and Training: Promote an enabling and supportive environment for vocational excellence at national and/or regional level**

- **Topic 3 - ERASMUS-EDU-2025-PI-FORWARD-VET-QM: Vocational Education and Training: Development of joint VET qualifications and modules**

- **Topic 4 - ERASMUS-EDU-2025-PI-FORWARD- ADULT-PS: Adult Learning: Support to the Pact for Skills**

- **Topic 5 - ERASMUS-EDU-2025-PI-FORWARD-ADULT-CG: Adult Learning: Improving career guidance to support adults' participation in training**

- **Topic 6 - ERASMUS-EDU-2025-PI-FORWARD-DIGITAL-SC: Digital education: Assessment of digital skills and competences**

- **Topic 7 - ERASMUS-EDU-2025-PI-FORWARD-DIGITAL-AI:**

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[1] Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2024 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (recast) ('EU Financial Regulation') (OJ L, 2024/2509, 26.9.2024).

[2] 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):https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32021R0817

[3] Commission Implementing Decision C(2024) 7026 of 11/10/2024 on the financing of Erasmus+: the Union Programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport and the adoption of the work programme for 2025: eplus-awp-2025-C-2024-7026_en.pdf (europa.eu)

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Digital education: Ethical and effective use of generative Artificial Intelligence systems in education and training

- **Topic 8 - ERASMUS-EDU-2025-PI-FORWARD-DIGITAL-DM:**
  Digital education: Innovative data collection and exchange approaches in primary, secondary education (including vocational education and training) for data-informed decision-making

Each project application under the call must address only one of these Topics. Applicants wishing to apply for more than one Topic, must submit a separate proposal under each Topic.

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, themes and priorities, activities that can be funded and the expected impact (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 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 under the Erasmus+ programme.

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1. Background

The European Union supports Member States and other key stakeholders in their efforts to provide the best education and training for their citizens.

The Council Resolution of 2021 establishing the Strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030)[4] underlines that education and training have a vital role to play when it comes to shaping the future of Europe, at a time when it is imperative that its society and economy become more cohesive, inclusive, digital, sustainable, green and resilient. Education and training help also citizens to find personal fulfilment and well-being, to be prepared to adapt and perform on a changing labour market and to engage in active and responsible citizenship.

The European Education Area[5] (EEA) fosters collaboration among European Union Member States and other key stakeholders to build more resilient and inclusive national education and training systems supporting economic growth and high-quality employment opportunities. It will allow learners to pursue their studies in different stages of life and to look for employment across the EU.

The framework support Member States and other key stakeholders to exchange best practices and learn from each other, with an aim to make lifelong learning and mobility a reality, improve the quality and efficiency of education and training, promote equity, social cohesion and active citizenship as well as enhance creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship.

The European Skills Agenda aims to support people to develop the skills needed to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by the green and digital transitions. The Skills Agenda covers several building blocks, i.e. the "Pact for Skills" will mobilise and incentivise relevant private and public stakeholders to partner up and take action for lifelong skills development;

The 2020 Council Recommendation on vocational education and training for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience defines key principles for ensuring that vocational education and training is agile in that it adapts swiftly to labour market needs and societal challenges. and provides quality learning opportunities for young people and adults alike. It places a strong focus on the increased flexibility of vocational education and training, innovation and vocational excellence, for example through the Centres of Vocational Excellence initiative (CoVEs), which provide opportunities for initial training of young people as well as the continuing upskilling and re-skilling of adults, in the context of the green and digital transitions. CoVEs act as catalysts for local business development and innovation, by working closely with companies (in particular SMEs) on applied research projects, creating knowledge and innovation hubs, as well as supporting entrepreneurial initiatives of their learners.

The Digital Competence Framework (DigComp) provides a common framework which facilitates a common understanding of digital skills and can be used for framing policy, curriculum development and skills assessment in education or labour market contexts. In March 2022, the Commission updated the framework (DigComp 2.2) to take account of emerging technologies such as AI, datafication and phenomena such as increased teleworking, misinformation and disinformation and the new skills requirements they bring.

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[4] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32021G0226(01)

[5] https://education.ec.europa.eu/about-eea

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European cooperation in education and training should enable the European Union and the wider education and training community to deliver on initiatives supporting the achievement of the European Education Area by 2025, in synergy with the European Higher Education Area[6], the European Skills Agenda[7] and also the Digital Education Action Plan[8]. Based on strengthened guidance from the Council and in line with the Open Method of Coordination, this requires boosting flexible cooperation methods and strengthening synergies with other initiatives in education and training.

The EEA Progress Report[9] (2022) gives an overview on strategic initiatives already adopted.

Other initiatives in the fields of education, training and social rights to support the relevant European policy agendas:

- The Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027[10]
- The Council Recommendation on key enabling factors for successful digital education and training[11]
- The Council Recommendation on improving the provision of digital skills and competences in education and training[12]
- The Staff Working Document underpinning both proposals[13]
- The Council Recommendation on Blended learning approaches for high-quality and inclusive primary and secondary education[14]
- The Digital Decade Strategy[15]
- The Learning Lab on Investing in Quality Education and Training[16]
- The Council Recommendation on common values, inclusive education and the European dimension of teaching[17]
- The 2022 Council Recommendation on Learning for the green transition and sustainable development [18]
- The Council Conclusions on skills and competences for the green transition[19]
- The Council recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning[20]
- The Council Recommendation on Pathways to school success[21]
- The European Pillar of Social Rights[22]
- The Council Recommendation on vocational education and training for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience[23]
- The Osnabrück Declaration on vocational education and training as an enabler of recovery and just transitions to digital and green economies[24]

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[6] https://education.ec.europa.eu/education-levels/higher-education

[7] https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_1196

[8] https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/digital-education/action-plan

[9] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52022DC0700&qid=1669030250195

[10] https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/digital-education/action-plan

[11] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52023DC0205R%2801%29

[12] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/C/2024/1030/oj

[13] https://education.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2023-04/deap-swd-digital-skills-180423_en.pdf

[14] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32021H1214%2801%29

[15] https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/digital-decade-policy-programme-2030

[16] https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/improving-quality/learning-lab

[17] https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/improving-quality/inclusive-education/common-values

[18] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32022H0627%2801%29

[19] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ%3AJOC_2023_095_R_0003

[20] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2018.189.01.0001.01.ENG&toc=OJ:C:2018:189:TOC

[21] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2022:316:FIN

[22] https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1226&langId=en

[23] https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/content/council-recommendation-24-november-2020-vocational-education-and-training-vet-sustainable

[24] https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/osnabrueck_declaration_eu2020.pdf

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- The European Skills Agenda[25]
- The Council Recommendation on individual learning accounts[26]
- The Council Resolution on a new European agenda for adult learning 2021-2030[27]
- The Council Recommendation on Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults[28]
- The Council Recommendation of 16 June 2022 on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability[29]
- The Green Deal Industrial Plan[30]
- The Communication on the Green Deal Industrial Plan for the Zero-Net Age[31]
- The Council Recommendation of 13 May 2024 on 'Europe on the Move' learning mobility opportunities for everyone.[32]

The Topics of the present call are consistent with these initiatives and aim at supporting them.

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

Objectives

This action will aim to foster innovation, creativity and participation, as well as social entrepreneurship, in different fields of education and training, within sectors or across sectors and disciplines.

Forward-Looking Projects are large-scale projects that aim to identify, develop, test and/or assess innovative (policy) approaches that have the potential of becoming mainstreamed, thus improving education and training systems. They will support **forward-looking ideas** responding to key European priorities. They should give input for improving education and training systems, as well as bring a substantial innovative effect in terms of methods and practices to all types of learning and active participation settings for Europe's social cohesion.

The goal is to support transnational cooperation projects implementing a coherent and comprehensive set of sectoral or cross-sectoral activities that either:

a) foster innovation in terms of scope, ground-breaking methods and practices, and/or

b) ensure a transfer of innovation (across countries, policy sectors or target groups), thus ensuring at European level a sustainable exploitation of innovative project results and/or transferability into different contexts and audiences.

The partnerships should be composed of a mix of public and private organisations combining researchers, practitioners and partners with the capacity to reach policy-makers.

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[25] https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_1196

[26] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32022H0627%2803%29

[27] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32021G1214%2801%29

[28] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ%3AJOC_2016_484_R_0001

[29] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32022H0627(02)

[30] https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy-priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/green-deal-industrial-plan_en

[31] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2023:62:FIN

[32] Council Recommendation of 13 May 2024 'Europe on the Move' — learning mobility opportunities for everyone (europa.eu)

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Forward-Looking Projects should therefore be implemented by a **mixed partnership of organisation**s:

- based on excellence and state of the art knowledge;

- having the capacity to innovate;

- able to generate systemic impact through their activities and the potential to drive the policy agenda in the fields of education and training.

The **general objectives** are as follows:

• Implementing innovative initiatives with a strong impact on education and training reforms in specific strategic policy areas;

• Contributing to the strengthening of Europe's innovation capacity by promoting innovation in education and training;

• Creating systemic change through fostering innovation at both practice and policy-level;

• Support forward-looking ideas focusing on key topics and priorities at EU level, with a clear potential to be mainstreamed in one or more sectors;

• As fully innovative, ground-breaking educational methods and practices and/or transfer of innovation: ensuring at EU level a sustainable exploitation of innovative project results and/or transferability into different contexts and audiences.

The **specific objectives** include:

• Identifying, developing, testing and/or assessing innovative approaches that have the potential to be mainstreamed in order to improve education and training systems, as well as the effectiveness of policies and practices in the field of education and training;

• Launching pilot actions to test solutions and address future challenges, aiming to create sustainable and systemic impact;

• Supporting transnational cooperation and mutual learning on forward-looking issues amongst key stakeholders and empowering them to develop innovative solutions and promote the transfer of those solutions in new settings, including capacity-building of relevant stakeholders.

Activities that can be funded (scope)

 Activities under Forward-Looking Projects should contribute to the following:

• Improve quality, efficiency, attractiveness, equity and inclusion of education and training systems;

• Improve effectiveness of policies in the field of education and training;

• Support the implementation of EU Frameworks and legal initiatives as well as country-specific recommendations from the European Semester;

• Improve evidence and understanding of target group(s), learning and teaching situations and effective methodologies and tools that can inspire and stimulate innovation at system level;

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- Develop knowledge to support evidence-based policy;

- Trigger behavioural shifts at EU level.

Forward-Looking Projects are recommended to apply EU wide instruments and tools whenever relevant. For example, when issuing a micro-credential describing the skills or learning outcomes achieved by a project beneficiary in a formal, non-formal or informal learning context, projects are invited to follow the European approach to micro-credentials[33] or to directly use the EU tool European Digital Credentials for Learning (EDCs)[34] for issuing these micro-credentials.

Projects should include the design of a long-term action plan (beyond the duration of the Erasmus+ funded project) for the progressive take-up and mainstreaming of the innovations developed to be able to impact on education and training systems, in collaboration with the relevant authorities and institutions. They should also ensure the appropriate visibility and wide dissemination of the work, including at EU and national political level.

To address the objectives of the action, the call is organised in **eight Topics** with specific themes and priorities, activities and expected impact:

SCHOOL EDUCATION

Topic 1-ERASMUS-EDU-2025-PI-FORWARD-SCHOOL-BS: School Education: Enhancing basic skills[35]

Themes and priorities (scope)

Educational outcomes, in terms of **knowledge, skills and attitudes[36]** developed during schooling, are strong predictors of a balanced, healthy and successful adult life. Measured in terms of 'educational achievements' and 'educational attainments', they are fundamental for laying the foundations for adult life. The acquisition of basic skills (literacy, mathematics, science and digital) set the foundation for further learning, hence essential for students' academic and personal development. The latest 2022 PISA (Programme of International Student Assessment) results are deeply worrying: in the EU, around 30% of young people fail to reach the minimum competence level in mathematics, and around 25% in reading and science.[37] Socio-economic status continues to be the strongest determinant of educational outcomes. Moreover, gender differences in underachievement are evident in reading, with boys underperforming girls. Regarding digital skills, at 43% underachievers in 2023, the EU average is at present far from the target of less than 15% underachievers by 2030.

At European level, initiatives such as **Pathways to School Success[38]** seek to address these challenges and achieve success at school for all children, no matter their personal background or story. The 2022 Council Recommendation on Pathways to School Success proposes a **new policy framework,** based on a whole-system, whole-school approach perspective, aimed at guiding policy makers and education practitioners. The

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[33] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32022H0627%2802%29

[34] https://europass.europa.eu/en/stakeholders/european-digital-credentials

[35] While various definitions of basic skills exist, for the purpose of this call they are to be understood according to the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), which measures 15-year-olds' ability to use their reading, mathematics and science knowledge and skills to meet real-life challenges. In this context, underachievers are those 15-year-old pupils, still in education, who fail to reach OECD PISA proficiency level 2, which is considered to be the minimum level necessary to participate successfully in society.

[36] https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/improving-quality/key-competences

[37] European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, The twin challenge of equity and excellence in basic skills in the EU – An EU comparative analysis of the PISA 2022 results, Publications Office of the European Union, 2024, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/881521

[38] https://education.ec.europa.eu/education-levels/school-education/pathways-to-school-success

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framework outlines conditions for effective action, key measures, to be promoted at school, local, regional and national levels as well as specific actions for supporting school leaders, teachers, trainers and other educational staff.

Having in mind the measures within Pathways to School Success framework coupled with the need for a renewed and enhanced focus on basic skills, the objective of this Topic is to support EU countries in their efforts to enhancing foundational literacy, maths, science and digital skills by implementing effective teaching, learning and assessment practices, with a specific focus on foundational years (Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) and primary education).

Based on existing evidence, the projects should look at teaching, learning and assessment practices (including interdisciplinary approaches) which have been assessed and have a demonstrated impact in foundational years (ECEC and primary education), and see how these can be further scaled-up, in particular in ECEC settings and schools with a high concentration of children from vulnerable groups, including low socio-economic background and children with different home languages.

A strong focus should be placed on involving parents/caregivers and families, including through support to parenting, home reading programmes, as well as on the involvement of other stakeholders, particularly public libraries, scientific institutions, and NGOs, non-formal learning providers (such as EU STEM Coalition national platforms), businesses, local authorities.

Projects should place a special attention on Initial Teacher Education and Continuing Professional Development programmes and how they can enhance educators' understanding of young children's competence development in literacy/communication, mathematics, sciences and digital, and to understand how to assess this development.

Specific activities that can be funded (scope)

Projects should address at least two of the activities described below with focus on basic skills acquisition. Projects can propose additional activities.

- Building on available national and international research, identify effective practices for teaching, learning and assessment to enhance literacy, math, science, and digital skills and develop a scale-up strategy. Selected practices should have been properly assessed and be supported by available evidence of impact. Innovative and differentiated approaches to basic skills teaching, learning and assessment should be prioritised. Special attention should be given to practices with a demonstrated impact on foundational years (early childhood education and care and primary education) and on children from vulnerable groups, including low socio-economic background and children with different home languages;
- Pilot the selected practices on an adequate sample of school and ECEC settings and create networking opportunities among the participants to the pilot;
- Develop and implement guidance for educators in employing and combining effective and innovative approaches to basic skills teaching, learning and assessment. Guidance should also be provided to address gender issues in basic skills acquisition (including low expectations regarding boys' achievements) and gender-sensitive teaching practices that are more conducive to motivating and engaging boys and girls;
- Develop guidance and material to build schools' capacity to work in a whole school approach by placing a strong focus on involving parents/caregivers and communities, for example through support to parenting, home reading programmes, as well as on involving other stakeholders, in particular public

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libraries, scientific institutions, youth organisations, NGOs, non-formal learning providers (such as [EU STEM Coalition](#) national platform), businesses, local authorities, etc. Public authorities at local and regional levels (eg: municipalities) could play a significant role in building schools' capacity;

- Support professional development of school leaders, teachers, ECEC professionals and other educators, equipping them with adequate competences, pedagogical approaches and tools, by placing a special attention on Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programmes, professional learning communities, coaching, mentoring, etc. Such professional learning opportunities should help enhance educators' awareness of young children's literacy/communication and mathematical and scientific competence development, of risk and protective factors, of the crucial role of wellbeing at school on academic achievement, and build capacity to addressing different types of learning needs, teaching in multilingual and multicultural contexts, etc;
- Assess the transferability of the piloted practices and the sustainability of the project results after the end of the project.

Expected impact

- Enhanced basic skills of learners in selected schools;
- Increased capacity of schools to work in a whole school approach to support acquisition of basic skills of their learners;
- Increased capacity of teachers and educators to address challenges related to basic skills acquisition.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET)

Vocational Education and Training (VET) projects support the implementation of the principles and objectives of the [European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan](#), the [European Skills Agenda](#), the [Council Recommendation on vocational education and training for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience](#), and the [Osnabrück Declaration on vocational education and training as an enabler of recovery and just transitions to digital and green economies](#).

Topic 2-ERASMUS-EDU-2025-PI-FORWARD-VET-VE: Vocational Education and Training: Promote an enabling and supportive environment for vocational excellence at national and/or regional level

Themes and priorities (scope)

The Erasmus+ flagship initiative on **Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs)** aims to be a driving force for reforms in the Vocational Educational and Training (VET) sector. The main objective is to ensure high quality skills that lead to quality employment and career-long opportunities, swiftly responding to the needs of an innovative, inclusive, and sustainable economy as well as to social needs, and contributing to increasing the attractiveness of VET.

The initiative is closely aligned with the European Skills Agenda and the ambitions for the VET sector as agreed between the Member States in the 2020 Council Recommendation on VET.

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The Centres of Vocational Excellence initiative support "upward convergence" on VET excellence through transnational partnerships, increasing the quality and effectiveness of VET in the participating regions and setting inspiring standards in the broader international community.

The CoVEs include a broad spectrum of stakeholders, from VET providers and local and regional authorities to businesses and other employers, social partners, universities of applied sciences, etc. A crucial feature of the CoVEs is that they are based on partnerships that develop local "skills ecosystems" to provide high quality vocational skills to young people and adults, and contribute to regional development, innovation, industrial clusters, smart specialisation strategies and social inclusion.

The projects should aim at promoting an **enabling and supportive environment for vocational excellence at national and/or regional level** through support structures, wide dissemination of the Erasmus+ CoVE projects and their results, further developing synergies with the work of various stakeholders, also sharing similar thematic or sectoral approaches, mapping of national/regional funding opportunities and other existing policy initiatives in the countries participating.

The projects should thereby increase the impact of the individual CoVEs, and promote their sustainability and scalability beyond Erasmus+ funding. The projects could expand activities, and/or partnerships and mainstream successful CoVEs projects at national level.

To pursue this objective, a strong focus should be placed on involving public authorities and partners from ongoing or completed Erasmus+ CoVEs projects, as well as on cooperating with the European Training Foundation (ETF) and European Centre for the development of vocational training (Cedefop), to secure relevance and avoid overlaps.

Specific activities that can be funded (scope)

In particular the project should select at least **five activities** among those below (list of activities not exhaustive):

- Peer learning activities, networking, in-depth targeted analysis of national/regional frameworks for vocational excellence, set up of governance structures and advice from and to policy makers/stakeholders from the different countries;
- Support exchanges of good practices in a particular region/country and/or across the Erasmus+ CoVEs projects, with a thematic or sectoral focus, with the aim to expand activities and/or partnerships, scale up and mainstream successful projects at national level;
- Develop and implement an evidence-based methodology and/or engagement strategy, in order to secure the systemic impact of the CoVE initiative on the national and regional levels, including exploring a strong role for national and regional authorities;
- Create synergies at local/regional/national level among vocational excellence stakeholders, including with European or national initiatives;
- Promoting vocational excellence at regional and/or national level, and act as catalyst/inspiration to other stakeholders and to national and regional VET systems;
- Connect existing CoVEs to skills ecosystems / CoVEs in other economic sectors to create economies of scale and work on cross-sectoral societal challenges;
- Explore how to ensure the sustainability of the results of the CoVE projects, for example recognition of teaching and learning provisions, applying different

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approaches, in line with relevant national requirements, to support major roll out of the courses at national, regional level to learners and staff, etc.

Expected impact

The projects will foster vocational excellence impact, visibility, promotion, at national, regional, local level through effective framework conditions and activities. They should increase the link between vocational excellence initiatives and national and regional policies. Cooperation among ongoing and completed Erasmus+ Centres of Vocational Excellence projects will also be strengthened.

Topic 3-ERASMUS-EDU-2025-PI-FORWARD-VET-QM: Vocational Education and Training: Development of joint VET qualifications and modules

Themes and priorities (scope)

The objectives of this Topic are to contribute to:

- Removing barriers to internal mobility for work and study purposes, facilitating portability, automatic recognition of qualifications and outcomes of learning periods abroad and contributing to the EU level target of 12% VET mobility participation by 2030;
- Developing a highly skilled, qualified and mobile workforce, opening up opportunities for learners, workers and businesses;
- Strengthening the quality, relevance and attractiveness of VET by supporting joint developments.

The specific objective of the Topic is to support the development and delivery of joint VET qualifications and/or modules that are part of qualifications, or the improvement of existing ones, thus facilitating the mutual recognition of qualifications and learning outcomes and contributing to removing barriers to work and study mobility within the EU. The joint qualifications and/or modules will include a work-based learning component and a mobility window for a certain number of VET learners enrolled in programmes with vocational orientation at ISCED level 3 or 4. Furthermore they are aimed at creating rotation mobility schemes enabling exchanges among the project partners to ensure the mutual automatic recognition of the joint VET qualifications and/or modules among the participating organisations.

Joint VET qualifications and modules have the potential to address common emerging and fast changing skills needs in various sectors and contribute to addressing labour shortages in the EU. Moreover, they can help remove barriers to internal mobility and the single market, while helping reduce persistent unemployment in some regions and contribute to reaching the VET mobility target set in the Council Recommendation on Europe on the Move.

Applicants could base the development of the transnational joint qualifications/modules on existing evidence on the emerging and fast changing skills needs for concrete professions (including using results of Blueprint projects, EU skills academies, Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs), EU sectoral strategies, etc.) or develop such evidence as part of the projects.

Joint qualification (or module) means that the same learning outcomes are pursued in the programmes of the participating entities and that the qualification is part of the register of the officially recognized national or regional qualifications in at least one of the EU countries.

To pursue these objectives, a strong focus should be placed on engaging with national or regional authorities in charge of qualifications and recognition, as well as on involving VET providers offering programmes at ISCED level 3 or/and 4.

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Specific activities that can be funded (scope)

Projects should implement all the activities listed below:

- Development of joint transnational qualifications and/or modules [based on the identified skills needs] - the qualifications and/or modules can target a certain trade or can develop multi-disciplinary content, they should not only include job-specific skills, but also content related to basic skills and transversal competences;
- Test the newly developed or adopted qualification and/or modules through exchanges of teachers and trainers among project partners;
- Deploy the joint qualifications and/or modules in a mobility activity of VET learners to be organised on a rotation principle among the project partners; integrate the joint training module(s) in the VET programme curricula (for example as a mobility window) and cooperate with qualification authority(ies) on this matter;
- Certify (national or regional certification rules and Europass Mobility using the European Digital Credentials for Learning infrastructure) and automatically recognise the learning outcomes of the mobility period abroad of the participants.

Additional activities are possible, for example the joint development or adaption of digitalised learning and training content and/or assessment (including using results of Blueprint projects, EU skills academies, CoVEs).

Projects could cover, as relevant, shortage occupations as listed in the Annex of the Commission proposal for the Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing an EU Talent Pool.[39]

Expected impact

The projects will contribute to addressing labour shortages in the EU and facilitate the removal of barriers to internal mobility and the single market, also fostering mutual trust and the recognition of qualifications or modules across countries.

ADULT LEARNING

Projects under this area address the adult learning sector. They support the implementation of the principles and objectives of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan, the European Skills Agenda and in particular the Council Recommendation on individual learning accounts, the initiative on the Pact for Skills and the Council Resolution on a new European agenda for adult learning 2021-2030.

Topic 4-ERASMUS-EDU-2025-PI-FORWARD-ADULT-PS: Adult Learning: Support to the Pact for Skills

Themes and priorities (scope)

The Pact for Skills is the flagship action of the 2020 European Skills Agenda. The Pact is firmly anchored in the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights and supports

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[39] https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/dc8eaed5-f8f0-43b9-97cb-03c84f0a463a_en?filename=Regulation%20establishing%20an%20EU%20Talent%20Pool-annex_en.pdf

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the goals of the Green Deal and the digital transformation, as set out in the Commission communication "A strong Social Europe for Just Transitions". It also contributes to reaching the EU target of 60% of adults participating in training every year by 2030, as set out in the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan.

Projects should include only partners that are registered members of the Pact for Skills.

Specific activities that can be funded (scope)

Projects should implement all the activities listed below:

- Develop and support governance structures and cooperation tools, connecting members of the Pact for Skills;
- Develop and support cooperation of large companies with SMEs, and among SMEs, in the field of training;
- Support the definition, implementation, and monitoring of concrete commitments under the Pact for Skills, such as:
  - ✓ gathering skills intelligence;
  - ✓ upskilling of low-skilled people;
  - ✓ reskilling people for new tasks in their jobs;
  - ✓ reskilling of people from other sectors with skills transferable into the own sector.

Expected impact

The projects shall reinforce cooperation between individual registered members of the Pact for Skills and between registered members of the various partnerships under the Pact for Skills resulting in better skills intelligence and effective upskilling and reskilling of people in work and of people who thus become employable. The projects will improve training provision along value chains within the Pact, particularly for SMEs.

Topic 5 - ERASMUS-EDU-2025-PI-FORWARD-ADULT-CG: Adult Learning: Improving career guidance to support adults' participation in training

Themes and priorities (scope)

The **European Year of Skills** has spread the message that lifelong skills development should become the norm for everybody, namely to respond to labour and skills shortages, which put at risk the European economy and the European social model. Three quarters (78%) of small and medium-sized businesses said in a recent Eurobarometer survey that they find it difficult to recruit the talent they need.[40] At the same time, 21% of people aged 20-64 in the EU are currently inactive and require targeted assistance to enter the labour market.

Participation of adults in learning remains too limited. The **2022 Adult Education Survey** found that 39.5% of adults participated in training in the previous 12 months, only 2 percentage points better than in 2016 and very far from the target that at least 60% of all adults should be participating in training every year by 2030.

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[40] https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2961

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A key success factor to ensure that adults are able to engage in up- and reskilling is that they have **access to guidance and counselling** enabling them to make informed choices about up- and reskilling opportunities. This is especially important for persons without a functional level of basic skills who risk getting stuck in a "low skills-poor jobs trap". Access to career guidance is also very important for people working for small and micro-enterprises who have less opportunities to participate in training. At the same time, career guidance and counselling are not only an asset for workers. They also are of the utmost importance to help companies struggling with labour shortages and to face the triple transition in Europe.

Projects under this Topic will identify and test methods and mechanisms to improve guidance and counselling services to adults, with a particular focus on reaching out to and supporting workers in small and micro-enterprises. Projects can address up- and reskilling for all levels of staff, including workers with low basic skills, but also management. Ideally, projects should devise approaches that have the potential of becoming mainstreamed.

Specific activities that can be funded (scope)

Main activities under this Topic could involve (non-exhaustive list):

- Provision of coordinated services (whether in person or online) open to all adults and organisations (in particular SMEs and micro-enterprises) through 'one-stop-shops', offering skills assessment, directing individuals (and groups of individuals) to tailor-made learning options, with validation of the acquired skills;
- Improvement of the career management skills of individuals, which will help them to navigate smoothly through different learning and work opportunities, i.e. to help people learn the necessary knowledge in order to make them more autonomous in their career choices and better adapt to some of the changes in the labour market during their working lives;
- Support to employers, especially small and micro-enterprises, to identify which skills their enterprises will need and how they can support their employees to assess and acquire these skills;
- Reinforcement of career guidance counsellors' training and skills development so that they can support individuals to unlock their full potential;
- Making use of skills intelligence and digital tools, including artificial intelligence, in career guidance to capitalise on new efficiencies and scale;
- Testing of such tools in combination with in-person guidance and counselling methods, on a sample of users.

Expected impact

- Higher participation rate of adults in lifelong learning;
- Strategies on ways to improve career guidance and counselling to support adults to make informed choices about up- and reskilling opportunities and to improve their career management skills;
- Action plans for career guidance and counselling solutions;
- Models for enhanced career guidance, counselling and mentoring for the up- and reskilling of adults, especially for people without a functional level of basic skills and for workers in small and micro-enterprises;
- Improved reflections on the specific up- and reskilling needs of SMEs and micro-enterprises;
- Availability of tried and tested tools that can be upscaled, to link automatised and in-person career guidance services.

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Projects should result in effective structural collaboration frameworks where all actors involved share the responsibility for adult skills development.

DIGITAL EDUCATION

Projects under this area can address different educational sectors or bridge educational sectors, and must support high quality and inclusive digital education, in line with the Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027[41].

Various initiatives at EU level[42] aim to address challenges of the digital transition and meet the ever-increasing demand for digital skills. The Digital Compass[43] and the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan[44] set ambitious targets to support EU Member States in digital skills development in a lifelong learning perspective. They aim to ensure that 80% of adults have at least basic digital skills and that 20 million ICT specialists are employed in the EU by 2030, with more women. These targets are reflected in the decision on the Digital Decade policy programme 2030[45] and are complemented by a target set in the European Education Area[46] of reducing the rate of eight-grader low achievers in computer and information literacy to less than 15% by 2030. However, key indicators show that there still is a long way to go to achieve the digital skills targets:

- *44% of EU citizens lack basic digital skills[47];*
- *Almost 10 million ICT specialists were employed in 2023, out of which 81% were male[48];*
- *34% of students still underachieve in computer and information literacy[49];*
- *Only 39% of teachers feel well prepared to use digital technologies for teaching[50.]*

Digital transformation is especially important for education and training, youth and sport, as a systematic process of change where technology is used to enable new processes and methods, with the goal to increase quality and inclusiveness of education, training and youth work. Purposeful use of digital and other emerging technologies provides new learning and communication possibilities, enhances information access, and allows for modern pedagogical approaches for educators to further improve teaching and learners to improve their learning, in both formal and non-formal settings. Having digital infrastructure and equipment on one hand, and digital skills on the other are a prerequisite for successful digital education, training youth work.

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[41] https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/digital-education/action-plan

[42] A Europe fit for the digital age - European Commission (europa.eu); AI Act | Shaping Europe's digital future (europa.eu); Data protection in the EU - European Commission (europa.eu); The EU's Digital Services Act (europa.eu); A European strategy for a better internet for kids (BIK+) | Shaping Europe's digital future (europa.eu)

[43] COM(2021) 118 final.

[44] COM/2021/102 final.

[45] Decision (EU) 2022/2481, 14.12.2022.

[46] 2021/C 66/01.

[47] Digitalisation in Europe - 2024 edition - Eurostat (europa.eu)

[48] Ibid

[49] 2.2 Low achieving eight graders in digital skills.pdf (europa.eu)

[50] TALIS - The OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey - OECD

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Education and training are key for personal development, social cohesion, competitiveness, and innovation. The Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027[51] is the main European Commission flagship initiative to make education and training fit for the digital age. It covers all formal education and training, in a life-long learning perspective, and all levels of digital skills (from basic to advanced), including informal and non-formal learning and youth work for digital skills development.

The two strategic priorities of the Digital Education Action Plan aim at:

- o *developing a high performing digital education ecosystem; and*
- o *enhancing digital skills and competences for the digital transformation.*

These priorities have been further developed through two Council recommendations adopted in November 2023. The Council Recommendation on the key enabling factors for successful digital education and training[52] outlines the vision for universal access to inclusive and high-quality digital education and training for everyone in formal education and training and proposes a coherent framework for investment, governance and capacity building. The Council Recommendation on improving the provision of digital skills and competences in education and training[53] aims to support Member States in facing common challenges related to the low level of digital skills in different segments of the population.

Topic 6-ERASMUS-EDU-2025-PI-FORWARD-DIGITAL-SC: Digital education: Assessment of digital skills and competences

Themes and priorities (scope)

In today's technology-driven world, digital skills have become a basic skill, on a par with literacy, numeracy, and science. At a societal level, a digitally skilled population can impact economic growth, technological advancement, sustainability development, social engagement that leads to enhancing living standards. In education and training, embedding digital skills in the curriculum from an early age prepares students not just for the jobs of the future, but also for real life problems and challenges.

While all EU countries include digital skills development in education and training, only half of them have developed assessment procedures for digital skills at primary or secondary school level, with some countries not testing digital skills at all. Despite the cross-curricular nature of digital skills, testing is not homogeneous, and tends to preferentially involve students in certain disciplines, such as STEM.

Projects under this Topic will focus on the assessment of individual students' digital skills at primary and/or secondary level including VET, the end of the secondary education cycle, and explore the feasibility of assessment practices that are explicit about the level of digital skills, including by referencing it clearly to DigComp, in a variety of contexts (e.g. if digital skills are developed through a specific subject or in a transversal way). These projects will allow to identify factors and criteria which are necessary for developing a comprehensive and robust assessment methodology for digital skills, thus supporting the creation of a progression model to assess digital skills.

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[51] COM(2020) 624 final.
[52] https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-15741-2023-INIT/en/pdf
[53] https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-15740-2023-INIT/en/pdf

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Specific activities that can be funded (scope)

- Methodologically robust research and analysis leading to an assessment framework for digital skills;
- Development of questionnaires or structured assessment methods for evaluating digital skills;
- Implementation of assessment methods for digital skills and analysis of the results;
- Design and pilot of assessment frameworks for digital skills which are also referenced to the latest version of DigComp;
- Transfer of innovative methods or tools (across countries, policy sectors or target groups) for the assessment of digital skills;
- A Mapping of assessment methods and policies in a variety of contexts and in different MS;
- a reassessment of monitoring systems: mappings of, or proposal for innovative monitoring and evaluation frameworks and methodologies to gauge and evaluate the effectiveness of the assessment methodologies;
- Analysis of transferability of the project results and sustainability of its results after the end of the project (including in other sectors of education and training);
- Dissemination and networking events (sectoral or cross sectoral) aiming for further exposure of the project work and results and for increasing possibility for transferability.

Expected impact (deliverables)

- A framework for assessing individual student skills attainment levels;
- A repository of items (i.e. questions or question areas) to assess digital skills;
- A methodology for the usability of the assessment framework in a diversity of contexts (e.g. regardless of when/how digital skills are developed) and levels and sectors of education (primary, secondary, VET). The projects under this Topic will also consider how/if the outputs are transferable to other sectors of education and training.

Topic 7-ERASMUS-EDU-2025-PI-FORWARD-DIGITAL-AI: Digital education: Ethical and effective use of generative Artificial Intelligence systems in education and training

Themes and priorities (scope)

The rapid and widespread adoption of artificial intelligence (AI), including generative AI, has large-scale implications for education and training. The potential of generative AI practices in the coming years to transform essential cognitive practices is already tangible, and directly affects education and training systems.

Since November 2022, it will have escaped no one that the acceleration in the availability of generative AI, over and above the AI already tested with intelligent tutors or adaptive learning and personalised pathway exercises, has not only caused an increased adoption but also given rise to a rethink of how to think dynamically about the integration of AI in education.

It is therefore essential to support the adaptation of European education and training systems to the generative AI transition and to ensure the technology's adoption in an inclusive, effective and ethical way.

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Projects under this Topic will aim to foster the organisational readiness and capacity of education and training institutions (at any level/s) and, more broadly, education and training systems, to leverage generative AI and ensure its adoption in an effective, inclusive, human-centred and ethical way. To pursue this objective, a strong focus should be placed on involving public education and training authorities (national, regional or local)[54], to ensure higher transferability and mainstreaming potential of the outcomes of the projects.

Specific activities that can be funded (scope)

- Methodologically robust research and analysis that would lead to identifying, mapping, and analysing effective existing uses and impact of generative AI in teaching, training, learning, and assessment at any level(s) of education and training;
- Analysis to identify challenges and success factors in the deployment of generative AI;
- Design and piloting of ethical, effective, purposeful, and pedagogically underpinned use of generative AI systems in teaching, training, learning and assessment at any level(s) of education and training;
- Development of questionnaires or other assessment methods (including qualitative ones) for evaluating the ethical, effective, purposeful, and pedagogically underpinned use of generative AI systems;
- Design of evidence-based materials and structured use cases of relevant generative AI systems in education and training practices that can be disseminated and easily implemented at organisational level;
- Large-scale pilots, user experience and engagement studies in educational settings;
- In-depth interviews with educators, parents, and students, as well as policymakers and other educational stakeholders;
- Development of guidelines on the critical use of generative AI systems in education and training practices that can be disseminated and easily implemented from organisational level to a large scale;
- Evidence-based recommendations to inform further policy initiatives about ethical, effective, purposeful, and pedagogically underpinned use of generative AI systems in teaching, learning and assessment at any level(s) of education and training;
- Analysis of transferability of the project results and sustainability of its results after the end of the project (including in other sectors of education and training);
- Dissemination and networking events (sectoral or cross sectoral) aiming for further exposure of the project work and results and for increasing possibility for transferability.

Expected impact (deliverables)

- A structured and up-to-date overview and analysis of good practices in the use of generative AI systems in teaching, learning and assessment to inform Member States and stakeholders about initiatives and actions in the policy field.
- Increased understanding of the challenges and success factors of generative AI's deployment in education and training, including also compliance with relevant EU and national level legislation, and the technological and pedagogical dimension

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[54] Public education and training authorities are understood as public bodies with the mandate, responsibility and power to define and adopt systemic policy reforms in the field of education and training at their level - being local, regional or national.

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- Increased knowledge and uptake of innovative approaches, methods and practices leading to the ethical, effective, and targeted pedagogical use of AI generative systems in teaching, learning and assessment at any level(s) of education and training.
- Adoption and upscale of quality methods for the critical use of generative AI systems in education and training at organisational level.
- Evidence and practice-based policy initiatives promoting the ethical and effective adoption of generative AI systems in education and training
- Recommendations to inform further policy initiatives.

Where relevant, the projects should leverage the Ethical Guidelines on the use of AI and data in teaching and learning for educators, published in October 2022 and the Digital Competence Framework 2.2 (DigComp 2.2) which addresses the topic of citizens interacting with AI systems as part of the Digital Education Action Plan as well as previous projects in the field.

Topic 8-ERASMUS-EDU-2025-PI-FORWARD-DIGITAL-DM: Digital education: Innovative data collection and exchange approaches in primary, secondary education (including vocational education and training) for data-informed decision-making

Themes and priorities (scope)

This Topic focuses on the key role of data in primary, secondary, and vocational education. Data from learners, teachers, parents, school facilities (such as classroom and laboratories) is used to assess teaching and learning strategies (learning outcomes, teacher performance, test scores, graduation rates, etc.), and ultimately, the success of a school. Data is also used for comparative analytics purposes across districts, regions, and countries, and it also informs decision making concerning legislation, policies, funding, and innovative learning and teaching methods.

However, the methodologies and criteria to collect, aggregate, process, and synthesise educational data differs widely between schools, institutions, regions, and Member States. This makes comparing and synthesising educational data challenging, especially across Member States, and it impedes the development and implementation of comprehensive strategies for educational improvement and policy formulation.

In the 'Council Recommendation on the key enabling factors for successful digital education and training', the European Commission has stated the intention to improve the transparency and evaluate the progress in implementing digital education and training, by supporting comparative data collection, and by monitoring and reporting on progress on the enabling factors for digital education and training (taking into account Member States' national strategies).

Therefore, the European Commission wants to support forward-looking ideas, projects and activities that contribute to ethical and privacy-centric data collection methods, the facilitation of relevant data exchange, transnational collaboration agreements, the development of advanced and ethical analytical tools and methodologies, and robust data governance frameworks to ensure consistency and accuracy in collecting and analysing educational data.

Specific activities that can be funded (scope)

- Research projects and thorough needs assessments that aim to understand the requirements and challenges of data collection and analysis in the European

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school education context. This involves engaging stakeholders such as education policymakers, school administrators, teachers, students, data experts, and the providers of school and educational content management systems;

- Data governance conceptual model design projects: projects and initiatives that aim to develop frameworks that outlines the principles, processes, and structures for effectively managing data within and across school institutions: functional and technical analyses of data needs for the school education context, transnational data mappings, etc.;
- Data governance development projects for educational data that aim to establish policies, processes, and structures to ensure the effective management, protection, and use of data in the education sector;
- Evidence-based proposals for data governance policies and procedures to govern the collection, storage, sharing, and use of school education data, both on national and EU level.
- The development of frameworks and/or guidelines to support the development and implementation of educational data collection strategies, fostering consistency and accuracy in data analysis.

Expected impact

- Transnational mappings highlighting opportunities, challenges, and best practices in data collection across Member States;
- Implementation of pilot projects demonstrating the feasibility and effectiveness of regional, national, and EU-level data collection initiatives;
- Create or support transparent, secure, ethical and structured comparative data collection (methodologies) for primary, secondary, and vocational education on a EU level;
- Foster consistency and accuracy in data analysis and data driven decision making, through the development and implementation of educational data collection strategies.
- To achieve higher levels of relevant critical data exchange across school infrastructures that enable more informed decision-making in education policy at both national and EU levels (while safeguarding privacy and ethics);

3. Available budget

The estimated available call budget is **EUR 32 000 000**.

Specific budget information per group of Topics can be found in the table below:

Topic	Topic budget
Topic 1: School Education: Enhancing basic skills	**EUR 3 000 000**
Topic 2: Vocational Education and Training: Promote an enabling and supportive environment for vocational excellence at national and/or regional level Topic 3: Vocational Education and Training: Development of joint VET qualifications and modules	**EUR 8 000 000**

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Topic 4: Adult learning: Support to the Pact for Skills Topic 5: Adult learning: Improving career guidance to support adults' participation in training	**EUR 8 000 000**
Topic 6: Digital education: Assessment of digital skills and competences Topic 7: Digital education: Ethical and effective use of generative Artificial Intelligence systems in education and training' Topic 8: Digital education: Innovative data collection and exchange approaches in primary, secondary education (including vocational education and training) for data-informed decision-making	**EUR 13 000 000**

The availability of the call budget still depends on the final adoption of the budget 2025 by the EU budgetary authority.

We reserve the right not to award all available funds or to redistribute them between the call Topics, depending on the proposals received and the results of the evaluation.

4. Timetable and deadlines

Timetable and deadlines (indicative)	
Call opening:	18 December 2024
Deadline for submission:	27 May 2025 – 17:00:00 CET (Brussels)
Evaluation:	June 2025 - September 2025
Information on evaluation results:	November 2025
GA signature:	February 2026

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 Calls for proposals 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:

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– **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 *(template to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed, assembled and re-uploaded)*

– **Part C** — contains the project's contribution to EU programme key performance indicators *(to be filled in directly online)*

– **Mandatory annexes and supporting documents** *(templates to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed, assembled and re-uploaded)*:

▪ **Detailed budget table/calculator**

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).

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 all 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** (please check carefully the layout of the documents uploaded).

Proposals are limited to maximum **70 pages** (Part B). 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)

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

• be legal entities (public or private bodies) active in the fields of education and training, research and innovation or in the world of work. For Topic 4 '*Adult Learning: Support to the Pact for Skills*', these bodies should also be registered

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members of the Pact for skills[55];

- be established in one of the eligible countries, i.e.:
    - **Erasmus+ Programme Countries:**
        - EU Member States (including overseas countries and territories (OCTs))
        - non-EU countries:
            - listed EEA countries and countries associated to the Erasmus+ Programme (list of participating countries)
- for higher education institutions (HEIs) established in Erasmus+ Programme Countries *(see above)*: be holders of the ECHE certificate (Erasmus Charter for Higher Education).

Organisations from third countries not associated to the Programme can only be involved as associated partners (not as beneficiaries and affiliated entities).

Exception: organisations from Belarus and the Russian Federation are not eligible to participate in this action.

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. NOTE: the registration in the Participant Register is completely separate from the registration as a member of the Pact for Skills required under the Topic 4 'Adult Learning: Support to the Pact for Skills'.

Other entities may participate in other consortium roles, such as associated partners, subcontractors, third parties giving in-kind contributions, etc. *(see section 13)*.

Specific cases and definitions

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 NOT eligible. 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 persons[56].

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'[57]. ⚠ Please note that

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[55] https://pact-for-skills.ec.europa.eu/about/pact-skills-members_en

[56] See Article 200(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation 2024/2509.

[57] For the definitions, see Articles 190(2) and 200(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation 2024/2509.

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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 for participation in the programme *(see list of participating countries above)* may participate in the call and can sign grants if the negotiations are concluded before grant signature and if the association covers the call (i.e. is retroactive and covers both the part of the programme and the year when the call was launched).

EU restrictive measures — Special rules apply for entities subject to EU restrictive measures under Article 29 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) and Article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU)[58] . 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).

EU conditionality measures — Special rules apply for entities subject to measures adopted on the basis of EU Regulation 2020/2092[59]. Such entities are not eligible to participate in any funded role (beneficiaries, affiliated entities, subcontractors, recipients of financial support to third parties, etc). Currently such measures are in place for Hungarian public interest trusts established under the Hungarian Act IX of 2021 or any entity they maintain (see Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/2506, as of 16 December 2022).

ⓘ For more information, *see Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment*.

Consortium composition

Proposals must be submitted by a consortium of at least 3 applicants (beneficiaries, not affiliated entities), from a minimum of 3 EU Member States or third countries associated to the Programme.

The below Topics have the following additional eligibility requirements:

- Under Topic 2 '*Vocational Education and Training: Promote an enabling and supportive environment for vocational excellence at national and/or regional level*', at least 3 applicants (beneficiaries, not affiliated entities) must be beneficiaries (or affiliated entities) of ongoing or completed Erasmus+ CoVE projects[60];

- Under Topic 3 '*Vocational Education and Training: Development of joint VET qualifications and modules'*, at least 2 applicants (beneficiary, not affiliated entity) must be a VET provider offering qualifications programmes at EQF ISCED level 3-4;

- Under *Topic 7 'Digital education: Ethical and effective use of generative Artificial Intelligence systems in education and training'* at least 1 applicant (beneficiary, not affiliated entity) must be a public education and training authority at national, regional or local level. Public education and training authorities are understood as public bodies with the mandate, responsibility, and power to

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[58] 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.

[59] Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2092 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2020 on a general regime of conditionality for the protection of the Union budget (OJ L 325, 20.12.2022, p. 94).

[60] Including 2019 Call Sector skills alliances 2019 - LOT 1: SECTOR SKILLS ALLIANCES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SECTORAL APPROACHES THROUGH "PLATFORMS OF VOCATIONAL EXCELLENCE and 2020 KA3 Call – Support for Policy Reform CENTRES OF VOCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

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define and adopt systemic policy reforms in the field of education and training at their level - being local, regional or national.

Affiliated entities and associated partners do not count towards the minimum eligibility criteria for the consortium composition, and can not be coordinator.

Eligible activities

Applications will only be considered eligible if their content corresponds wholly (or at least in part) to the Topic description for which they are submitted.

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.)*. Projects must also respect EU values and European Commission policy regarding reputational matters (*e.g. activities involving capacity building, policy support, awareness raising, communication, dissemination, etc*)[61].

Financial support to third parties is not allowed.

Geographic location (target countries)

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

Duration

Projects should normally range between 24 and 36 months.

Extensions are possible, if duly justified and through an amendment.

Ethics

Projects must comply with:

   − highest ethical standards and

   − applicable EU, international and national law.

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 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

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61   See, for instance, Guidance on funding for activities related to the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of Union legislation and policy.

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account other aspects, such as dependency on EU funding and deficit and revenue in previous years.

The check will normally be done for the coordinators, 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 responsibility for all beneficiaries or joint and several liability of affiliated entities *(see below, section 10)*

- prefinancing paid in instalments

- (one or more) prefinancing guarantees *(see below, section 10)*

or

- propose no prefinancing

- 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.

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.

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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 participate[62]:

– 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 misconduct[63] (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);

– 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).

– intentionally and without proper justification resisted[64] an investigation, check or audit carried out by an EU authorising officer (or their representative or auditor), OLAF, the EPPO, or the European Court of Auditors.

Applicants will also be rejected if it turns out that[65]:

– during the award procedure they misrepresented information required as a condition for participating or failed to supply that information

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[62] See Articles 138 and 143 of EU Financial Regulation 2024/2509.

[63] 'Professional misconduct' includes, in particular, the following: violation of ethical standards of the profession; wrongful conduct with impact on professional credibility; breach of generally accepted professional ethical standards; false declarations/misrepresentation of information; participation in a cartel or other agreement distorting competition; violation of IPR; attempting to influence decision-making processes by taking advantage, through misrepresentation, of a conflict of interests, or to obtain confidential information from public authorities to gain an advantage; incitement to discrimination, hatred or violence or similar activities contrary to the EU values where negatively affecting or risking to affect the performance of a legal commitment.

[64] 'Resisting an investigation, check or audit' means carrying out actions with the goal or effect of preventing, hindering or delaying the conduct of any of the activities needed to perform the investigation, check or audit, such as refusing to grant the necessary access to its premises or any other areas used for business purposes, concealing or refusing to disclose information or providing false information.

[65] See Article 143 EU Financial Regulation 2024/2509.

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– 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 formal requirements (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.

⚠ 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. Full 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

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opening/access *(see also Funding & Tenders Portal Terms and Conditions)*. Please also be aware that for complaints submitted electronically, there may be character limitations.

9. Award criteria

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

1. Relevance *(maximum 30 points)*	
Relevance of the project	**Background and general objectives** • **Link to EU policy and initiatives**: the proposal establishes and develops a project that supports a forward-looking idea at EU level, taking into account and fostering existing EU tools and initiatives (if relevant). The proposal also supports the implementation of EU policies, EU Frameworks, and EU initiatives; • **Purpose**: the proposal is relevant to the general and specific objectives of the Action, as well as to the themes and priorities of the addressed Topic (see section 2 above); • **EU values**: the proposal is relevant for 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. **Needs analysis and specific objectives** • **Scope**: the proposal addresses **one of the Topics** of the Action (see section 2 above). The extent to which the proposal consistently integrates the activities, research or events as specified in section 2 above for the addressed Topic ; • **Consistency**: the objectives and activities are based on a comprehensive, well-grounded and high-quality problems and needs analysis. The objectives are clearly defined, realistic and the activities address well the findings of the needs analysis to which they clearly link. **Complementarity with other actions and innovation – European added value** • **Innovation**: the proposal considers state-of-the-art methods and techniques, and leads to innovative results and solutions that can be mainstreamed into one or more economic or educational sectors; • **European added value**: The proposal has a clear European added value based on transnational cooperation which allows achieving results that would not be achieved at country level

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	alone, and there is potential for transferring results to countries not involved in the proposal or other sectors.
2. Quality *(maximum 40 points)*	
2.1. Project design and implementation *maximum 20 points*	**Concept and methodology** • **Coherence**: the overall project design ensures consistency between project objectives, methodology, activities, duration and the budget proposed. The proposal presents a coherent and comprehensive set of appropriate activities to meet the identified needs and lead to the expected results; • **Structure**: the work programme is clear and complete (covering appropriate project phases: preparation, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, dissemination and exploitation). It comprises an ex ante and ex post (both within the project duration) analysis of the introduced innovation in education and training; • **Methodology**: the quality and feasibility of the methodology proposed and its appropriateness for producing the expected results is demonstrated (using EU instruments whenever relevant to the project). **Project management, quality assurance and monitoring and evaluation strategy** • **Management**: solid management arrangements are foreseen. Timelines, organisation, coordination, supervision and other responsibilities are well defined and realistic. The proposal allocates appropriate resources to each activity; • **Improving quality and effectiveness:** the proposal clearly embeds its innovation into activities and results which improve the quality, efficiency and equity of education and training systems; **Cost effectiveness and financial management** • **Budget:** the budget provides for appropriate resources necessary for success, is clearly linked to the proposal activities, and is neither overestimated nor underestimated; • **Financial and quality control**: control measures (continuous quality evaluation and training, peer reviews, benchmarking activities, etc.) and quality indicators ensure that the project implementation is of high quality and cost-efficient. Challenges/risks of the project are clearly identified and mitigating actions properly addressed. The work programme includes an independent external quality assessment at mid-term and a few months before the project end in order to enable potential project adjustments.
2.2 Partnership and cooperation arrangements *maximum 20 points*	**Consortium set-up** • **Configuration:** the composition of the partnership is in line with the objectives of the Action, of the addressed Topic and of the project. It brings together an appropriate mix of relevant organisations with the necessary profiles, skills, experience, expertise and management support required for the successful

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delivery of the whole project. The proposal includes partners that adequately represent the sector or cross-sectoral approach concerned.

- **Commitment**: the contributions from partners are significant and pertinent. The distribution of responsibilities demonstrates the commitment and active contribution of all participating organisations in relation to their specific expertise and capacity;

- **Geographical dimension**: the partnership includes relevant partners from different geographical areas and this geographical composition is motivated.

Consortium management and decision-making

- **Tasks**: the coordinator shows high quality management and coordination of transnational networks and leadership in complex environment. Individual tasks of partners are allocated on the basis of the specific know-how of each partner. The distribution of responsibilities and tasks is clear and appropriate;

- **Collaboration/Team spirit**: an effective mechanism is proposed to ensure an efficient coordination, decision-making, communication and conflict resolution between the participating organisations, participants and any other relevant stakeholder.

3. Impact *(maximum 30 points)*

Impact and ambition

- **Exploitation**: the proposal demonstrates how the outcomes of the project will be mainstreamed at system level in one or more sectors/countries. It provides means to measure exploitation within the project lifetime and after;

- **Impact**: the proposal demonstrates the potential impact of the project, within the project's duration and beyond:
    - On the targeted groups and sector(s);
    - At system level;
    - Beyond the stakeholders directly targeted in the project, on private or public policy-drivers at local, regional, national and/or European levels.

The proposal includes measures as well as identified quantitative targets and indicators to monitor progress and assess the expected impact (short- and long-term).

Communication, dissemination and visibility

- **Dissemination**: the proposal provides a clear plan for the dissemination of results, and includes appropriate identified quantitative targets, activities, relevant timing, tools and channels to ensure that the results and benefits will be spread effectively to the right stakeholders and policy makers and drivers of innovation within and after the project's lifetime. The proposal also indicates which partners will be responsible for dissemination and demonstrates the relevant experience that they have in dissemination activities.

Sustainability and continuation

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	• **Open access**: as a general rule, and within the limits of existing national and European legal frameworks, results should be made available as open educational resources (OER) as well as on relevant professional, sectorial or competent authorities' platforms. The proposal will describe how data, materials, documents and audio-visual and social media activity produced will be made freely available and promoted through open licences, and does not contain disproportionate limitations;
	– **Sustainability**: the proposal explains how the Forward-Looking Project will be rolled out and further developed at different levels (local, regional, national). The proposal includes the design of a long-term action plan for the progressive roll-out of project deliverables after the project has finished and their incorporation into the mainstream. This plan shall be based on sustained partnerships between public authorities, education and training providers and key industry stakeholders at the appropriate level. It should include the identification of appropriate governance structures, as well as plans for scalability and financial sustainability, including the potential identification of financial resources (European, national and private) to ensure that the results and benefits achieved will have a long-term sustainability.

Award criteria		Minimum pass score	Maximum score
Relevance		15	30
Quality	Project design and implementation	10	20
	Partnership and cooperation arrangements	10	20
Impact		15	30
Overall (pass) scores		**70**	**100**

Maximum points: 100 points.

Individual thresholds per criterion: 15/30, 10/20, 10/20 and 15/30 points.

Overall threshold: 70 points.

Proposals that pass the individual thresholds AND the overall threshold will be considered for funding — within the limits of the available 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.

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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 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. A retroactive starting date can be granted exceptionally for duly justified reasons but never earlier than the proposal submission date.

Project duration: *see section 6 above*.

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 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)*.

Project budget (maximum grant amount): EUR 1 000 000 per project.

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%**.

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 [66]

Specific cost eligibility rules for this call:

− the lump sum amount must be calculated in accordance with the methodology set out in the lump sum decision and using the detailed budget table/calculator provided;

− the lump sum calculation should respect the following conditions:

  − the estimated budget must comply with the basic eligibility conditions for EU actual cost grants *(see AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement, art 6)*.

  − costs for financial support to third parties: not allowed.

Reporting and payment arrangements

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[66] Decision of 28 November 2023 authorising the use of lump sum contributions and unit contributions under the Erasmus+ Programme 2021-2027.

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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 no **interim payments**.

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 (recovery).

All payments will be made to the coordinator.

⚠ Please be aware that payments will be automatically lowered if you or 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.

Prefinancing 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 normally requested from the coordinator, for the consortium. They must be provided during grant preparation, 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)*.

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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

Consortium agreement: YesNon-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.

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Once you have an EULogin 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 Calls for proposals 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, as follows:

- 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 may 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.

Guidance on the use of generative AI tools for the preparation of the proposal

When considering the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools for the preparation of the proposal, it is imperative to exercise caution and careful consideration. The AI-generated content should be thoroughly reviewed and validated by the applicants to ensure its appropriateness and accuracy, as well as its compliance with intellectual property regulations. Applicants are fully responsible for the content of the proposal (even those parts produced by the AI tool) and must be transparent in disclosing which AI tools were used and how they were utilised.

Specifically, applicants are required to:

• Verify the accuracy, validity, and appropriateness of the content and any citations generated by the AI tool and correct any errors or inconsistencies.

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• Provide a list of sources used to generate content and citations, including those generated by the AI tool.

Double-check citations to ensure they are accurate and properly referenced.

• Be conscious of the potential for plagiarism where the AI tool may have reproduced substantial text from other sources. Check the original sources to be sure you are not plagiarizing someone else's work.

• Acknowledge the limitations of the AI tool in the proposal preparation, including the potential for bias, errors, and gaps in knowledge.

12. Help

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

- Online Manual

- Topic Q&A on the Topic page (for call-specific questions)

- Portal FAQ (for general questions).

Please also consult the Topic page regularly, since we will use it to publish call updates. (For invitations, we will contact you directly in case of a call update).

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-POLICY-SUPPORT@EC.EUROPA.EU. Please indicate clearly the reference of the call and Topic to which your question relates *(see cover page)*.

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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. In mono-beneficiary grants, the single beneficiary will automatically be coordinator.

- **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). If affiliated entities participate in your project, please do not forget to provide documents demonstrating their affiliation link to your organisation as part of your application.

- **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.

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- **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).

- **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).

- **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 cumulation of funding/no double funding —** It is strictly prohibited to cumulate funding from the EU budget (except under "EU Synergies actions"). Outside such Synergies actions, any given action may receive only ONE grant from the EU budget and cost items may under NO circumstances be declared to two different EU actions. Projects must be designed as different actions, clearly delineated and separated for each grant (without overlaps).

- **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 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 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*).

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- **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:

    o beneficiary names

    o beneficiary addresses

    o the purpose for which the grant was awarded

    o 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.