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Erasmus+ Programme (ERASMUS)

Call for proposals

Partnerships for Excellence – European Universities
ERASMUS-EDU-2027-EUR-UNIV

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EUROPEAN EDUCATION AND CULTURE EXECUTIVE AGENCY (EACEA)

EACEA.A - Erasmus+, EU Solidarity Corps
EACEA.A.1 - European Higher Education

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

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0. Introduction

This is a call for proposals for EU **action grants** in the field of Higher Education 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])
- IPA III: the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (2021-2027)[3]
- Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the multi-country annual action plan in favour of the Western Balkans and Türkiye for 2024[4]

The call is launched in accordance with the Erasmus+ 2027 Work Programme[5] 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 2027 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 **topic**:

- **ERASMUS-EDU-2027-EUR-UNIV - Partnerships for Excellence – European Universities**

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, scope, activities that can be funded and the expected results (sections 1 and 2)

[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 (OJ L 189, 28.5.2021, p. 1).
[3] Regulation (EU) 2021/1529 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 September 2021 establishing the Instrument for Pre-Accession assistance (IPA III)
[4] Commission Implementing Decision C (2024) 1351 of 28.02.2024 - on the financing of the multi-country annual action plan in favour of the Western Balkans and Türkiye for 2024;
[5] Commission Implementing Decision C (2026) 7171 final of 15.10.2026 on the financing of Erasmus+: the Union Programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport and the adoption of the work programme for 2027.

  - 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.

1. Background

Heads of state and government called in the **European Council Conclusions of 14 December 2017** on the Member States, the Council and the European Commission, in line with their respective competences, to take work forward in encouraging the emergence of *'European Universities'*. The Member States' support for the initiative has been reiterated, notably in the February 2021 **Council Resolution on a 'Strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030)'** that states that *"higher education institutions will be encouraged to find new forms of deeper cooperation, namely by creating transnational alliances, (…) and through the full roll- out of the European Universities initiative."* The **Council Conclusions on the European Universities initiative**, adopted on 10 June 2021, invited Member States and the Commission to *"consider more sustainable funding instruments for the 'European Universities'*, while taking into account the diversity of the cooperation models.

European Universities are a key flagship initiative of the **European strategy for universities**, presented on 18 January 2022, which sets out the objective to expand to at least 60 European Universities with more than 500 higher education institutions by mid-2024, with an Erasmus+ indicative budget totalling EUR 1.2 billion for 2021-2027. **The Council conclusions on a European strategy empowering higher education institutions for the future of Europe,** adopted on 21 April 2022, highlight that *"unlocking the full added value of alliances of higher education institutions such as the 'European Universities' calls for further support at European and, where appropriate, national level through a step-by-step approach"* and that *"alliances of higher education institutions, such as the 'European Universities', can demonstrate the potential of extensive and long-term institutional higher education cooperation"* and *"have the potential to generate real European added value by achieving critical mass on a European scale through the long-term commitment of all involved parties"*. The

higher education sector, including European Universities alliances, have also a key role to play in the implementation of the **European Innovation Agenda** presented on 5 July 2022.

The **Union of Skills** key strategic initiative presented by the Commission in March 2025 aims to support the development of quality, inclusive and adaptable education, training and skills systems and to contribute to the Union's competitiveness and preparedness, in line with the **Commission Communications 'A Competitiveness Compass** for the EU' and the **EU Preparedness Union Strategy**.

The Union of Skills promotes four strands of action across: (1) building skills for quality lives and jobs, (2) upskilling and reskilling agile workforce for the digital and clean transitions, (3) circulating skills with the free movement across the EU, and (4) attracting, developing and retaining talent. It highlights the key role of higher education and of the European Universities alliances for delivering on these ambitious objectives. It calls for Europe *"to invest and support the pooling of resources in higher education to increase access to innovation, cutting-edge knowledge and high-level skills, including through joint study programmes within alliances of higher education institution, such as European Universities alliances".*

What are European Universities alliances? European Universities alliances are highly ambitious transnational alliances of higher education institutions developing long-term institutional structural, systemic and strategic cooperation, based on common values, and agreed principles, and aiming to achieve sustainability of their cooperation. The European Universities initiative responds to a long-term vision transforming the institutional cooperation between higher education institutions and bring it to the next level.

In 'European Universities', the term "Universities" should be understood in its broadest sense, including all types of Higher Education Institutions.

The Commission has co-created the European Universities initiative with Member States and stakeholders as of 2018 and launched under Erasmus+ six calls for proposals (2019, 2020, 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2026[6]). Currently, 65 European Universities alliances are funded under Erasmus+. Collectively, they are involving more than 570 higher education institutions of various sizes and diverse types, located across all parts of Europe. They are triggering deep levels of institutionalised cooperation, aiming for it to become systemic, structural and sustainable.

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

General objectives

The European Universities initiative is pivotal to achieving the ambitious vision of the Union of Skills. It contributes to an innovative, globally competitive, and attractive European Education Area, in full synergy with the European Research Area and the European Higher Education Area. The initiative aims to transform the institutional cooperation between higher education institutions, strengthening the European higher education system and enabling it to compete on the global scene. It will help higher education institutions to nurture, attract and retain talent, promote developing the knowledge, skills and competencies Europe needs for its competitiveness and social

[6] Call results 2019: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_19_3389
Call results 2020: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_1264
Call results 2022: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_4702
Call results 2023: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_3634
Call results 2024: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_24_3542
Call results 2026: 20 European Universities alliances selected for Erasmus+ funding | European Education Area

cohesion and upholding EU values.

The initiative mobilises all four missions of higher education institutions: education, research, innovation and service to society. European Universities alliances develop innovative models for implementing and achieving systemic, structural, and sustainable cooperation, in full respect of higher education landscape diversity. They serve as inspiration for the wider higher education sector.

As such, European Universities alliances aim at achieving the following general objectives:

- **Promote common EU values** as enshrined in article 2 of the Treaty on European Union **and a strengthened European identity** by bringing together a new generation of Europeans, who can cooperate and work within different European and global cultures, in different languages, and across borders, sectors and academic disciplines.
- **Reach a substantial leap in quality, performance, attractiveness, and international competitiveness** and enable **deep institutional transformation** of involved European higher education institutions. In this, contribute to the European knowledge economy, employment, creativity, culture, and welfare by making best use of innovative pedagogies and striving to make the knowledge square[7] a reality.

European Universities alliances are key drivers to boost the quality of higher education and where possible to strengthen its links to the research and innovation landscape in Europe and its outreach towards the society and economy.

Themes and priorities (scope)

This call for proposals will support **alliances of higher education institutions demonstrating an existing deep institutional transnational cooperation**, including - but not limited to - the European Universities alliances previously funded under the 2023 Erasmus+ call for proposals (ERASMUS-EDU-2023-EUR-UNIV), taking their cooperation to the next level and concretely materialising their long-term strategies, in line with the ambitious vision of the European Universities initiative as described in this call.

The alliances are required to submit within their proposal a **joint long - term mission statement[8]** endorsed by the relevant decision-making bodies[9] at institutional level of each member of the alliance. This mission statement will entail a **full joint strategy of the alliance** outlining the **long-term vision** to **drive systemic, structural and sustainable impact at all levels of the institutions** (e.g. governance, academics, professional/support staff and students), and **across different areas of their activities** (i.e. strong education focus with **links**, where possible, to research, innovation and service to society), building on their complementary strengths and going beyond the alliance EU funding period.

European Universities alliances supported under this call should deliver on the following

[7] A concept understood as the junction of four core domains: education, research, innovation, and service to society - Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on achieving the European Education Area by 2025. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0625&rid=4.

[8] The joint long-term mission statement should explain the proposed European University's fundamental purpose, with at least a time horizon up to 10 years after its launch. It should also explain the alliance's capacity and potential to step-by-step transform and enhance the institutionalised cooperation between higher education institutions, bring it to the next level, and explain the unique and differentiated vision of the alliance.

[9] This should be done through a signature of relevant decision-making bodies (e.g. Rector, President). The joint long-term mission statement is a single document endorsed by each partner of the alliance.

specific objectives, in line with their long-term strategies and considering the 24 months maximum duration of the grants. While addressing all objectives in line with their long-term strategies, alliances are **expected to prioritise their areas of activities** based on the experience in past years of cooperation. They may place strategic emphasis on areas where they can generate the most significant impact and/or where they see the biggest need to boost implementation of their joint long-term mission, based on their strengths, interests, and capacities. This focus must be clearly justified, demonstrating that the prioritised areas align with the alliance's long-term strategy and will contribute to future developments and measurable outcomes within the duration of the grant agreement.

Specific objective 1: Progress the development of European inter-university campuses

European Universities alliances are expected to increase the quality, attractiveness and inclusiveness of educational offerings through integrated transnational European inter-university campuses. They should broaden access to innovative, joint, and interdisciplinary learning opportunities and mobility, and increase awareness, outreach, and recognition of student and staff engagement.

In this context, building on their existing achievements and in line with their long-term strategy, the European Universities alliances should put in place concrete measures to:

- **increase seamless and inclusive mobility**, across physical, virtual, and blended formats, supported by automatic recognition of credits[10], agreed methods for grading conversion, as well as by rewarding mobility experiences; including shorter ones leading to micro-credentials and credits[11];
- **scale up mobility opportunities**, including by further implementing their joint mobility strategies and by continuing to embed mobility as a standard feature throughout their educational offerings and curricula across their partner institutions, at all levels, including at Bachelor, Master and Doctoral levels. Mobility opportunities may also be supported for example within flexible learning pathways, life-long learning and career pathways, challenge-based approaches, joint degrees, including for the implementation of the European Degree label, etc. The objective is to increase students and staff numbers benefiting from transnational mobility and internationalisation activities, progressing towards the target of at least 50% of the students within the alliance benefitting from such mobility, be it physical, virtual, or blended;
- **disseminate and upscale their innovative teaching, learning and cooperation activities** across their partner institutions, supporting the engagement of an increased share of their partner higher education institutions and an increased number of their faculties in the activities of the alliance, including through support for inter- and trans-disciplinary approaches;
- **broaden and increase accessibility and attractiveness of educational offerings** and enhance interoperability of their campuses (e.g. joint course catalogues, joint enrolment of students, implementation of European Student Card, etc.). This may include efforts to align joint programmes with the criteria set for the joint European degree label and consider, where possible, offering a joint European degree label to students graduating within the grant period;
- **upscale student and staff awareness** of their higher education institution being partner in an alliance and of the existing opportunities available and increase their outreach, participation, engagement and community building in the alliance's activities;

[10] In line with the ECTS User's Guide.
[11] In line with the Council Recommendation on a European approach to micro-credentials.

- develop robust **valorisation measures for students' and staff** engagement and participation in the alliances' activities, including by accounting it towards degree obtention and/or career progression[12]. The alliances should continue their efforts towards valorisation and rewarding of diverse career paths, enabling to strengthen the academic, teaching, research careers, ensure parity of esteem between teaching and research, and revalorising pedagogical roles in academia when it comes to academic career assessment.

Specific objective 2: Upscale and mainstream joint, high-quality and innovative educational activities

The European Universities alliances are expected to **upscale and mainstream the joint, high-quality and innovative**[13] **educational activities** and embed the innovative results, activities and approaches developed–into partner curricula. This includes integrating new pedagogies, mobility opportunities and other innovative learning formats so that they become a permanent feature of teaching and learning across institutions.

In this context, building on their existing achievements and in line with their-long term strategy, the European Universities alliances should put in place concrete measures to:

- **increase the number of students** participating in joint educational activities;
- **expand the number of partners** in the alliance participating in diverse manners in joint educational activities, also accounting for the legislative and institutional contexts at national level;
- **update existing (joint) educational activities in their partners' curricula** aiming to integrate the innovative activities developed under the alliance, including for example screening and updating joint degree programmes to align them with the joint European Degree label criteria, where possible, offer the joint European degree label to students graduating within the grant period;
- where possible, **increase the number of new high-quality, innovative joint educational programmes,** outlining the steps undertaken by the end of the granting period towards making such educational offerings concretely available for students and learners' cohorts, including by implementing the European Degree label;
- work towards **developing, testing and implementing innovative pedagogical methods**;
- commit to open science, open education and open data practices;
- **increase** the **European knowledge-creating teams** of students and academics, researchers, entrepreneurs, companies, local and regional actors, and civil society actors – depending on the overall strategy and vision of the alliance. They should work together to address societal and other challenges of their choice through interdisciplinary **challenge-based approaches.** Approaches shall allow involved parties to work jointly and across disciplines, reinforcing excellence in education and research, including through the transfer of research results back into education (e.g., in teaching, re-skilling, student traineeships, innovative activities, etc).

Such educational activities should be delivered, where relevant, in the three cycles (Bachelor, Master and Doctoral), based on inter-disciplinary and cross-sectoral approaches, integrating student-centred learning approaches and innovative

[12] In line with the Council Recommendation on attractive and sustainable careers in higher education.
[13] Such innovative learning, teaching and training activities may cover developing knowledge through trans- and inter-disciplinary approaches, research based and research informed curricula, challenge-based approaches, student traineeships in research teams, equipping students, lifelong learners and researchers with future-oriented skills and competencies such as digital skills, STEAM, sustainability, entrepreneurship and innovation, as well as critical thinking, democratic competencies, creative and transversal skills, relevant for a fast-changing labour market and profound structural transition-driven changes in markets, technologies and society.

pedagogies, including the use of the latest digital technologies and the STEAM approach[14]. Students at all levels should be empowered to customise their own flexible curricula, choosing where and what to study, within the confines of pedagogically sound and logically structured study programmes between the different higher education institutions and other members of the alliance, also considering the implementation of the European Degree label.

Specific objective 3: Upscale flexible and inclusive learning, teaching opportunities and alternative learning pathways

The European Universities alliances are expected to enhance attractiveness, and inclusiveness of study offerings by promoting interdisciplinary, cross-sectoral, and student-centred learning across all study cycles. They are also expected to support diversity, equality, to strengthen collaboration with industry, innovation ecosystems, and civil society to enhance employability, entrepreneurship, and knowledge transfer.

In this context, building on their existing achievements and in line with their-long term strategy, the European Universities alliances should put in place concrete measures to:

- **make their joint educational offer more attractive and inclusive**, including by ensuring high levels of accessibility and integrating flexible learning pathways, as well as for example fostering automatic recognition of study qualifications and learning periods abroad between partner institutions, supporting the uptake of the European Degree label;
- **support inclusiveness, equality, and diversity** of the student, academic and research bodies, including lifelong learners, part-time and non-traditional students. Access, participation and completion of under-represented and disadvantaged groups should be ensured notably through institutional and alliance level measures;
- **scale-up and increase the attractiveness of their offer** of flexible and inclusive learning opportunities and alternative learning pathways for learners at all stages of life, across disciplines and sectors. This may include widen access for non-traditional, adult and lifelong learners and reinforce their joint strategies for lifelong learning, including where relevant through small volumes of learning leading to micro-credentials[15];
- **strengthen their engagement with local innovation ecosystems**, industry, civil society and labour market actors to ensure for example their active participation in the design and implementation of educational offerings, for example by providing practical and work-based experience and traineeships supported by external mentors to foster entrepreneurial mind-sets and civic engagement, to promote knowledge transfer with surrounding ecosystems, as well as to support development of labour market relevant skills and competencies, and to amplify employability and flow of talent with other sectors.

Specific objective 4: **Deepening institutional transnational cooperation and**

[14] STEAM: Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics. The STEAM approach for learning and teaching links STEM and other fields of study. It promotes transversal skills such as digital competencies, critical thinking, problem-solving, management and entrepreneurial skills as well as cooperation with non-academic partners and responds to economic, environmental, political and social challenges. STEAM encourages the blending of knowledge that is required in the real world and natural curiosity.

[15] As defined in Council Recommendation of 16 June 2022 on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability (2022/C 243/02), 'Micro-credential' means the record of the learning outcomes that a learner has acquired following a small volume of learning. These learning outcomes will have been assessed against transparent and clearly defined criteria. Learning experiences leading to micro-credentials are designed to provide the learner with specific knowledge, skills and competences that respond to societal, personal, cultural or labour market needs. Micro-credentials are owned by the learner, can be shared and are portable. They may be stand-alone or combined into larger credentials. They are underpinned by quality assurance following agreed standards in the relevant sector or area of activity.

enhancing higher education sector capacity

The European Universities alliances are expected to consolidate governance structures already developed in earlier phases of their cooperation.

In this context, building on their existing achievements and in line with their-long term strategy, the European Universities alliances should put in place concrete measures to:

- **further deepen their institutionalised cooperation** supported by existing operational joint governance and management structures and cooperation methods to enable the implementation of the alliances' joint long-term strategies and efficient pooling of resources (financial, human, digital and physical, intellectual and administrative resources, infrastructure, data and services to ensure joint capacity and capability, reach critical mass and facilitate access to high quality and inclusive education);
- **bring current forms of cooperation and governance to the next level**, to effectively support for example the joint education provision, quality assurance methods including external formative quality assurance at the alliance level, piloting or fully implementing a common legal status for alliances;
- ensure that the cooperation model **valorises the geographical balance** set by these alliances and strong participation of each partner of the alliance, and **mobilises** engagement of associated partners;
- ensure the **democratic involvement of students** in alliances' joint governance and cooperation structures;
- continue to implement activities enabling them **to act as models of good practice** to further increase the capacity, quality, international competitiveness and attractiveness of the European higher education landscape, further demonstrating their systemic transformational potential, in line with the relevant policy objectives of the European Education Area and the Union of Skills. The alliances are expected to continue to be a driving force for higher education policy implementation and development at EU and national levels, including regarding the European Degree label, the development of a legal status for alliances of higher education institutions, as well as digitalisation and increased interoperability taking into consideration the Higher Education Interoperability Framework[16], for example regarding joint course catalogues, joint enrolment of students for joint educational activities;
- in cooperation with their national authorities, **commit to work towards relevant policy objectives of the European Education Area**, such as: multilingualism; automatic recognition of academic qualifications and learning periods abroad provided for by the participating higher education institutions within the alliance; the implementation of the European Student Card initiative; where relevant, the implementation of a whole institutional approach to sustainability and climate literacy and mainstreaming of education for sustainable development across all levels and disciplines; as well as the Bologna key commitments (quality assurance, recognition, and wherever applicable three cycle degree); commit to share relevant data with the European Higher Education Observatory. European Universities alliances are also encouraged to work together with their innovation ecosystems on common actions supporting synergies between education, research and innovation.

All these measures and actions must align with EU values and priorities, particularly the green and digital transitions, social inclusion, and the resilience of democratic societies, as well as the respect of fundamental academic values.

Activities that can be funded (scope)

Following a bottom-up approach, each alliance will have the flexibility to shape through

[16] https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/f28f2849-7cad-11f0-9af8-01aa75ed71a1

a step-by-step approach its joint work plan of activities that is the most relevant to reach their specific objectives and that will enable them to achieve the long-term vision of European Universities in line with their strategies. Their joint work plan of activities should be supported by existing efficient common management and governance structures, by a clear and robust methodological approach and concrete steps towards delivering their objectives until the end of the granting period. The feasibility of the concrete actions proposed should be reflecting a thorough assessment of the alliance's strengths, achievements, challenges and needs, and the starting points towards further developments. The joint work plan should describe how these activities will enable measurable progress towards the specific objectives and contribute to the joint long-term mission.

As the alliances should build on the past achievements and results, clear evidence of the starting points and solid methodology towards further developments, should be provided. The alliances are expected to implement activities that contribute to the achievement of specific objectives as defined in this call, in line with their long-term strategies. In this context the alliances that have already a robust maturity level of their cooperation, are expected to prioritise their activities and consider opportunities to upscale, mainstream and expand successful activities and practices embedded across their institutions. Activities shall leverage impact, outreach and engagement, increasing the alliances' level of integration, and enabling to reach the full transformational potential of the alliances for their partners and the European higher education sector. The activities shall consolidate achievements and strengthen capacity, in line with the alliances long-term strategies. They shall also aim to further leverage the contribution of associated academic and non-academic partners from the world of work and the civil society.

Expected impact

The European Universities alliances are expected to benefit to all involved higher education institutions, higher education systems, EU Member States, and the broader society and HEIs ecosystem.

European Universities alliances should trigger the following expected impacts:

• **Improve synergies** between the European Education Area, the European Research Area, and the European Higher Education Area.

• **Contribute to a more united, innovative, autonomous, competitive, cohesive, digital and sustainable Europe, open to the wider world**.

• **Increase attractiveness and competitiveness** of participating higher education institutions and of the European higher education system on the global scene by deepening transnational cooperation, offering seamless mobility of students, academics, and researchers, and by creating and sharing knowledge, developing new concepts, technologies, and innovation.

• **Promote EU values, foster respect of fundamental academic values**[17].

• **Enhance the quality and excellence dimension of higher education, research, and innovation**, while **promoting gender equality, inclusiveness, diversity, equity, geographical and social inclusiveness** of European higher education institutions, contributing to social and geographical cohesion of Europe.

• **Trigger a much deeper level of transnational institutional cooperation between higher education institutions,** leading to long-term structural institutional transformation with positive impact on higher education learning and teaching, fostering joint educational

[17] As defined by the Rome and Tirana communiques of the Bologna process.

activities and allowing for more inclusive and enhanced flexible learning approaches.

• **Improve students', staff, researchers and lifelong learners' skills and employability perspectives**, including entrepreneurial, transversal, intercultural, digital and green skills, and fuel innovation through a flow of creative talents to support the establishment and scaling up of start-ups and SMEs in Europe, notably by setting up and reinforcing technology transfer, or sharing knowledge and technology transfer capacity, supporting the development of emerging novel concepts likely to lead to breakthroughs or market creative innovations.

• **Make lifelong learning a reality in higher education**, by offering diverse education opportunities and introducing innovative and learner-centred pedagogies and educational offerings (such as micro-credentials), jointly delivered across European inter-university campuses, where a more diverse student body can build flexible learning pathways at all levels of their studies and career.

• Continue to develop **cutting-edge knowledge, skills and competences for the digital and green transitions**, fostering Europe's autonomy, competitiveness, preparedness and resilience.

• **Advance knowledge and talent nurturing, attraction and balanced circulation**, thus fostering education, social and technological innovation to address societal challenges, and build a more sustainable and resilient future.

• **Strengthen European identity** for all learners, teachers, researchers, and staff through cooperation and co-creation of knowledge within different European and global cultures, in different languages, across borders, sectors and academic disciplines.

• **Continue to drive legislative progress and catalysing the development of new instruments** and legal frameworks to accelerate the transformation of higher education institutions and cooperation across Europe.

• **Contribute to regional development and positively impact the local communities and ecosystems** through education and training, research and knowledge exchange, technology transfer, contributing to improvements in social cohesion and societal well-being.

3. Available budget

The estimated available call budget is **EUR 216 000 000**.

Additional funding of **EUR 2 400 000** has been made available for this call through the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA III)[18] to further support the participation of higher education institutions from the Western Balkans countries not associated to the Erasmus+ programme[19], leading to a total budget of **EUR 218 400 000.**

The availability of the call budget still depends on the final adoption of the budget 2027 by the EU budgetary authority.

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

4. Timetable and deadlines

18 Regulation (EU) 2021/1529 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 September 2021 establishing the Instrument for Pre-Accession assistance (IPA III)

19 Commission Implementing Decision C(2022) 8947 of 30/11/2022 amending "Implementing Decision C(2021) 9716 final adopting a financing of the multi-country multiannual action plan in favour of the Western Balkans and Turkey for 2021-2022".

Timetable and deadlines (indicative)	
Call opening:	29 Oct 2026
Deadline for submission:	4 March 2027 – 17:00:00 CET (Brussels)
Evaluation:	March-July 2027
Information on evaluation results:	July - August 2027
Grant Agreement signature:	October - November 2027

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:

- Application Form Part A — contains administrative information about the participants (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 additional project data and 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*
  - *Other annex: the joint long-term mission statement.*

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 the 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)
- 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),
      - United Kingdom and Switzerland[20],
      - Western Balkans third countries not associated to the programme[21].

The applicants (beneficiaries and affiliated entities) must be:

- Higher Education Institutions holding a valid Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) and entities affiliated to them.
- Any other organisation consisting of the above referred higher education institutions specifically set up with the purpose of implementing deep institutional transnational cooperation, including joint educational activities.

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.

Other entities may participate in other consortium roles, such as associated partners,

[20] Provided they join Erasmus+ as an associated third country in accordance with the respective association agreement.
[21] Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Kosovo (This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence).

subcontractors, third parties giving in-kind contributions, etc. *(see section 13)*.

Associated partners DO NOT receive EU funding under this grant, but their involvement and role in different activities have to be clearly described in the proposal.

The associated partners can be:

- Any Higher Education Institution holding a valid Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) established in an EU Member State or a third country associated to the programme;
- Any public/private organisation from an EU Member State, third country associated to the programme or Western Balkans third country not associated to the programme, active in the field of education and training, research and innovation or in the world of work;
- Any higher education institution established in a third country not associated to the programme that is part of the European Higher Education Area (Bologna Process) or in Western Balkans third country not associated to the programme, and in the United States of America and Canada.

Specific cases

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 eligible as associated partner. 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[22].

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'[23]. ⚠ Please note that 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)[24]. 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).

[22] See Article 200(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation 2024/2509.
[23] For the definitions, see Articles 190(2) and 200(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation 2024/2509.
[24] 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.

EU conditionality measures — Special rules apply for entities subject to measures adopted on the basis of EU Regulation 2020/2092[25]. Such entities are not eligible to participate in any funded role (beneficiaries, affiliated entities, subcontractors, recipients of financial support to third parties, etc.). Currently no such measures are in place.

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 and not affiliated entities), which complies with the following conditions:

- Minimum 3 eligible higher education institutions from 3 different eligible countries.

Any eligible institution, and any entity affiliated to it, can apply under this call and participate as beneficiary in only one European Universities alliance at the same time. They may apply in other applications and may participate in other alliances only as associated partners.

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, awar*

eness raising, communication, dissemination, etc).[26]

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

[25] 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).
[26] See, for instance, Guidance on funding for activities related to the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of Union legislation and policy.

Projects should normally last for 24 months (extensions are possible, if duly justified and through an amendment).

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

The check will normally be done for 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 guarantee *(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.

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[27]:

- 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[28] (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

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

[28] '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.

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[29] 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 refused if it turns out that[30]:

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

- 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 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 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

[29] '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.
[30] See Article 143 EU Financial Regulation 2024/2509.

the reserve list or rejected.

The proposals evaluated above the quality threshold (80 points), but that cannot be funded under Erasmus+ due to lack of available budget under this call for proposals, will be awarded with a Seal of Excellence certificate to attest the quality of the proposal and to facilitate the search for alternative funding at national level.

⚠ 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 will be considered to have been accessed and that deadlines will be counted from 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 25 points)	
	Extent to which the proposal: • addresses the general objectives and the scope of the call in line with the European Universities initiative's ambition, including through a clear and highly relevant joint long-term mission statement, explicitly endorsed by relevant decision-making bodies; • provides a sound needs analysis, based upon evidenced baselines and achievements that demonstrates how the proposal will address the call specific objectives, in line with the alliance's long-term vision; • demonstrates its ambition and presents innovative approach. • demonstrates the European added value through its transnational dimension, its contribution to local innovation ecosystems and improvement of synergies between the European Education, Research and Higher Education Areas; • 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.
2. Quality (maximum 50 points)	
2.1. Project design and implementation *(Maximum 25 points)*	Extent to which the proposal:

	• demonstrates that the approach and methodology are sound and feasible to achieve the specific objectives, expected outcomes and progress towards implementation of the joint long-term strategy; • provides robust implementation measures and methods to ensure effective project management, appropriate quality assurance mechanisms, risks management and evaluation methods for progress monitoring, including measurable quantitative and qualitative indicators; • provides clear and effective work plan, including work packages, tasks, activities, deliverables, milestones, timelines and appropriate effort and resources, in order to achieve the specific objectives; • demonstrates cost effectiveness and sound financial management.
2.2 Partnership and cooperation arrangements *(Maximum 25 points)*	Extent to which the proposal: • clearly demonstrates a deep institutional transnational cooperation already existing for a period of at least between two and three years; • provides a clear distribution of roles and responsibilities among all partners, including commitment at the highest institutional level; • demonstrates that each participant complements each other to implement joint vision, strategy and activities, collaborates to obtain added value as an alliance, and that the consortium as a whole brings together the necessary expertise; • demonstrates agile and robust management and governance structures, and effective decision-making mechanisms, • demonstrates the benefits of the integrated cooperation by reducing existing administrative barriers and obstacles. • ensures wide geographical coverage by including as beneficiaries higher education institutions across North, South, East and West Europe; • motivates the geographical composition of the alliance and demonstrates how it enables partners across Europe to strengthen their institutional capacity.
3. Impact (maximum 25 points)	
	Extent to which the proposal: • demonstrates progress towards the achievement of the expected impacts listed in the call; • demonstrates the capacity of the alliance to act as role model: extent to which results and good practices generated by the alliance will be shared and have the potential to be mainstreamed in other higher education institutions beyond the alliance in Europe and beyond; • provides a clear plan for communication and dissemination of results; • presents a clear strategy for sustainability and demonstrates how the results will be made sustainable beyond the EU funded period.

Award criteria		**Minimum pass score**	**Maximum score**
Relevance		17	25
Quality	Project design and implementation	17	25

	Partnership and cooperation arrangements	17	25
Impact		17	25
Overall (pass) scores		**80**	**100**

Maximum points: 100 points.

Individual thresholds per criterion: 17/25 points. Overall threshold: 80 points.

Proposals that pass the individual thresholds AND the overall threshold will be considered for funding — within the limits of the available call budget (i.e. up to the budget ceiling). 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.

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 project 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):

Total number of HEIs as beneficiaries	Maximum EU Grant
9 or more	7.20 MEUR
8	4.32 MEUR
7	3.78 MEUR
6	3.24 MEUR

5	2.70 MEUR
4	2.16 MEUR
3	1.62 MEUR

The maximum EU grants are based on the number of HEIs as beneficiaries (not affiliated entities). However, it is entirely discretionary for each alliance to distribute in the proposal the total budget among the partners.

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[31]

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 provided.
- the lump sum calculation should respect the following conditions:

  - for lump sums based on estimated project budgets: the estimated budget must comply with the basic eligibility conditions for EU actual cost grants *(see AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement, art 6)*.

  - for lump sums based on estimated project budgets: costs for financial support to third parties: not allowed.

Reporting and payment arrangements

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 **80%** 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.

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).

[31] Decision of 28 November 2023 authorising the use of lump sums and unit costs under the Erasmus+ Programme 2021-2027.

All payments will be made to the coordinator.

⚠ Please be aware that payments will be automatically lowered if 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 *(art 23).*

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).*

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

N/A.

Non-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.

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 might 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.

• 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 in open calls; not

applicable for actions by invitation)

- Portal FAQ (for general questions).

Please also consult the Topic page regularly since we will use it to publish call updates.

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-EUROPEAN-UNIVERSITIES@ec.europa.eu .

Please indicate clearly the reference of the call and topic to which your question relates *(see cover page)*.

13. 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.
- **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 under two EU grants; 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 Model Grant Agreement, art 6.2.E).*
- **Multiple proposals —** If there are several proposals for very similar projects, only one application will be accepted and evaluated; the applicants will be asked to withdraw the others (or they 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 —** the applicants can submit a 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*).

- **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:

  - beneficiary names
  - beneficiary addresses
  - the purpose for which the grant was awarded
  - 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.