Key Action 2
Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices
Capacity-building projects in the field of higher education

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
Call for Proposals 2020 - EAC/A02/2019

INTRODUCTION

The following "questions and answers" on aspects related to the action "Capacity building in the field of higher education" (CBHE) are published as a source of information for applicants intending to submit a project proposal under the Erasmus+ 2020 Call for Proposals in the framework of this action of the programme.

The FAQs should help applicants find a quick answer to general matters relating to the preparation of their CBHE project proposal. The document addresses both enquiries received by the Executive Agency and issues which the Agency considers useful to clarify for potential applicants, in order to avoid misunderstandings.

Please note that the primary sources of information remains the **Call for Proposal 2020** (EAC/A02/2019), the **Erasmus+ Programme Guide 2020** (esp. Part B, Key Action 2: "Capacity building in the field of higher education", incl. Annex I on CBHE, as well as Part C, Information for Applicants), and the document **Application and Selection Procedure - Instructions for completing the Application Package**.

These information sources constitute your first reference to guide you through your CBHE application; they can be consulted in the CBHE Call section at the following Agency website:

https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/funding/capacity-building-in-the-field-of-higher-education-2020_en

The Erasmus+ Programme Guide specifies key terms, explains the nature and functioning of CBHE, presents the funding scheme, and outlines the application/selection procedure in the context of this action. Most of the answers to questions which may arise for CBHE applicants can be obtained from a close reading of the Guide, for instance:

- The eligibility criteria for potential applicants (e.g. is my organisation eligible, how many organisations does a consortium need to comprise at application stage, etc.),
- the award criteria that applicants need to address in their proposal,
- Financial rules.

If you have specific enquiries where you consider that further explanations and/or clarifications by the Agency are needed for a more complete understanding of the CBHE rules, then you can send an email to the following Agency mailbox and you will receive an answer as soon as possible from our staff:

EACEA-EPLUS-CBHE@ec.europa.eu

Table of Contents

1. eForm – EU Login account

1.1. In which language can we complete the eForm and annexes? Can we fill in all documents in Spanish or should we complete them all in English?

The eForm and some annexes have been released in English, French and German languages, but they can be completed in any of the EU's official languages, <u>provided that all the project partner institutions can communicate in the language used in the project</u>. So you can fill in all the documents in Spanish. (cf. [Erasmus+ Programme Guide 2020](#), page 258).

1.2. Do individuals from a university have to register individually to access the application forms? My university has a PIC code. I am confused as to how individual academics can apply using EU Login?

The PIC is managed at the level of the University. Only one PIC must be created by organisation/university.

It is however different from the EU Login (European Commission Authentication Service, formerly known as ECAS) which is a personal account needed to access several services from the European Commission, such as PIC creation in the Participant Portal or eForm creation from the EACEA website.

Therefore, if a staff member from a university is in charge of an application using the eForm, he will need to register first in EU Login to access to the eForm creation web tool (https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/PPMT/).

The PICs will be needed to encode the organisation's data in the eForm. PICs should be provided by the organisation's main **administration** or can be found using the "Search organisation" function in the Participant portal.

Links to the Participant Portal and EACEA eForms are accessible from the footer of each page on the [EACEA website](#) :

To create an EU Login, click **[here](#)**

PROGRAMMES	ONLINE APPLICATION TOOLS	OUR PARTNERS	ABOUT
Erasmus +	e-Forms	Directorate-General for	About EACEA
Creative Europe	Participant portal	Education and Culture	Document register
Europe for Citizens		Directorate-General for	Working for EACEA
EU Aid Volunteers		Communications Networks,	Working as an expert
Eurydice		Content and Technology	Calls for tenders
Programmes 2007-2013		Directorate-General for	Visual identity
		Migration and Home Affairs	Legal Remedies
		Directorate-General	Visiting EACEA
		European Civil Protection	Contacts
		and Humanitarian Aid	
		Operations	

You can also find further clarification in the CBHE Guidelines: *Application and Selection Procedure - Instructions for completing the Application Package*

2. Number of applications by applicant organisation

Can you clarify whether one applicant can submit several project proposals for different regions in the CBHE Call for Proposals?

As regards the KA2-Capacity Building in Higher Education (CBHE) action, there are no restrictions concerning the number of proposals submitted by the same institution.

However, at the final stage of the selection process, only **a maximum of three project proposals per applicant organisation can be recommended for funding** (cf. [Erasmus+ Programme Guide 2020](#), page 168).

3. Participant portal – PIC reference

3.1. Do private companies and associations that will be partners in the project need a PIC number like the universities to be able to participate?

Yes, it is necessary to insert the PIC into the eForm <u>for all full partners and their affiliated (if any)</u>. The organisations' data will be pre-filled in the eForm from the Participant portal/PIC reference account.

3.2. How do I find the PIC number of my organisation?

You can search for the PIC code at any time by clicking the Search button in the [Organisation Register page](#) on the Education Participant Portal.

3.3. I have lost my access to our PIC account, I do not know which documents to upload as annex to my legal entity, I found two PICs for my organisation, I would like to contact the validation service, etc…

All these issues are clarified in the Participant Portal FAQ:
http://ec.europa.eu/education/participants/portal/desktop/en/support/faq.html

3.4. Do we need to have the PICs under "Validated" status in order to submit our eForm application?

The validation of the status of participants is required <u>before grant agreements can be signed with the EACEA</u> (i.e. for all co-beneficiaries organisations who have signed a mandate).

At the stage of the application submission, the PICs status can be under "Validated", "Declared" or "Sleeping":

- **"Declared status":** the validation has not yet started or is still ongoing;

- **"Sleeping status":** the Validation Service has contacted the organisation for further clarification with the documentation submitted but they have not received any answer. In such case, the responsible person should check his emails or contact the Validation Service.

- **"Validated status**": the supporting documents to the organisation's legal entity have been checked and confirmed by the Validation Service. <u>This PIC is permanent and should be used in any applications</u>.

As regards the CBHE applications submitted to the EACEA, **we will check the information transferred from the PIC database to the eForm (Part A).** We assume that the information provided by the organisations in this database is correct, and will be confirmed by the validation process, before the signature of the Grant agreement.

You should therefore ensure with your partners that the data transferred in the eForm from the Participant Portal database is correct.

In any case, the partners do not have to send to the applicant organisation the legal entity form nor sent it to the EACEA as attachment to the eForm.

3.5. Is the EACEA responsible for the validation of the PICs?

The Participant portal is managed by another service from the European Commission, the **Validation Services (VS)** that carries out the validation of the legal entity status of participants (public or private bodies, education organisations, etc.).
The VS acts on behalf of the Commission. The VS functions currently as a department within the Research Executive Agency which was entrusted by the European Commission to carry out the validation of the status of the participants receiving funding through specific European programmes.

3.6. Do organisations outside EU need to attach 1.Legal entity form and 2.Financial Identification form?

The legal entity documents and its annexes have to be provided by all the organisations registering in the Participant Portal, even for Partners Countries: these supporting documents are necessary for the validation of the information provided in the database.
The financial identification form should be provided **only by the applicant organisation**, but is not required for the partner organisations.
Please also refer to the [Erasmus+ Programme Guide 2020](#), page 250.

4. PARTNERSHIP

4.1. Partnership composition

4.1.1. Can a regional ministry participate under the category of "national authorities"?

As for the national ministries, any type of regional authority can be involved in a project (if relevant for the topic and a suitable role is explained in the partnership).

4.1.2. Is there a maximum number concerning the participation of non-HEI partners?

The Call requirements for the composition of the consortium concern only the minimal number of HEIs from the respective countries (Programme and Partner Countries), but there is no limitation for the maximum number of partners, including the non-academic partners.

4.2. Associations in the field of Higher Education

The Programme Guide states that a HEI or an association/organisation composed of HEIs is allowed to apply for the grant. The whole part of the Guide about eligibility mentions only HEIs. Can we consider an Association of HEIs as one HEI?

Higher Education Institutions and Association/organisation composed of HEIs are two distinctive types of organisation.
Although associations of higher education institutions can be applicant organisations for a CBHE project, **they are not delivering higher education degrees and therefore cannot be considered as a HEI**. Therefore, they should not be considered as such in the calculation of the minimum number of higher education institutions in the consortium composition as described in [Erasmus+ Programme Guide 2020](#), page 164

As a general rule, regarding the participation of **Associations of Higher Education** in CBHE projects:
- They can be an applicant, partner or associated partner.

- "An association ... will count as **one legal entity/partner institution** and will act on behalf of its members": the PIC reference of the organisation is linked to the specific country indicated in the legal entity and therefore the association will represent the respective country in the partnership.

- Amongst the different countries represented by the association, "**only those members which are established in the eligible Programme or Partner Countries, and which are official members of the Association, can benefit from the grant**" even if their country is not represented in the project's consortium.

  - So, it is possible to invite a staff member of one of the member universities to participate in one of the activities of the project (covering travel and subsistence), even though that institution is not a partner institution in the project.

  - The costs are eligible provided that a contractual link between this participant and your organisation can be demonstrated, i.e. membership agreement between the institution where the participant member is employed and the Association (this is very important in case of an audit of the project).

As from 2018, the member organisation of an association can be identified as "Affiliated entity" in the eForm. This will allow a clear identification of the eligible costs incurred by the affiliated entities. These costs have to be declared under their affiliated full partner (cf. below 4.3.3).

4.3. Associated partners & Affiliated entities

4.3.1 I *looked for information about associate status in the guide. As far as I could see, associated partners will not be able to get a part of the subsidy. But my question is, whether there is an associate official status?*

You can find the reference to the Associated partners in the [Erasmus+ Programme Guide 2020](#), section WHAT IS THE ROLE OF ORGANISATIONS PARTICIPATING IN A CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT? (pages 162-163).

"Associated partners" to the project are intended to be a different category, compared to "full partners of the project". They are only identified in the "Detailed Project Description", not in the eForm (they don't need a PIC), this means that they can be involved (though marginally) in the project without receiving any funding. A mandate for this type of partners is not required as they cannot receive a share from the project grant.

Example of associated partners: an enterprise, an intergovernmental organisation, an organisation etc. that may bring an added value to the project by their strong potential for dissemination, expertise etc., but without being paid from the project.

4.3.2 Do Affiliated entities need a PIC?

Yes, Affiliated entities will need a PIC as they have to be identified in the eForm, but the PIC validation is not necessary.

4.3.3 Can affiliated entities receive funding from EACEA?

Yes, Affiliated entities can receive funding from EACEA; however this is done only through their affiliated Partner acting as full partner in the consortium.

4.4. Eligible/ineligible Partner Countries

4.4.1. We represent Georgia. In the Programme Guide, it was mentioned that Region 2 can be an applicant. My question is whether an NGO established in Georgia can apply for a capacity-building project in higher education?

NGOs (from Programme or Partner Countries) can be partners in a CBHE project but not an applicant organisation. Please refer to the list of eligible participating organisations on pages 163-164 of the Erasmus+ Programme Guide 2020.

4.4.2. Regarding Russian participation, the Erasmus Programme Guide mentions that Russia can be included in the proposal. However, I cannot find the National priorities for the Russian Federation.

As indicated in the Erasmus+ Programme Guide 2020, Russian organisations are eligible to participate to the Capacity Building for HE action but under certain conditions: <u>as partner</u>, <u>in multi-country projects</u>:

- **Page 163 of the guide, in "Eligible Partner Countries": Russian federation is confirmed as eligible Partner Country from "Region 4";**

- **Page 164, in "Who can apply" you will find the notification for the exception of Russian HEIs that cannot be applicant;**

- **Page 165, in "Number and profile of participant organisation" requirement to have a minimum of 2 Partner Countries for projects including the Russian federation.**

Therefore, the priorities established for the Russian Federation should be addressed in conjunction with the <u>regional priorities</u> applying to countries from the region(s) involved in the project.

You can find the list of priorities for Region 4 (Russian Federation) in the Table "Regional priorities" on the section "Guidelines" from the CBHE funding webpage.

4.4.3. Is a university from Hong Kong or from the United States eligible to be a partner in a CBHE consortium?

Hong Kong and the USA are classified among the **Industrialised Countries** in "Region 13" from the *Erasmus+ Programme Guide* (cf. p. 24). Only countries from the regions 1 to 4 and 6 to 11 are eligible under the CBHE action in 2019.
Therefore, a partner from an ineligible country in your CBHE project cannot be listed in the project partnership, **neither as partner nor as associated partner and <u>should not have a major role in the implementation of the projects' activities</u>** (the project should be able to be implemented without these "non-official" partners). However, **in the description of the project** (in particular parts D and E of the application form) you can still mention any activity involving an important/relevant actor from an ineligible institution along with the reasons justifying their participation. This can be considered as an added value to the project.

4.5. Partner search

4.5.1. Where can I find partners? Is there a partners' search tool for CBHE action?

- "Erasmus+ Project Results" is the Erasmus+ platform for dissemination and exploitation of project results. You can find there project information and results of all projects supported by the European Commission under the integrated Erasmus+ Programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport.
- In our web page "Information on Capacity Building projects in the field of Higher Education" a table provides basic details about projects funded under the CBHE action: project number,

project type, project title, list of beneficiaries, participating countries, budget awarded, project summary as provided in the initial application, etc.

The CBHE action also builds on the results of previous EU funded projects, such as those under the former Alfa, Edulink, Erasmus Mundus and Tempus programmes:

- For a project involving partner countries from Regions 1, 2, 3, 4 and 7, you can check the Table of projects selected under the Tempus IV programme (2008-2013) (very similar to the CBHE action) or contact the relevant National Erasmus+ Offices (NEOs) in these Partner Countries (https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/contacts/national-erasmus-plus-offices_en).

- For a project involving the other regions: Asia (Region 6), Latin America (Region 8), Middle East countries: Iran, Iraq, Yemen (Regions 9) and South Africa (Region 10): you can find potential partners from the Erasmus Mundus projects compendia or from the other related programme webpages.

Please note that the specificity of the Capacity Building in Higher Education action relies on the relevance of the projects with the national/regional priorities set by the national authorities of the target countries. In order to be selected, the specific thematic of your project should above all comply with the national/ regional priorities set from your Partner Countries and this is an important aspect to check when establishing the country target group for your project. You can find the list of these priorities on the Capacity building in field higher education 2020 Funding web pages (section "Guidelines").

4.5.2. Is there a local contact point in the Programme and/or Partner Countries?

- In the Programme Countries you can contact the **International Erasmus+ Contact point (ICPs)** in the National Agencies: https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/contacts/international-erasmus-plus-contact-points_en

- **National Erasmus+ Offices (NEOs)** are established in the Partner Countries from Regions 1, 2, 3, 4, 7: The NEOs are responsible for the local management of the international dimension of the higher education aspects of the Erasmus+ Programme and can help potential applicants to identify HEIs that might be interested to cooperate with their country. The full contact details of the existing NEOs in the Partner Countries is available on our website: https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/contacts/national-erasmus-plus-offices_en

5. PRIORITIES:

5.1. I am reading all the documentation about Capacity Building and I have a doubt about National Priorities. Some regions like 6 do not have National Priorities, is it right? We want to apply for Region 6. Do we have to address just the Regional Priorities?

Indeed, national priorities apply only to countries in regions 1, 2, 3 and 7 (former Tempus countries) and for Region 10 South Africa (which represents only one Partner Country).
For other regions which are eligible under the CBHE action (i.e. Regions 6, 8, 9 and 11) only regional priorities have been established, applying to all the countries in that region, either for national or multi-country projects.

5.2. In "Category 1 - Curricula development", does it mean that only new curricula should be developed and there is no possibility to modernize the existing one?

"Curriculum development" includes the creation of new curricula and the adaptation/revision/ modernization of existing ones (e.g. by introducing new courses, restructuring the existing ones e.g. under modular form, etc.).

5.3. In the [Erasmus+ Programme Guide 2020](), on page 165 it is written: "Multi-country projects, that is, projects involving institutions from at least two eligible Partner Countries, must respect the regional priorities or national priorities (if relevant) of the participating eligible Partner Countries involved. That is, the theme of the project must be listed as regional priority for each of the participating Partner Countries or the theme of the project must be listed as a national priority for each of the participating Partner Countries concern.

The main rule is:

- •For national projects (i.e. addressing only one Partner Country - National priorities must be addressed

- •For multi-country projects (i.e. addressing more Partner Countries, in the same region or in different regions) - Regional priorities must be addressed, in particular considering the importance of the regional dimension for projects under the Capacity Building in Higher Education action.

Nevertheless, multi-country or cross-regional proposals addressing a mix of national and regional priorities will not be excluded, provided the addressed priority is common and relevant to all participating Partner Countries.

5.4. *What is better: to have regional or multiregional project?*

Regarding the implementation of a national, regional or cross-regional project, no choice is better than another. The choice depends on the project rationale and the need to implement the project objectives at national level (in one country) or at transnational level (regional level involving more countries from the same or different regions). This goes in line with the choice of priority addressed to one country or more country (certainly, it must be a common priority to all Partner Countries involved in the project).

To increase the chances of success, the project should clearly respond to the award criteria, as described in page 166 of the [Erasmus+ Programme Guide 2020](). Following closely the guiding questions in the application form and replying directly to what is requested under different sections will help as well.

6. **FUNDING RULES**

6.1. Co-funding by the project's consortium:

Based on page 170 of the [Erasmus+ Programme Guide 2020](), it seems that applicants applying for capacity-building will have to indicate a contribution from other sources other than the EU-grant. Could you please confirm if the co-financing has to be indicated in the application and if there is any required percentage/amount for co-financing? Will applications be assessed taking into account the amount of co-financing declared in the Excel table that will be annexed to the application?

Concerning the financial rules applicable to the Erasmus+ Capacity-building action, the EU grant has to be considered as <u>a contribution to cover part of the actual costs incurred by the partner institutions in carrying out the activities foreseen in the application/project</u>. This is a new approach

compared to the previous Tempus programme, where a fixed co-funding percentage was calculated according to the total of "real" costs incurred by the project.

The CBHE grant covers:

- Staff costs (unit costs, max. 40% of the grant)
- Travel costs (unit costs) + Exceptional travel costs (real costs, max. 80% of eligible travel costs)
- Costs of Stay (unit costs)
- Equipment for the partner countries (real costs, max. 30% of the grant)
- Subcontracting (real costs, max. 10% of the grant)

Although the implementation of the project may require other types of expenditure (such as costs for dissemination, publishing, overheads costs), this expenditure will not be taken into account for the calculation of the grant proposed. **As a result, they will have to be covered by co-funding**.

However, in order to ensure that the consortium will effectively consider these other types of expenditures as part of their co-financing, they are requested to indicate them in a specific sheet in the Budget excel table, in line with the instructions given in the Erasmus+ Programme Guide 2020. This information will support the assessment of the feasibility of the projects: i.e. a work package including the organisation of a conference or the publication of books should foresee the budget planned by the partnership for these activities, although they are not covered by the EU grant.

6.2. Mandatory /Specific costs to be considered:

Are there some specific costs that we need to include absolutely in our grant budget?

- An external audit report (audit type II) on the action's financial statement and underlying accounts must be sent with the Final Report on the project's activities. This cost has to been foreseen under "Subcontracting heading" (cf. page 311 of the Erasmus+ Programme Guide 2020).

- Selected projects will be most probably invited to a kick off meeting in Brussels at the beginning of the project. It is advised to foresee travel costs and costs of stay for the coordinator and a Partner Country representative.

6.3. Staff costs:

I cannot find in the Programme Guide about staff costs for executives (staff members) of the Ministry of higher education in the Partner Countries. Is it the same Tempus approach applicable for Ministry people who can benefit of mobility but not staff costs?

No. In the Erasmus+ Programme Guide, staff from the Ministries is considered as other partners' staff and can receive staff costs under the CBHE action (contrary to the Tempus programme).

Therefore, the ministries:

- can be treated as full partners, the same as any other non-academic partner,
- can receive funds from any budget line, except from equipment which is eligible only for higher education institutions in the Partner Countries.

6.4. Travel costs and Costs of Stay:

Are future trainers from the Partner Institutions of the project in Colombia and Ecuador eligible to be reimbursed for their travel and subsistent expenses to attend such seminars and courses?

Can we also select staff from other institutions in Colombia and Ecuador to attend such seminars and courses? Are these people eligible to be reimbursed for their travel and subsistence expenses even if they come from institutions that are not partners of the project?

Travel costs for staff from Partner Countries project partners are eligible for training and retraining purposes. Please refer to the rule concerning staff costs, indicated in page 308 (Annex1) of the Erasmus+ Programme Guide.
However, as indicated in the Erasmus+ Programme Guide, staff from non-partner organisations are not covered by the CBHE EU grant.

6.5. Subcontracting:

6.5.1 Could you please clarify if expenditure for dissemination can be covered by the grant budget if they are sub-contracted or whether these particular expenditures still have to be co-financed regardless of whether they are sub-contracted or not.

Subcontracting is limited to max 10% of the grant and for very specific, time-bound, project-related tasks which cannot be performed by the Consortium members themselves. Furthermore, subcontracting is based on real costs and must respect a clear tendering procedure (see Erasmus+ Programme Guide 2020, Annex I on CBHE).
Consequently, dissemination costs can possibly account for "subcontracting" if they comply with the above-mentioned requirements. Otherwise, they will have to be covered by the consortium's co-funding.

6.5.2 Is it possible that staff members from associate partners (e.g. companies) can deliver training and get paid staff costs/travel&stay costs via subcontracting? Or are associate partners considered as part of the consortium and subcontracting is not eligible in this case?

Staff members from associated partners can be sub-contracted. Nevertheless, the coordinator should at least justify why that is the best choice (amongst other similar offers), even when the subcontracting cost is below the threshold of 25.000 €. It should be clear that there is no conflict of interest or preferential treatment (insofar as the associated partner is "connected" with the project by different activities e.g. meetings).
As an alternative, if they cannot follow this approach, we may suggest that they include this associated partner as an official partner in the proposal, and in this case they can charge Staff costs and Costs of stay + travel under these budget headings.

7. Work packages

Are we limited to have only the five work packages (Preparation, Development, Quality, Dissemination/Exploitation and Management) in all annexes required (Detailed description of the project and Budget table?

There are 5 types of work-package:

- Preparation
- Management
- Development (or Implementation - the substance of the work planned including production, testing, etc.)
- Quality Assurance and monitoring (quality plan)
- Dissemination and Exploitation of results

At least one work-package must be elaborated for each of the 5 work-package types listed above. Applications that fail to present this minimum cannot be considered further.

In the Project description document, section H, it is mentioned that you can copy as many of the tables as necessary with these work-packages. However, whilst it is reasonable to have more packages of "Development/Implementation" type, it should not be necessary to include more work-packages of the Preparation type, Management etc. Normally, the project should have a structure easy to understand, both by the project partners and the external experts who will evaluate it.
You can also find further clarifications in the document Application and Selection Procedure - Instructions for completing the Application Package (cf. CBHE 2020 funding page, under Guidelines).