

## **CAPACITY BUILDING IN THE FIELD OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET)**

Capacity building projects are international cooperation projects based on multilateral partnerships between organisations active in the field of VET in EU Member States and third countries associated to the Programme, and third countries not associated to the Programme. They aim to support the relevance, accessibility, and responsiveness of VET institutions and systems in third countries not associated to the Programme as a driver of sustainable socio-economic development.

Through joint initiatives that foster cooperation across different regions of the world, this action intends to increase the capacity of VET providers - especially in the fields of management, governance, inclusion, quality assurance, and innovation – so that they are better equipped to engage with private sector/enterprises/business associations to explore employment opportunities and jointly develop responsive VET interventions. International partnerships should contribute to improving the quality of VET in the third countries not associated to the Programme, notably by reinforcing the capacities of VET staff and teachers as well as by strengthening the link between VET providers and the labour market.

It is envisaged that the capacity building projects VET contribute to the broader policy objectives that are being pursued between the European Commission and the third countries not associated to the Programme or region concerned, including Global Gateway investment packages.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE ACTION**

Specifically, the action will:

- Build capacity of VET providers to strengthen cooperation between private and public stakeholders in the field of vocational education and training for demand-oriented and opportunity-driven VET interventions;
- Improve the quality and responsiveness of VET to economic and social developments to enhance the labour market relevance of skills provision;
- Align VET provision to local, regional and national development strategies.

### **THEMATIC AREAS**

Features that characterise capacity building in VET include some thematic areas presented below. Proposals should focus on one or more of the following themes:

- Work-based learning (for young people and/or adults);
- Quality assurance mechanisms;
- VET teachers/trainers professional development;
- Key competences, including entrepreneurship;
- Public Private Partnerships in VET;
- Innovation in VET;
- Green and digital skills for the twin transition;
- Skills matching with current and future job opportunities.

In addition, the applicants can cover thematic areas that are not presented above. These must demonstrate that they are particularly appropriate to meet the objectives of the call and identified needs.

## ACTIVITIES

The activities proposed must be directly linked to the objectives and thematic areas of the action, i.e. they must correspond to one or more of the thematic areas listed above and they must be detailed in a project description covering the entire implementation period.

In the context of this international worldwide action, project activities must focus on building and strengthening the capacities of organisations active in the field of VET principally in the third countries not associated to the Programme covered by the action.

Funded projects will be able to integrate a wide range of cooperation, exchange, communication and other activities including for example:

- Creating and developing networks and exchanges of good practice between VET providers in third countries not associated to the Programme and in EU Member State or third country associated to the Programme;
- Creating tools, programmes and other materials to build the capacity of institutions from third countries not associated to the Programme (practical training schemes training programmes and tools for assessing and validating learning outcomes in VET, individual action plans for participating institutions; professional guidance and counselling and coaching methods...);
- Creating mechanisms to involve the private sector both in the design and delivery of curricula and to provide VET learners with high quality work-based experience;
- Developing and transferring pedagogical approaches, teaching and training materials and methods, including work based learning, virtual mobility, open educational resources and better exploitation of the ICT potential;
- Developing and implementing international (virtual) exchange activities for staff primarily (including teachers and non-teaching staff such as school leaders, managers, counsellors, advisors, etc.).

In case learner and staff mobility activities are proposed, these should contribute directly to the objectives of the project and be strongly embedded in the project logic as a whole.

The proposed activities should bring an added value and will have a direct impact on the achievement of the project results.

## REGIONAL PRIORITIES

The budget available is divided between different regions of the world (i.e. Western Balkans, Neighbourhood East, South-Mediterranean countries, Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and Caribbean) and the size of each budgetary envelope is different. Further information on the amounts available under each budgetary envelope will be published on the Funding and Tender Opportunities Portal (FTOP).

The EU has set a number of priorities regarding geographical balance and specific objectives. In addition, organisations are encouraged to work with partners in the poorest and least developed third countries not associated to the Programme.

The regional priorities set for this action are the following:

If the application involves one or more ETF (European Training Foundation) partner countries<sup>292</sup>, the proposal should provide evidence of responding to ETF recommendations formulated in the relevant Torino process<sup>293</sup> regional reports<sup>294</sup>.

#### **Western Balkans**

- Priority will be given to projects that contribute to its Economic and Investment Plan and/or the European Training Foundation recommendations under the Torino process (see above);
- Mobility of learners (students) and staff (teachers, trainers, directors, managers etc.) will be privileged.

#### **Neighbourhood East**

- Priority will be given to projects that contribute to its Economic and Investment Plan and/or the European Training Foundation recommendations under the Torino process (see above).

#### **South-Mediterranean countries**

- Priority will be given to projects that contribute to its Economic and Investment Plan and/or the European Training Foundation recommendations under the Torino process (see above).

#### **Sub-Saharan Africa**

- Priority will be given to least developed countries; a special emphasis shall also be put on migration priority countries; no country will access more than 8% of funding foreseen for the Region;
- Priority will be given to projects that contribute to the respective geographic Multi-annual Indicative Programmes<sup>295</sup> at country or regional level.

#### **Latin America**

- Priority will be given to regional projects (projects involving more than one eligible third country not associated to the Programme) or projects in lower and upper middle income countries;
- Priority will be given to projects that contribute to the respective geographic Multi-annual Indicative Programme<sup>296</sup> at country or regional level.

#### **Caribbean**

- Priority will be given to regional projects (projects involving more than one eligible third country not associated to the Programme) or projects in least developed, lower and upper middle income countries;
- Priority will be given to projects that contribute to the respective geographic Multi-annual Indicative Programme<sup>297</sup> at country or regional level.

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<sup>292</sup> Except Belarus and Central Asia countries that are not eligible under this action.

<sup>293</sup> The Torino Process (TRP) is a participatory process leading to an evidence-based analysis of the vocational education and training (VET) policies in a country. Introduced in 2010 and carried out every two years, the Torino Process provides a snapshot of the state of development of VET systems in the ETF's partner countries, an overview of progress made and priorities for the future.

<sup>294</sup> <https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/policies-human-capital-development-southern-and-eastern>;  
<https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/policies-human-capital-development-eastern-partnership-etf>;  
<https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/policies-human-capital-development-south-eastern-europe-and>  
[https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/global-europe-programming\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/global-europe-programming_en)

<sup>295</sup> As above

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In case the above regional priorities are addressed, projects will have to demonstrate how and to which extent they do so.

## **SETTING UP A PROJECT**

A capacity building project in the field of VET consists of four stages:

- Project identification and initiation;
- Project preparation, design and planning;
- Project implementation and monitoring of activities;
- Project review and impact assessment.

Please note that while preparatory activities can start before the proposal is submitted or selected for funding, costs can be incurred and activities be implemented only after the signature of the grant agreement.

Participating organisations and participants involved in the activities should take an active role in all those stages and thus enhance their learning experience.

### **▪ Identification and initiation**

Identify a problem, need or opportunity that you can address with your project idea in the context of the call; identify the key activities and the main outcomes that can be expected from the project; map the relevant stakeholders and potential partners; formulate the project's objective(s); ensure the project's alignment to the participating organisations' strategic objectives; undertake some initial planning to get the project off to a good start, and put together the information required to continue to the next phase etc.

### **▪ Preparation, design and planning**

Specify the project scope and appropriate approach; outline clearly the methodology proposed ensuring consistency between project objectives and activities; decide on a schedule for the tasks involved; estimate the necessary resources and develop the detail of the project e.g. needs assessment; define sound objectives and impact indicators (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound); identify project and learning outcomes; development of work programme, activity formats, expected impact, estimated overall budget; preparing a project implementation plan and a sound and realistic communication plan including strategic aspects of project governance, monitoring, quality control, reporting and dissemination of results; defining practical arrangements and confirmation of the target group(s) for the envisaged activities; setting up agreements with partners and writing the proposal etc.

### **▪ Implementation and monitoring of activities**

Carrying out the project implementation according to plans fulfilling requirements for reporting and communication; monitoring ongoing activities and assessing project performance against project plans; identifying and taking corrective action to address deviations from plans and to address issues and risks; identifying non-conformities with the set quality standards and taking corrective actions etc.

### **▪ Review and impact assessment**

Assessing project performance against project objectives and implementation plans; evaluation of the activities and their impact at different levels, sharing and use of the project's results, etc.

Furthermore, where appropriate, and in proportional terms, projects are expected to:

- Integrate a long-term action plan for the progressive roll-out of project deliverables after the project has finished (based on sustained partnerships) including measures for scalability and financial sustainability;

- Ensure an appropriate visibility and wide dissemination of the project's outcomes, at transnational, national and/or regional levels with relevant partners.

### **Horizontal aspects to be considered when designing your project**

In addition to complying with the formal criteria and setting up sustainable cooperation arrangement with all project partners, the following elements can contribute to increasing the impact and qualitative implementation of capacity building projects throughout the different project phases.

Applicants (coordinator and full partners) are encouraged to take these opportunities and dimensions into account when designing their project.

- **Inclusion and diversity**

The Programme supports projects that promote social inclusion and aim at improving the outreach to people with fewer opportunities, including people with disabilities and people with a migrant background, as well as people living in rural and remote areas, people facing socio-economic difficulties or any other potential source of discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. The projects will help addressing the barriers faced by these groups in accessing the opportunities offered by the Programme, as well as contributing to creating inclusive environments that foster equity and equality, and that are responsive to the needs of the wider community.

- **Environmental sustainability**

The Programme supports awareness-raising about environmental and climate-change challenges. The projects are encouraged to develop competences in various sustainability-relevant sectors, green sectorial skills strategies and methodologies, as well as future-oriented curricula that better meet the needs of individuals. The Programme also supports the testing of innovative practices to prepare learners and VET providers to become true agents of change (e.g. save resources, reduce energy use and waste, compensate carbon footprint emissions, opt for sustainable food and mobility choices, etc.).

- **Digital dimension**

The Programme supports digital transformation plans of primary, secondary, vocational education and training (VET). It fosters the purposeful use of digital technologies. This includes the development of digital pedagogy and expertise in the use of digital tools, including accessible and assistive technologies and the creation and innovative use of digital education content.

- **Common values, civic engagement and participation**

The Programme supports active citizenship and ethics in lifelong learning. The projects should offer opportunities for people's participation in democratic life, social and civic engagement. The focus will also be on raising awareness on and understanding the European Union context, notably as regards the common EU values, the principles of unity and diversity, as well as their cultural identity, cultural awareness and their social and historical heritage.

## **WHICH ARE THE CRITERIA TO BE MET TO APPLY FOR A CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT IN THE FIELD OF VET?**

### **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

In order to be eligible for an Erasmus grant, project proposals for capacity building in the field of VET must comply with the following criteria:

<p><b>Who can apply?</b></p>	<p>Any public or private organisation active in the VET field and legally established in an EU Member State or eligible third country associated to the Programme (please see Part A of this Guide). Organisations from third countries not associated to the Programme cannot be coordinators. The coordinator applies on behalf of all participating organisations involved in the project.</p>
<p><b>What types of organisations are eligible to participate in the project?</b></p>	<p><b>Each participating organisation</b> must be active in the field of VET or in the labour market. It can be involved as full partner, affiliated entity or associated partner and must be established in an EU Member state or third country associated to the Programme (please see Part A of this Guide), or in an eligible third country not associated to the Programme (please see below).</p> <p><b>Eligible third countries not associated to the Programme for this action:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All third countries not associated to the Programme in Regions 1, 2, 3, 9, 10 and 11 (please see Part A of this Guide);;</li> </ul> <p><b>Exception:</b> organisations from Belarus (Region 2) are not eligible to participate in this action.</p> <p><b>Type of eligible organisations can be (non-exhaustive list):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ VET providers;</li> <li>▪ Companies, industry or sector representative organisations;</li> <li>▪ National/regional qualification authorities;</li> <li>▪ Employment services ;</li> <li>▪ Research institutes;</li> <li>▪ Innovation agencies;</li> <li>▪ Regional development authorities etc.</li> </ul> <p><b>Associated partners</b> can participate to the extent it is demonstrated that their participation brings an essential added value to the project (e.g. implementation of specific project tasks/activities or support the dissemination and sustainability of the project). For contractual management issues, associated partners are not considered as part of the project partners and do not receive funding.</p>
<p><b>Number and profile of participating organisations</b></p>	<p>Capacity building projects are transnational and must involve <b>at least 4 organisations</b> (coordinator and full partners) <b>from minimum 3 countries:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. At least <b>1 organisation from 2 different EU Member States</b> and at least <b>2 organisations from at least 1 eligible third country not associated to the Programme</b>, or</li> <li>2. At least <b>1 organisation from 2 different third countries associated to the Programme</b> and at least <b>2 organisations from at least 1 eligible third country not associated to the Programme</b>, or</li> <li>3. At least <b>1 organisation from an EU Member State and 1 organisation from a third country associated to the Programme</b> and at least <b>2 organisations from at least 1 eligible third country not associated to the Programme</b>.</li> </ol> <p>The consortium must include at least one VET provider at non-tertiary education level.</p> <p>The number of organisations from EU Member States and third countries associated to the Programme <b>may not be higher</b> than the number of organisations from eligible third countries not associated to the Programme.</p> <p><b>Affiliated entities and associated partners</b> are not counted in these above requirements.</p>

<b>Venue of the activities</b>	<p>The activity must take place in the countries of the organisations participating in the project except in duly justified cases related to the objectives of the action.</p> <p>In addition, if duly justified in relation to the objectives or implementation of the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities can also take place at the seat of an Institution of the European Union, even if in the project there are no participating organisations from the country that hosts the Institution;</li> <li>• Activities involving sharing and promotion of results can also take place at relevant thematic transnational events/conferences in EU Member States or third countries associated to the Programme or eligible third countries not associated to the Programme.</li> </ul>
<b>Duration of the project</b>	<p>Projects should normally last <b>12, 24 or 36 months</b> (extensions are possible, if duly justified and through an amendment). The duration must be chosen at application stage, based on the objective of the project and on the type of activities foreseen over time.</p>
<b>Where to apply?</b>	<p>To the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Call ID: ERASMUS-EDU-2023-CB-VET</p>
<b>When to apply?</b>	<p>Applicants have to submit the grant application by <b>28 February at 17:00:00 (Brussels time)</b>.</p>
<b>Other criteria</b>	<p>Only one proposal per deadline can be submitted by the same coordinator. If more than one proposal is submitted by the same coordinator, only the one submitted the earliest will be taken into account while the other(s) will be automatically rejected.</p>

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

#### EXPECTED IMPACT

The granted projects should demonstrate their expected impact by achieving the following results:

- Tighter links between the third countries not associated to the Programme VET system and its labour market;
- Improved links between VET profiles and local/regional/national strategies and priorities;
- Improved capacities of VET providers especially in the fields of management, governance, inclusion, quality assurance, innovation and internationalisation;
- Increased exposure of staff, managers, policy makers and senior teachers to approaches bringing the labour market and VET closer;
- Improved knowledge, technical, managerial and pedagogical skills of VET teachers and trainers;
- Better input of teachers/trainers, VET learners and employers into curriculum, profile design and training reform;
- Improved level of competences, skills and employability potential of VET learners;
- Increased cooperation across different regions of the world through joint initiatives;
- Development of competences of the participating organisations regarding environmental sustainability;
- Improved digital skills and competences of the target public through appropriate activities and initiatives;
- Increased social and intercultural competences in the VET field.

## AWARD CRITERIA

Each proposal must answer in part B of the application all points listed under all four award criteria presented below.

<p><b>Relevance of the project</b>  (maximum score 30 points)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Link to thematic areas:</b> the relevance of the proposal to the objectives and thematic areas of the action;</li> <li>▪ <b>Regional priorities:</b> the proposal addresses the regional priorities, <b>including relevant policy documents listed under this action</b>;</li> <li>▪ <b>Local context:</b> the proposal is based on an adequate needs analysis and feasible in the local context of the targeted country(/ies);</li> <li>▪ <b>Consistency:</b> the objectives of the application are clearly defined, realistic and address issues relevant to the participating organisations and target groups;</li> <li>▪ <b>Innovation:</b> the proposal considers state-of-the-art methods and techniques, and leads to innovative results and solutions for its field in general, or for the geographical context in which the project is implemented (e.g. content; outputs produced, working methods applied, organisations and persons involved or targeted);</li> <li>▪ <b>Complementarity:</b> the proposal is complementary to other initiatives already carried out by the participating organisations;</li> <li>▪ <b>Capacity building:</b> the capacity building activities are clearly defined and aim at reinforcing the capacities, principally of the participating organisations from third countries not associated to the Programme;</li> <li>▪ <b>Link to strategies:</b> the activities inscribe themselves in the development strategies of the targeted VET providers and support strategies at country level, including a greater attention to employability, inclusion, diversity and socio-economically disadvantaged participants where relevant;</li> <li>▪ <b>Horizontal aspects:</b> the horizontal aspects of the Programme are taken into consideration.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Quality of the project design and implementation</b>  (maximum score 30 points)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Coherence:</b> the overall project design ensures consistency between project objectives, activities and the budget proposed. The proposal presents a coherent and comprehensive set of appropriate activities and services to meet the identified needs and lead to the expected results. There are appropriate phases for preparation, implementation, monitoring, exploitation, evaluation and dissemination;</li> <li>▪ <b>Methodology:</b> the appropriateness and quality of the methodology proposed for addressing the needs identified;</li> <li>▪ <b>Work plan:</b> the quality and effectiveness of the work plan, including the extent to which the resources assigned to work packages are in line with their objectives and deliverables;</li> <li>▪ <b>Non-formal learning methods:</b> the quality of the non-formal learning methods proposed - if applicable, i.e. if the non-formal learning methods are proposed in the application;</li> <li>▪ <b>Selection of participants:</b> the quality of arrangements for the selection of participants involved in the proposal activities in relation to inclusion and diversity objectives;</li> <li>▪ <b>Recognition and validation:</b> the quality of arrangements for the recognition and validation of participants' learning outcomes as well as the consistent use of European transparency and recognition tools;</li> <li>▪ <b>Quality control measures:</b> the existence and relevance of quality control measures to ensure that the project implementation is of high quality, completed in time and on budget;</li> <li>▪ <b>Cost-effectiveness:</b> the extent to which the project is cost-effective and allocates appropriate resources to each activity;</li> <li>▪ <b>Mobility activities:</b> the appropriateness of measures for selecting and/or involving participants in mobility activities (please refer to "Protection, health and safety of participants" in part A of this Guide as well to other requirements and recommendations applicable to KA1 Mobility projects) – if applicable, i.e. if mobility activities are part of the application.</li> </ul>



<p><b>Quality of the partnership and the cooperation arrangements</b></p> <p>(maximum score 20 points)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Configuration:</b> the project involves an appropriate mix of complementary participating organisations with the necessary profile, experience and expertise to successfully deliver all aspects of the project;</li> <li>▪ <b>Commitment:</b> the distribution of responsibilities and tasks demonstrates the commitment and active contribution of all participating organisations.</li> <li>▪ <b>Collaboration:</b> the existence of effective mechanisms for coordination and communication between the participating organisations, as well as with other relevant stakeholders.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Impact</b></p> <p>(maximum score 20 points)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Impact:</b> the potential impact of the project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- on participants and participating organisations, during and after the project lifetime;</li> <li>- outside the organisations and individuals directly participating in the project, at local, regional, national and/or international levels;</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <b>Dissemination:</b> the quality of the dissemination plan: the appropriateness and quality of measures aimed at sharing the outcomes of the project within and outside the participating organisations;</li> <li>▪ <b>Exploitation:</b> the proposal demonstrates how the outcomes of the project will be used by the partners and other stakeholders. It describes exploitation measures within project lifetime and after;</li> <li>▪ <b>Open access:</b> the proposal describes how the materials, documents and media produced will be made freely available and promoted through open licences, and does not contain disproportionate limitations;</li> <li>▪ <b>Sustainability:</b> the quality of the plans for ensuring the sustainability of the project: its capacity to continue having an impact and producing results after the EU grant has been used up.</li> </ul>

To be considered for funding, proposals must score at least 60 points (out of 100 points in total).

Furthermore, they must score at least half of the maximum score points for each of the four award criteria mentioned above (i.e. minimum 15 points for the "relevance of the project" and the "quality of the project design and implementation"; 10 points for the "quality of the partnership and the cooperation arrangements" and "impact").

In cases where two or more applications have received the same total score (ex aequo cases), priority will be given to highest scores for "relevance of the project" and then "impact".

#### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

The acceptance of an application does not constitute an undertaking to award funding equal of the amount requested by the applicants. The funding requested may be reduced on the basis of the financial rules applicable to the action and the results of the evaluation.

As a general rule, and within the limits of existing national and European legal frameworks, results should be made available as open educational resources (OER) as well as on relevant professional, sectorial or competent authorities' platforms. The proposal will describe how data, materials, documents and audio-visual and social media activity produced will be made freely available and promoted through open licences, and does not contain disproportionate limitations.

#### **WHAT ARE THE FUNDING RULES?**

This action follows a lump sum funding model. The amount of the single lump sum contribution will be determined for each grant based on the estimated budget of the action proposed by the applicants. The granting authority will fix the lump sum of each grant based on the proposal, evaluation result, funding rates and the maximum grant amount set in the call.

The EU grant per project will vary from a **minimum of 100.000 EUR to a maximum of 400.000 EUR**

### **How is the project lump sum determined?**

Applicants must fill in a detailed budget table according to the application form, taking into account the following points:

- e) The budget should be detailed as necessary by beneficiary/ies and organized in coherent work packages (for example divided into 'project management', 'training', 'organisation of events', 'mobility preparation and implementation', 'communication and dissemination', 'quality assurance', etc.);
- f) The proposal must describe the activities covered by each work package;
- g) Applicants must provide in their proposal a breakdown of the lump sum showing the share per work package (and, within each work package, the share assigned to each beneficiary and affiliated entity);
- h) Costs described can cover staff costs, travel and subsistence costs, equipment costs and subcontracting as well as other costs (such as dissemination of information, publishing or translation).

Proposals will be evaluated according to the standard evaluation procedures with the help of internal and/or external experts. The experts will assess the quality of the proposals against the requirements defined in the call and the expected impact, quality and efficiency of the action. Following the proposal evaluation, the authorising officer will establish the amount of the lump sum, taking into account the findings of the assessment carried out. The lump sum value will be limited to a maximum of 80% of the estimated budget determined after evaluation.

The grant parameters (maximum grant amount, funding rate, total eligible costs, etc.) will be fixed in the Grant Agreement. Financial support to third parties is not allowed. Volunteer and SME costs are allowed. Please refer to Part C of this Programme Guide, section 'Eligible direct costs'.

The project achievements will be evaluated on the outcomes completed. The funding scheme would allow putting focus on the outputs rather than the inputs, thereby placing emphasis on the quality and level of achievement of measurable objectives.

More details are described in the model Grant Agreement available in the Funding and Tender Opportunities Portal (FTOP).