

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND YOUTH

WHAT ARE THE AIMS AND PRIORITIES OF A STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP?

Strategic Partnerships aim to support the development, transfer and/or implementation of innovative practices as well as the implementation of joint initiatives promoting cooperation, peer learning and exchanges of experience at European level.

Depending on the objectives and the composition of the Strategic Partnership, projects may be of two types:

- **Strategic Partnerships supporting innovation;**

Projects are expected to develop innovative outputs, and/or engage into intensive dissemination and exploitation activities of existing and newly produced products or innovative ideas. Applicants have the possibility to request a dedicated budget for Intellectual Outputs and Multiplier Events in order to directly answer to the innovation aspect of the Action. These types of projects are open to all fields of education, training and youth.

- **Strategic Partnerships supporting exchange of good practices:**

The primary goal is to allow organisations to develop and reinforce networks, increase their capacity to operate at transnational level, share and confront ideas, practices and methods. Selected projects may also produce tangible outputs and are expected to disseminate the results of their activities, although in a way that is proportional to the aim and scope of the project. These results and activities will be co-financed through the standard budget for project management and implementation. Strategic Partnerships relevant to the field of higher education will not support these types of projects.

Irrespective from the type of project chosen by the applicant and the field impacted by the project, Strategic Partnerships are open to any type of organisation active in any field of education, training and youth or other socio-economic sectors as well as to organisations carrying out activities that are transversal to different fields (e.g. local and regional authorities, recognition and validation centres, chambers of commerce, trade organisations, guidance centres, cultural organisations). Depending on the priority and the objectives addressed by the project, Strategic Partnerships should involve the most appropriate and diverse range of partners in order to benefit from their different experiences, profiles and specific expertise and to produce relevant and high quality project results.

To be funded, Strategic Partnerships must address either a) at least one horizontal priority or b) at least one specific priority relevant to the field of education, training and youth that is mostly impacted, as described below. Among these priorities, National Agencies may give more consideration to those that are particularly relevant in their national context ("European priorities in the national context"). National Agencies must duly inform potential applicants through their official websites.

HORIZONTAL PRIORITIES

- Achievement of relevant and high quality skills and competences: supporting individuals in acquiring and developing key competences - including basic, transversal and soft skills, entrepreneurial, foreign language and digital skills - in order to foster employability, socio-educational and professional development. The Programme will also support actions that develop or disseminate tools for assessment of such competences, as well as actions that apply the "learning outcomes" approaches in carrying out education, training and youth activities or assessing their quality and relevance.
- Social inclusion: priority will be given to actions that promote - in particular through innovative integrated approaches - inclusion, diversity, equality, gender-balance and non-discrimination in education, training and youth activities. The Programme will support projects that aim to: 1) foster the development of social, civic, intercultural competences, media literacy and critical thinking⁹⁶, also combating discrimination, segregation, racism, bullying and violence; 2) enhance the access, participation and learning performance of disadvantaged learners, reducing disparities in learning outcomes.
- Open and innovative practices, in a digital era: priority will be given to actions that promote innovative methods and pedagogies, participatory governance where appropriate, develop learning materials and tools as well as actions that support the effective use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in education, training and youth. This

⁹⁶ This is also in line with the Council conclusions on developing media literacy and critical thinking through education and training of 30 May 2016.

includes supporting synergies with research and innovation activities and promoting new technologies as drivers of improvements in education, training and youth policies.

- Educators: priority will be given to actions that strengthen the recruitment, selection and induction of the best and most suitable candidates for the teaching profession as well as to actions supporting the promotion of high-quality teaching, training and youth work. The Programme will support the professional development of educators (such as teachers, professors, tutors, mentors, etc.) and youth workers, especially in dealing with early school leaving, learners with disadvantaged backgrounds, diversity in classrooms and other contexts and work-based learning.
- Transparency and recognition of skills and qualifications: priority will be given to actions that facilitate employability as well as learning and labour mobility and facilitate transitions between different levels and types of education and training, between education/training and the world of work, and between different jobs. Priority will be given to actions promoting recognition as well as transparency and comparability of qualifications and learning outcomes, including through the provision of better services and information/guidance on skills and qualifications. This includes promoting innovative solutions for the recognition and supporting the validation – at local, regional, national or European/international level - of competences acquired through informal, non-formal, digital and open learning.
- Sustainable investment, performance and efficiency: priority will be given to actions supporting the effective implementation of the Investment Plan for Europe, including by promoting funding models attracting private actors and capital, as well as supporting the design of evidence-based reforms that deliver quality in education, training and youth systems and policies. Priority will also be given to actions supporting the development of innovative ways to ensure sustainable investment in all forms of learning, both formal and non-formal, including performance-based funding and cost-sharing.

FIELD-SPECIFIC PRIORITIES

In the field of higher education, priority will be given to the following actions in line with the challenges identified in the public consultation on the review of the EU Modernisation Agenda for Higher Education:

- enhancing the quality and relevance of students' knowledge and skills, promoting more student-centred learning approaches, better use of ICT, better links between higher education institutions and employers or social enterprises;
- supporting the social engagement of higher education institutions and promoting intercultural and civic competences of students;
- supporting innovation and creativity, through partnerships and inter- and transdisciplinary approaches, and strengthening the role of higher education regionally;
- ensuring education and research are mutually reinforcing, incentivising and rewarding good teaching;
- improving institutional and system-level governance, transparency and feedback mechanisms;
- promoting internationalisation, recognition and mobility, supporting changes in line with Bologna principles and tools.

In the field of school education, priority will be given to:

- Strengthening the profile(s) of the teaching professions, including teachers, school leaders and teacher educators, through actions with the following objectives: making careers more attractive; strengthening selection and recruitment; enhancing teachers' professional development and linking its different phases in a continuum from Initial Teacher Education and induction to continuing professional development; supporting teachers in dealing with diversity in the classroom (including pupils with a migrant background); supporting teachers in adopting collaborative and innovative practices; strengthening leadership in education, including the role and profile of school leaders, distributed leadership at school and teacher leadership.
- Promoting the acquisition of skills and competences, for example by: addressing underachievement in maths, science and literacy through effective and innovative teaching and assessment; promoting entrepreneurship education; fostering critical thinking especially through teaching science in environmental and/or cultural context; adopting a holistic approach to language teaching and learning, building on the diversity found in today's increasingly multilingual classrooms.
- Supporting schools to tackle early school leaving (ESL) and disadvantage and to offer quality education, enabling success for all students, from the lowest to the highest end of the academic spectrum, including children with a migrant background who might face specific (e.g. linguistic) challenges; strengthening collaboration among all actors within schools, as well as with families, and other external stakeholders; improving transition between different stages of education; supporting networking by schools which promote collaborative and holistic approaches to teaching and learning; improving evaluation and quality assurance.

- Supporting efforts to increase access to affordable and high quality early childhood education and care (ECEC). Enhancing the quality of ECEC systems and provisions in order to foster age appropriate development of children, to achieve better learning outcomes and ensure a good start in education for all - in particular through taking the EU ECEC quality framework further, as well as ensuring that the benefits of early childhood education are carried through to other school education levels, and projects that develop new models of implementation, governance and funding for ECEC.

In the field of vocational education and training (VET), priority will be given to:

- Developing VET business partnerships aimed at promoting work-based learning in all its forms, with special attention to apprenticeship training, by involving social partners, companies and VET providers and with a specific focus on the local and regional dimension in order to produce concrete results on the ground;
- In view of increasing the quality of VET provision, establishing feedback loops to adapt VET provision based on outcomes, including graduate tracking systems, as part of quality assurance systems in line with EQAVET recommendation;
- Further strengthen key competences in VET, including common methodologies for introducing those competences in curricula, as well as for acquiring, delivering and assessing the learning outcomes of those curricula. The focus should be on both initial VET and continuing VET;
- Enhancing access to training and qualifications for all, with a particular attention to the low-skilled, through continuing VET, notably by increasing quality, supply and accessibility of continuing VET, validation of non-formal and informal learning, promoting work-place learning, providing for efficient and integrated guidance services and flexible and permeable learning pathways;
- Introducing systematic approaches to, and opportunities for, the initial and continuous professional development of VET teachers, trainers and mentors in both school and work-based settings, with a focus on developing effective open and innovative education through the use of ICT.

In the field of adult education, priority will be given to:

- Improving and extending the supply of high quality learning opportunities tailored to the needs of individual low-skilled or low-qualified adults so they acquire literacy, numeracy or digital skills, including through the validation of skills acquired through informal and non-formal learning;
- Increasing the demand and take-up through effective outreach, guidance and motivation strategies which encourage low-skilled or low-qualified adults, to develop and upgrade their literacy, numeracy and digital skills;
- Extending and developing educators' competences, particularly in the effective teaching of literacy, numeracy and digital skills to low-skilled or low-qualified adults, including through the effective use of ICT.

In the field of youth, priority will be given to:

- Promoting quality youth work. Priority will be placed on projects that: support the capacity building of youth workers and in youth work; support youth workers in developing and sharing effective methods in reaching out to marginalised young people and in preventing racism and intolerance among youth; foster the inclusion and employability of young people with fewer opportunities (including NEETs) giving particular emphasis to young people at risk of marginalisation and young people with a migrant background, including newly arrived immigrants and young refugees; promote intercultural dialogue and strengthen knowledge and acceptance of diversity in society; open up youth work to cross-sectorial cooperation allowing greater synergies across all fields of actions concerning young people; easier transition of young people from youth to adulthood, in particular the integration into the labour market; developing their competences, setting quality standards, ethical and professional codes; reinforce links between policy, research and practice; promote better knowledge about the situation of young people and youth policies, recognition and validation of youth work and informal non-formal learning at European, national, regional and local levels.
- Promoting empowerment: strengthen the cross-sectorial cooperation allowing greater synergies across all fields of actions concerning young people, with a special focus on access to rights, autonomy, participation - including e-participation - and the active citizenship of young people, notably those at risk of social exclusion, through projects that: foster stronger participation of all young people in democratic and civic life in Europe; broaden and deepen political and social participation of young people at local, regional, national, European or global level; foster volunteering among young people; increase social inclusion of all young people, taking into account the underlying European values; promote diversity, intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, common values of freedom, tolerance and respect of human rights; enhance critical thinking and media literacy of young people; strengthen their sense of initiative notably in the social field; enable young people to connect with, express their opinions to and influence elected policy-makers,

public administrations, interest groups, civil society organisations, or individual citizens within any of the political or social processes affecting their lives.

- Promoting entrepreneurship education and social entrepreneurship among young people. Priority will be placed on projects in the form of transnational youth initiative that allow groups of young people to put ideas into practice, including through social enterprises, tackling challenges and identified problems in their daily lives.

WHAT ARE THE ACTIVITIES SUPPORTED IN A STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP?

Over the lifetime of a project, and depending on the type of Strategic Partnership, projects may typically realise a broad range of activities, for example:

- activities that strengthen the cooperation and networking between organisations;
- testing and/or implementation of **innovative practices** in the field of education, training and youth;
- activities that facilitate the **recognition and validation of knowledge, skills and competences** acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning;
- activities of **cooperation between regional authorities** to promote the development of education, training and youth systems and their integration in actions of local and regional development;
- activities to support learners with **disabilities/special needs** to complete education cycles and facilitate their transition into the labour market, including by combating **segregation and discrimination** in education for marginalised communities;
- activities to better prepare and deploy the education and training of professionals for **equity, diversity and inclusion** challenges in the learning environment;
- activities to promote the integration of refugees, asylum seekers and newly arrived migrants and raise awareness about the refugee crisis in Europe;
- transnational initiatives fostering entrepreneurial mind-sets and skills, to encourage **active citizenship and entrepreneurship (including social entrepreneurship)**, jointly carried out by two or more groups of young people from different countries.

Strategic Partnerships may also organise transnational **learning, teaching and training activities** of individuals, in so far as they bring added value in the achievement of the project's objectives. Some of these activities are particularly relevant in one or more fields of education, training and youth, as stated in the table below. For a more detailed description of the supported activities, see Annex I.

Type of activity	Particularly relevant for
Blended mobility of learners	All fields of education, training and youth
Short-term exchanges of groups of pupils	School education
Intensive Study Programmes	Higher education
Long-term study mobility of pupils	School education
Long-term teaching or training assignments	Higher education, VET, School and Adult education
Long-term mobility of youth workers	Youth
Short-term joint staff training events	All fields of education, training and youth

WHO CAN TAKE PART IN A STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP?

As a general rule, Strategic Partnerships target the cooperation between organisations established in Programme Countries. However, organisations from Partner Countries can be involved in a Strategic Partnership, as partners (not as applicants), if their participation brings an essential added value to the project.

In addition to the organisations formally participating in the project and receiving EU funds, Strategic Partnerships may also involve associated partners from the public or private sector who contribute to the implementation of specific project tasks/activities or support the dissemination and sustainability of the project. For contractual management issues, associated partners are not considered as part of the project partners, and they do not receive funding. However, their involvement and role in the project and different activities have to be clearly described.

WHAT ARE THE CRITERIA USED TO ASSESS A STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP?

Here below are listed the formal criteria that a Strategic Partnership must respect in order to be eligible for an Erasmus+ grant:

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Eligible participating organisations	<p>A participating organisation can be any public or private organisation, established in a Programme Country or in any Partner Country of the world (see section "Eligible Countries" in Part A of this Guide).</p> <p>For example, such organisation can be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ a higher education institution; ▪ a school/institute/educational centre (at any level, from pre-school to upper secondary education, and including vocational education and adult education); ▪ a non-profit organisation, association, NGO; ▪ a public or private, a small, medium or large enterprise (including social enterprises); ▪ a public body at local, regional or national level; ▪ a social partner or other representative of working life, including chambers of commerce, industry, craft/professional associations and trade unions; ▪ a research institute; ▪ a foundation; ▪ an inter-company training centre; ▪ enterprises providing shared training (collaborative training); ▪ a cultural organisation, library, museum; ▪ a body providing career guidance, professional counselling and information services; ▪ a body validating knowledge, skills and competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning; ▪ a European Youth NGO; ▪ a group of young people active in youth work but not necessarily in the context of a youth organisation (i.e. informal group of young people⁹⁷). <p>Higher education institutions (HEIs) established in a Programme Country must hold a valid Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE). An ECHE is not required for participating HEIs in Partner Countries, but they will have to sign up to its principles.</p>
Who can apply?	<p>Any participating organisation established in a Programme Country can be the applicant. This organisation applies on behalf of all participating organisations involved in the project.</p>
Number and profile of participating organisations	<p>A Strategic Partnership is transnational and involves minimum three organisations from three different Programme Countries. There is no maximum number of participating organisations. However, the budget for project management and implementation is capped (and equivalent to 10 participating organisations). All participating organisations must be identified at the time of applying for a grant.</p> <p>Exceptionally, the following types of projects may involve minimum two organisations from two different Programme Countries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strategic Partnerships in the youth field; ▪ Strategic Partnerships for schools only⁹⁸. This type of partnership may only apply for projects supporting exchange of good practices between organisations from Programme Countries.
Venue(s) of the activities	<p>All the activities of a Strategic Partnership must take place in the countries of the organisations participating in the project. Activities can also takes place at the seat of an Institution of the European Union, even if in the project there are no participating organisations from the country that hosts the Institution.⁹⁹</p> <p>In addition, Multiplier events can be hosted in the country of any of the associated partners involved in the Strategic Partnership, if duly justified in relation to the objectives of the project.</p>

⁹⁷ In case of an informal group, one of the members of the group assumes the role of representative and takes responsibility on behalf of the group.

⁹⁸ Depending on the country where the school is registered, a specific definition of eligible schools applies for this type of partnerships. The definition and/or a list of eligible schools is published on the website of each National Agency. In addition, please note that the contracting model for Strategic Partnerships for schools only differs from other Strategic Partnerships and is based on monobeneficiary Grant Agreements. For further details, please refer to Part C of this Guide or contact your National Agency.

⁹⁹ Seats of the Institutions of the European Union are Brussels, Frankfurt, Luxembourg, Strasbourg, and The Hague.



<p>Duration of project</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Partnerships in the field of higher education: between 24 and 36 months; ▪ Partnerships in the field of VET, school education and adult education: between 12 and 36 months; ▪ Partnerships in the youth field: between 6 and 36 months. <p>The duration has to be chosen at application stage, based on the objective of the project and on the type of activities planned over time.</p> <p>In exceptional cases, the duration of a Strategic Partnership may be extended, upon request by the beneficiary and with the agreement of the National Agency, of up to 6 months and provided that the total duration does not exceed 3 years. In such a case, the total grant will not change. In all cases, projects must end not later than 31 August 2020.</p>
<p>Where to apply?</p>	<p>To the National Agency of the country in which the applicant organisation is established¹⁰⁰.</p> <p>Per deadline, the same consortium of partners can submit only one application and to one National Agency only.</p>
<p>When to apply?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Partnerships in the fields of Higher Education, VET, School and Adult education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ applicants have to submit their grant application by 29 March at 12:00 (midday Brussels time) for projects starting between 1 September and 31 December of the same year. ▪ Partnerships in the youth field: applicants have to submit their grant application by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2 February at 12:00 (midday Brussels time) for projects starting between 1 June and 30 September of the same year; ▪ 26 April at 12:00 (midday Brussels time) for projects starting between 1 September of the same year and 31 January of the following year; ▪ 4 October at 12:00 (midday Brussels time) for projects starting between 1 February and 31 May of the following year. <p>For Strategic Partnerships in the youth field: for each of the three deadlines, National Agencies may open the deadline to both types of Strategic Partnerships (i.e. supporting innovation and supporting exchanges of good practices) or only to one type of projects. Applicants are invited to check the website of their National Agency for more precise information.</p>
<p>How to apply?</p>	<p>Please see Part C of this Guide for details on how to apply.</p>

In addition, if the Strategic Partnership foresees transnational learning, teaching and training activities, the following criteria must be respected, in addition to those listed above:

¹⁰⁰ Please note: schools under the supervision of national authorities of another country (e.g. lycée français, German schools, UK "Forces" schools) apply to the NA of the supervising country.

Eligible Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Blended mobility of pupils and learners combining short-term physical mobility (5 days to 2 months; excluding travel days) with virtual mobility; ▪ Short-term exchanges of groups of pupils (5 days to 2 months; excluding travel days); ▪ Intensive Study Programmes for HE students (5 days to 2 months; excluding travel days), with invited HE teaching staff and other relevant HE experts ; ▪ Long-term study mobility of pupils (2 to 12 months); ▪ Long-term teaching or training assignments (2 to 12 months); ▪ Long-term mobility of youth workers (2 to 12 months); ▪ Short-term joint staff training events (3 days to 2 months; excluding travel days). <p>Some of the listed activities are relevant to some fields of education, training and youth and not to others. For more information, please see section "Strategic Partnerships" of Annex I to this Guide.</p> <p>Activities of learners as well as long-term activities of staff or youth workers from or to Partner Countries are not eligible.</p> <p>Short-term joint staff training events as well as the staff from Partners Countries teaching in Intensive Study Programmes are eligible activities.</p>
Eligible participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students registered in a participating HEI and enrolled in studies leading to a recognised degree or other recognised tertiary level qualification, up to and including the level of doctorate (in Intensive Study Programmes and blended mobility activities); ▪ Apprentices, VET students, adult learners, pupils, and young people in blended mobility; ▪ Pupils of any age, accompanied by school staff (in short-term exchanges of groups of pupils); ▪ Pupils aged 14 or older enrolled in full-time education at a school participating in the Strategic Partnership (in long-term study mobility of pupils); ▪ Professors, teachers, trainers, educational and administrative staff¹⁰¹ working in the participating organisations and youth workers.
Number of participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ For Strategic Partnerships promoting exchange of good practices only: maximum 100 participants in learning, teaching and training activities per project will be funded (including accompanying persons).

Applicant organisations will be assessed against the relevant **exclusion and selection criteria**. For more information please consult Part C of this Guide.

AWARD CRITERIA

Depending on the objectives of the project, the participating organisations involved, the expected impact, and other elements, Strategic Partnerships can be of different sizes, and adapt their activities accordingly. In simplified terms, this action enables participating organisations to gain experience in international cooperation and to strengthen their capacities, but also to produce high-quality innovative deliverables. The qualitative assessment of the project will be proportional to the objectives of the cooperation and the nature of the organisations involved.

Projects will be assessed against the following criteria:

¹⁰¹ In the school education field, this includes educational staff intervening in schools such as school inspectors, school counsellors, pedagogical advisors, psychologists, etc.



<p>Relevance of the project (maximum 30 points)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The relevance of the proposal to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the objectives and the priorities of the Action (see section "What are the aims and priorities of a Strategic Partnership"). - If the proposal addresses the horizontal priority "inclusive education, training, and youth", it will be considered as highly relevant. - If the proposal addresses one or more "European Priorities in the national context", as announced by the National Agency, it will be considered as highly relevant. ▪ The extent to which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the proposal is based on a genuine and adequate needs analysis; - the objectives are clearly defined, realistic and address issues relevant to the participating organisations and target groups; - the proposal is suitable of realising synergies between different fields of education, training and youth; - the proposal is innovative and/or complementary to other initiatives already carried out by the participating organisations; - the proposal brings added value at EU level through results that would not be attained by activities carried out in a single country.
<p>Quality of the project design and implementation (maximum 20 points)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The clarity, completeness and quality of the work programme, including appropriate phases for preparation, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and dissemination; ▪ The consistency between project objectives and activities proposed; ▪ The quality and feasibility of the methodology proposed; ▪ The existence and relevance of quality control measures to ensure that the project implementation is of high quality, completed in time and on budget; ▪ The extent to which the project is cost-effective and allocates appropriate resources to each activity. <p>If the project plans training, teaching or learning activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The extent to which these activities are appropriate to the project's aims and involve the appropriate number of participants; ▪ The quality of arrangements for the recognition and validation of participants' learning outcomes, in line with European transparency and recognition tools and principles.
<p>Quality of the project team and the cooperation arrangements (maximum 20 points)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the project involves an appropriate mix of complementary participating organisations with the necessary profile, experience and expertise to successfully deliver all aspects of the project; - the distribution of responsibilities and tasks demonstrates the commitment and active contribution of all participating organisations; - if relevant for the project type, the project involves participation of organisations from different fields of education, training, youth and other socio-economic sectors; - the project involves newcomers to the Action. • The existence of effective mechanisms for coordination and communication between the participating organisations, as well as with other relevant stakeholders; • If applicable, the extent to which the involvement of a participating organisation from a Partner Country brings an essential added value to the project (if this condition is not fulfilled, the project will not be considered for selection).