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Erasmus+ call for proposals 2015 – What's new?

I. VET MOBILITY FOR LEARNERS AND STAFF

Still before end of 2014, the European Commission will launch a call for proposals to award the Erasmus+ VET Mobility Charter. The Charter is intended to encourage organisations that have track records of proven quality in organising VET mobility for learners and staff to further develop their European strategies. The Charter aims to simplify the procedures through which sending organisations apply for funding, organise mobility for learners and staff and report on their activities, whilst at the same time rewarding, promoting and further developing quality in mobility. Charter holders will be selected as of 2015 and will be given the possibility to apply in a simplified way under the Key Action 1 mobility for VET learners and staff as of 2016. The Charter will be awarded for the entire period of the Erasmus+ Programme, although it may be withdrawn if Charter holders do not maintain the quality standards that allowed them to obtain the Charter.

Under the 2015 Mobility Call, an applicant for a VET mobility grant will be required to submit a European development plan for his/her organisation and explain how the planned mobility will be embedded in it. This requirement is introduced to ensure similar approach for all education and training sectors and also support applicant organisations in developing their institutional capacity so that in the long run they could also apply for the VET Mobility Charter.

II. STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

The horizontal priorities and the priorities specific to educational fields are now clearly integrated in the section on Strategic Partnerships.

The contents of the priorities have changed and proposals are required in the application form to address either at least one horizontal priority or at least one priority in the educational field/s they propose to address.

a. Horizontal priorities

- developing basic and transversal skills (such as entrepreneurship, digital skills and language competences) in all fields of education, training and youth, using innovative and learner-centred pedagogical approaches and developing appropriate assessment and certification methods. In particular, supporting innovative activities that foster the assessment of transversal skills and that promote the use of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) or reciprocal learning to increase language competences among learners of all ages from various fields of education, training and youth including those with migrant background;
- developing new approaches to strengthen the education and training paths of prospective and practicing educators/youth workers; equipping them with all competences and skills needed to deliver high quality services and address increasingly diverse needs e.g. those posed by multicultural societies. In particular, priority will be given to activities building effective partnerships between providers and educational institutions (e.g. HEI/teacher training colleges and schools/VET institutions); co-ordinating approaches among providers as well as through collaboration and dialogue with key stakeholders and partners and in particular with youth organisations;
- enhancing digital integration in learning, teaching, training and youth work at various levels: promoting access to and learning through Open Educational Resources (OER); supporting ICT-based teaching, training and youth work, as well as ICT-based assessment practices. In particular, supporting teachers, trainers, educational staff and youth workers in acquiring or improving the use of ICT for learning and related digital competences; supporting organisations active in education, training and youth review their business models; promoting OER in different languages and produced in Europe; supporting digital integration in learning to reach audiences of disadvantaged backgrounds; exploring the potential of learning analytics and crowd-assessment to increase the quality of learning;
- contributing to the development of a European Area of Skills and Qualifications: promoting stronger coherence between different EU and national transparency and recognition tools, supporting projects that facilitate the recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning and its permeability with formal education pathways as well as permeability between different fields. In particular, promoting the use of learning outcomes in the design, delivery and assessment of curricula, educational programmes and activities in favour of students, trainees, pupils, adult learners and young people;
- supporting innovative projects aimed to reduce disparities in learning outcomes affecting learners from disadvantaged backgrounds/with fewer opportunities –including learners with disabilities. In particular, enhancing access to, participation and performance in (formal/ non formal) education and training, preventing early school leaving, preparing educational staff and youth workers for equity, diversity and inclusion challenges; monitoring the various kinds of disparities, combating segregation and discrimination of marginalised communities, such as migrants and Roma; facilitating transitions from education to the world of work for disadvantaged learners.

b. Field specific priorities

In VET:

- supporting the development of high quality VET with a strong work-based learning component (including apprenticeships and dual learning models), involving strong partnerships between education and employment (in particular companies and social partners);
- increasing the labour market relevance of VET provision and reducing skills mismatches and shortages in economic sectors through timely adaptation of curricula and qualifications profiles and establishment of stable partnerships between VET providers and economic actors, including social partners, development agencies, bodies in innovation systems, chamber of commerce. These should be based on data stemming from monitoring systems of VET outcomes (employability rates, placement rates) and systems of forecasting skills needs and a close alignment of VET provision to economic development strategies at regional and local levels. This also may imply development of VET at higher than upper secondary level / higher EQF levels;
- increasing transparency and mutual trust between VET systems through streamlined and coherent implementation at national level of ECVET and EQAVET recommendations;
- fostering the promotion of easily accessible and career oriented continuing VET, including for the least likely to take part in such learning opportunities;
- promoting the development of skills and competences of teachers and trainers, with a particular focus on work-based teaching, partnerships between school teachers and in-company trainers, and training of in-company trainers.

In adult education:

- designing and implementing effective strategies for enhancing basic skills (literacy, numeracy and digital skills) for specific adult target groups, increasing incentives for adult training;
- providing information on access to adult learning services, such as information on the validation of non-formal and informal learning and career and education guidance;
- improving and extending the offer of high quality learning opportunities tailored to individual adult learners, including through innovative ways of outreach and delivery;
- developing adult educators' competences to deal with diversified groups of learners, make use of new technologies for better outreach and teaching outcomes;
- evaluating the effectiveness of adult education policies at national, regional and local levels level.

III. SECTOR SKILLS ALLIANCES

Eligible sectors have been widened (Manufacturing) and 2 have been added (Health care, Tourism). We have evidence that these sectors particularly suffer from skills shortages and there are Commission on-going initiatives to address them.

Eligibility, number & profile of participating organisations have been clarified. In the call 2014 many applicants did not understand the requirements for the composition of a Sector Skills Alliance and their application was ineligible.

Career guidance, professional counselling & information services are no more considered as entities with regulatory function.

Since the call has been published considerably earlier than the previous one, the deadline for applying has also been set much earlier: 26 February 2015 – 12:00 midday Brussels time.

IV. DEADLINE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS

All deadlines for submission of applications specified below end at 12.00 (noon), Brussels time.

Key Action 1	
Mobility of individuals in the field of youth	04 February 2015
Mobility of individuals in the field of education and training	04 March 2015
Mobility of individuals in the field of youth	30 April 2015
Mobility of individuals in the field of youth	01 October 2015
Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees	04 March 2015
Large scale European Voluntary Service events	03 April 2015

Key Action 2	
Strategic partnerships in the field of youth	04 February 2015
Strategic partnerships in the field of education, training and youth	30 April 2015
Strategic partnerships in the field of youth	01 October 2015
Knowledge Alliances, Sector Skills Alliances	26 February 2015
Capacity building in the field of higher education	10 February 2015
Capacity building in the field of youth	03 April 2015 02 September 2015

Please refer to the Erasmus+ Programme Guide for detailed instructions for the submission of applications. It is available on the Erasmus+ site: http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/index_en.htm.