How to prepare a competitive project proposal?

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Erasmus+

What is a successful application?

- Delivering the expected results
- Effective implementation
- Expected changes
- Keeping the results alive
- Smooth implementation highly depends on the amount of time invested in the preparation,

What is a competitive application?

- Concrete and sustainable results for the benefit of all the parties concerned
- Prepared and agreed jointly by all consortium partners
- Institutional commitment and support
- Ready to start immediately after the selection decision

What are we looking for?

Clear and ambitious proposal corresponding to the needs

Impact

Coherence effectiveness of the work plan executed by a competent team

To be improved …

- **Discrepancies between part B and part C (2 pages with KPI)**
- **Confusion between tasks / milestones / indicators / deliverables**
- Logical Framework Matrix (**LMF**) **missing or not correctly completed**
- **Weak needs analysis**
- **Innovation not visible**
- Too **high share of Staff Costs**
- No equipment for newcomers
- Too limited purchase of **specialised equipment vs generic material (laptops,** photocopiers, etc.)
- In **Strand 1, missing or too few newcomers, not well justified**

Terminology is key

- **Objectives** is what you will achieve in the project period
- **Implementation** is how you will do your project in the project period
- A **task** refers to any activity that has a definite outcome associated with it
- **Deliverables** are the final products/results of your project, those justifying spending public money to fund the project
- A **milestone** is a significant step in the successful production of a deliverable
- **Impact** is spreading (**dissemination**) and use (**exploitation**) of your results during and after project, including beyond the original consortium
- **Communication** is everything you do to inform about and get attention to your project during the project period

Innovation in higher education

Innovative curricula

Engagement with the business world and research

Innovative teaching and learning methods

Award criteria

| Relevance of the project | Quality of the project design and implementation | Quality of the partnership and the cooperation arrangements | Sustainability, impact and dissemination |

Note:
- *Relevance and quality of the project design: max 30 points*
- *Quality of the partnership and impact, dissemination and sustainability: max 20 points*

Relevance of the project

Purpose

- Relevant to objectives and activities of CBHE and specificities of the Strand,
- Adequate response to current needs of the target country(ies) or Region(s) and of the target groups,
- The extent to which the proposal addresses the EU overarching priorities.

Objectives

- Based on a sound needs analysis; clearly defined, specific, measurable, achievable, realistic,
- They address issues relevant to the participating organisations and development strategies for higher education in the eligible third countries not associated to the Programme.

Link to EU policy and initiatives

- The proposal takes into account and enhances complementarity/synergies with other interventions funded by the EU and other entities.

EU added value

- The proposal demonstrates that similar results could not be achieved without the cooperation of HEIs from the EU Member States or third countries associated to the Programme and without the EU funding

Relevance of the project

1.1 Background and general objectives

- How the objectives the background and rationale of the project?
- How is the project relevant to the scope of the Call?
- How does the project address the general objectives of the Call, including the overarching priorities?

1.2. Needs analysis and specific objectives

- How the objectives are based on a sounds needs analysis, specifying which challenges the project aims to address?
- Cover each participating country
- Clear, measurable, realistic and achievable objectives
- Clear and appropriate indicators for measuring the achievement

1.3. Complementarity with other actions and innovation

- How the project builds on the past activities and describe its innovation
- How the activities are complementary to other activities carried out by other organisations
- The transnational dimension and the European added value

Quality of the project design and implementation

Coherence	Methodology	Work plan	Budget	Quality control	Environmental sustainability
• Consistency between project objectives, methodology, activities and the budget proposed, • Coherent and comprehensive set of appropriate activities to meet the identified needs and the expected results.	• The logic of the intervention is of good quality, planned outputs and outcomes are coherent and feasible, and key assumptions and risks have been clearly identified.	• Quality and effectiveness of the work plan are in line with their objectives and the deliverables, • The relation between the resources and the expected results is adequate and the work plan is realistic, with well-defined activities, time-lines, clear deliverables and milestones.	• Cost efficiency and appropriate financial resources for a successful implementation of the project, • The estimated budget is neither overestimated nor underestimated.	• Control measures (continuous quality evaluation, peer reviews, benchmarking activities, mitigating actions etc.) and quality indicators ensure a project implementation of high quality	• The project is designed in an eco-friendly way.

Quality of the project design and implementation

2.1.1 Concept and methodology

- Clarify your methodology for the different project activities in view of demonstrating it is appropriate to the objectives and feasible:

  - Which target groups will be involved

  - How the teacher training will be implemented (face-to-face, hybrid, T-o-T)

  - How and when the students will be involved

  - If you will use surveys, benchmarking, self-assements

- Explain why the chosen methodology would be the most appropriate for your planned goals

- Illustrate how it supports the capacity building process and the third country's ownership of results

Quality of the project design and implementation

2.1.2 Project Management, Quality Assurance and monitoring

- You need to **demonstrate how the consortium is able to organise and** monitor the planned activities, ensure their quality and deliver on time the expected results.

- You must **insert the Logical Framework Matrix** (LFM), **that is a document to** be downloaded separately. You need to complete it and copy/paste in this section.

2.1.3 Project teams, staff, experts

- **Do not insert CV**, our call does not require it

- For European institutions - **insert the staff who will be actively involved in the project**

- For Third countries HEIs - **ensure an appropriate mix of profiles: senior and junior academic staff, researchers**.

Quality of the project design and implementation

Logical Framework Matrix

NARRATIVE SUMMARY OF THE INTERVENTION LOGIC	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	IMPORTANT ASSUMPTIONS AND PREREQUISITES
Goal (general objective) *Identify the broader objective to which this project contributes*			
Purpose (specific Objectives) *List the specific objectives that projects shall achieve*			
Outputs (deliverables) *List the deliverables (grouped in work packages) that the project is committed to produce. These must be stated as results.*			
Activities: *List the key activities to be carried out (grouped in work packages) and in what sequence, in order to produce the expected results.*			

Quality of the project design and implementation

2.1.4 Cost effectiveness and financial management

- Demonstrate (that is more than just stating) why your planned budget is **cost-effective** (Months/effort)

- Pay attention to copy **Part A the very exact amounts of the Detailed Budget Table (Excel)**

- Watch the **% of Staff Costs: if it takes more than half of the budget, reconsider it !**

- Pay attention to a **balanced mix of presential and on-line activities**

- Present a **fair distribution of the grant among the different partners**

- Very **often Management WP is inflated, too high**

- For countries participating to the capacity building action since decades, we **strongly encourage the acquisition of specialised equipment**

- Remember that CBHE action does NOT finance long mobilities (more than one semester) neither of students nor of staff

- Do **not include financial audit costs, nor equipment for non-HEIs**

Quality of the project design and implementation

2.1.5 Risk management

- We live in uncertain times with a number of unlikely events that did happen

- You should demonstrate:

    - realistic analysis in assessing the likelihood (low-medium-high) that a risk occurs

    - anticipation capacities

    - adaptation and flexibility in finding appropriate mitigation strategies

What are tasks, milestones and deliverables?

Tasks
- Preparation of the accreditation file of the new Master for submission to the responsible national authority

Milestones
- Feedback from the responsible authority

Deliverables
- Accredited Master

Work Packages

- **Work Package**: the building blocks of the proposal
- **Number of WPs**: on average, between 6 and 12
- **WP structure**:
    - A WP devoted to Quality Assurance is possible, but not compulsory, this aspect can be dealt within the WP Management
    - A WP devoted to Preparation/Preparatory measures is admissible, but not compulsory
    - Dissemination activities and Sustainability measures can be grouped in one single WP or form two different WPs
    - Creating a single WP gathering all travels and mobilities: <u>NOT Recommended</u>
- **Duration:** Tasks, Milestones and Deliverables – avoid identical wording, and same date in the 3 sections
- **Example:**
    - Task: Establishing the training format, collecting case studies… (M 4-8)
    - Milestone: Dates and Agenda of the training event agreed and displayed (M 9)
    - Deliverable: Training Workshop for academic staff (M 11)

Examples of WP and deliverables

WP Management	WP Preparation	WP Development	WP Dissemination	WP Impact and sustainability

Examples of WP and deliverables

WP Management

- Project management handbook
- Quality Assurance Plan
- Communication Plan
- Reports of external experts for QA

WP Preparation

- Surveys of stakeholders
- Needs analysis (**updated**) reports
- Inclusion Strategy

WP Development
Curriculum Development

- New degree
- New or updated courses
- Official accreditations
- Training for academic staff
- Memorandums of understanding

WP Development
HE reform

- Change in legislation, introduction of new policies
- Services, platforms at national level
- Guidelines, national strategies, papers

Examples of WP and deliverables

WP Dissemination

- Website of the project, plus links in each institutional website
- Dissemination Plan
- Video clips and promotion materials
- Report on dissemination activities
- Social media activities
- Final conference

WP Impact and sustainability

- Sustainability Plan
- Report on measurement of indicators in LMF
- Memorandums of understanding

Quality of the partnership and cooperation

Management	Composition	Tasks	Collaboration	Commitment
• Solid arrangements are foreseen, • Timelines, governance structures, collaboration arrangements and responsibilities well defined and realistic.	• Appropriate mix of organisations with the necessary competences relevant to the objectives of the proposal and to the specificities of the Strand, • most appropriate and diverse range of non-academic partners.	• Roles and tasks are assigned on the basis of the specific know-how, profiles and experience of each partner.	• Effective mechanisms to ensure efficient collaboration, communication and conflict resolution between the partner organisations and any other relevant stakeholders.	• The contribution from the project partners is significant, pertinent and complementary, • The proposal demonstrates the partners' involvement, commitment and ownership of the project's specific objectives and results, in particular from the third countries not associated to the Programme.

Quality of the partnership and cooperation

2.2.1.Partnership and cooperation arrangements

2.2.1 Consortium set up

2.2.1 Consortium management and decision-making

Sustainability, impact and dissemination

Exploitation	Dissemination	Impact	Open Access	Sustainabiliy
How will the outcomes be used?	Plan, activities, timing, tools and channels Communication vs dissemination	Target groups, measures, goals and indicators	Materials, documents and media	How will the project results be sustained?

KEY WORDS
for a competitive application

Coherent

Concrete

Clear

Explicit

Focused

Simple language

Rigorous

Complete

Finally

- It is all about writing a GOOD STORY
- Start in time and structure the writing process
- Recognise the connections between your proposal and funding policies
- Involve your hierarchy and your administration from start
- Involve all your partners from the beginning, including their hierarchies
- Create a logical link between objectives, WPs, deliverables and resources
- Underline the social/societal benefits
- Identify the users of your results
- Identify the impact that you want to obtain

Useful links

- Erasmus+ Call and Programme Guide: https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-programme-guide

- Funding & tender opportunities portal (FTOP): https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/programmes/erasmus2027

- Logical Framework Matrix: https://www.eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-capacity-building-higher-education-cbhe-2024_en

- Online Manual: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/om_en.pdf

- Lump sum proposal submission, evaluation and grant management: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/how-to-manage-your-lump-sum-grants_en.pdf

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

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