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Handbook on the lump sum funding model

Key Action 2 – Partnerships for Cooperation

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1. Introduction

This guide aims to offer methodological guidance on how to interpret and correctly follow the rules of the Cooperation Partnerships and Small-scale Partnerships actions, as described in the Erasmus+ Programme Guide. It provides indications covering the entire project life cycle, from the preparation and presentation of the application to the management of the project, reporting and controls.

This handbook is applicable only to actions under 'Erasmus+ Key Action 2 – Partnerships for Cooperation managed by National Agencies (decentralised actions).

Should there be inconsistencies between the information provided in this document and the provisions of the Erasmus+ Programme Guide, the latter would prevail.

The following annexes provide additional methodological guidance aiming to support the design of a project:

Annex 1 provides general guidelines on project management to help applicants prepare a successful grant application.

Annex 2 shows how to design indicators and provides examples from former strategic partnerships funded in the 2014-2020 programming period.

2. Partnerships for Cooperation: description

Partnerships for Cooperation supported under Erasmus+ allow organisations and institutions to increase the quality and relevance of their activities in the fields of education, training, youth and sport.

This section summarises the information contained in the Erasmus+ Programme Guide regarding the objectives, structure, criteria and funding rules applying to Partnerships for Cooperation.

2.1. Objectives

Partnerships for Cooperation aim at:

- **Increasing quality in the work, activities and practices of organisations and institutions involved,** opening up to new actors, not naturally included within one sector;
- **Building capacity of organisations** to work transnationally and across sectors;
- **Addressing common needs and priorities** in the fields of education, training, youth and sport;
- **Enabling transformation and change** (at individual, organisational or sectoral level), leading to improvements and new approaches, in proportion to the context of each organisation.

In addition to the above, Small-scale Partnerships aim to:

- **Attract and widen access for newcomers, less experienced organisations and Small-scale actors to the programme.** These partnerships should act as a first step for organisations into cooperation at European level.
- **Support the inclusion of target groups with fewer opportunities**
- **Support active European citizenship and bring the European dimension to the local level**

2.2. Structure

A **Partnership for Cooperation project** typically consists of four stages, which start even before the project proposal is selected for funding: planning, preparation, implementation and follow-up. Participating organisations and participants involved in the activities should take an active role in all those stages and thus enhancing their learning experience.

- **Writing a proposal**

The design and planning of a project is to define the needs, objectives, project and learning outcomes, activity formats, schedule, financial needs etc.

It is recommended to carefully read the Programme Guide rules and the application form before starting the design and planning of the project. Having the award criteria and the

application form questions as a reference from the start will guide you through the drafting process.

It is important to establish a clear structure of the project and to make sure that the links between priorities, needs, objectives and results are well described. A clearly defined target group will help you to assess the needs and define the objectives and results.

All partners should be involved from the beginning of the process. This helps to draft a comprehensive and coherent proposal. It is recommended to start drafting a partnership agreement already at this stage (see Annex 3).

The more detail applicants provide for the activities, the easier it will be to define the financial needs and to estimate the required lump sum. Agreeing on a general plan (number and format of activities, expected results and overall schedule) makes it possible to deduce the financial needs and estimate the total budget of the project.

Annex 1 of this document includes more guidance on how to conduct a needs analysis and define realistic and measurable project objectives.

Once the general structure of the project has been agreed, partners should then move on to preparing a more detailed plan of the activities, work programme and practical arrangements

Having a clear work programme, including a project timeline, and clear distribution of tasks and budget between project partners, based on their different experiences and expertise, will facilitate the coordination of the project.

During the preparation phase, it is important to reflect on the potential risks and the possible measures to mitigate them. A good monitoring mechanism is paramount to prevent risks.

- **Implementing the project**

The activities should be implemented according to the project proposal. Any change in the planned activities or results should be well documented and justified and continue to pursue the goals set.

The beneficiaries should make sure that the activities are designed, prepared and implemented in an accessible, inclusive and eco-friendly way making use of relevant digital tools.

Throughout the implementation of the project, the beneficiary should monitor on a regular basis the quality and impact of the activities, verify if the work plan is respected and anticipate possible changes.

Before the end of the project, the beneficiary should evaluate the project outcomes and their impact at different levels. At the level of the participating organisations, the impact depends largely on the integration of the project results in the regular work of the organisation and, at a wider level, on the transferability of the results to other stakeholders or sectors.

Sustainability of the project and wide and targeted dissemination of results by all project partners is also a key factor of success.

3. The funding model

3.1. Overview

The funding rules of Partnerships for Cooperation have been simplified compared to similar actions supported under Erasmus+ during the period 2014-2020. These rules are based on the following principles:

- The grant will take the form of one single fixed amount (single lump sum), covering all costs of eligible activities linked to the implementation of the project;

- The Erasmus+ Programme Guide sets different single lump sums amounts (see section 3.2) to cover different types of partnerships with different levels of complexity in terms of administrative and reporting requirements.

- When planning their projects, the applicant organisation – together with their project partners – will need to choose the most appropriate single lump sum amount to cover the costs of their project, based on their needs and objectives. Their choice needs to match the ambitions and expected outcomes of the project.

- Proposals must describe the activities that the applicants commit to carry out. Those activities must be compliant with the eligibility criteria set in the Programme Guide and relevant to the objectives of KA2. The number and magnitude of the described activities should justify the chosen single lump sum, so as to justify the chosen single lump sum.

- Regarding budget details, the applicants should indicate the amount allocated to each activity and to the WP project management (for Cooperation Partnerships), which must satisfy the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness in relation to the objectives of KA2.

- The lump sum amounts are fixed. If the assessment of the proposal shows that its cost-effectiveness is not adequate, there is no possibility to "downgrade" or “upgrade” the proposal to a lower or higher lump sum amount. It means that the proposal will simply not be selected.

- The lump sum amount chosen at proposal stage cannot be modified during the project implementation phase. It becomes a characteristic of the project, and it can only be reduced at final report stage due to poor, partial, or late implementation, or to *force majeure* according to the rules stated in the Grant agreement.

- At the end of the selection process, the granting authority (NA) will select the projects per type of partnerships. The selection process for Small-scale Partnerships and Cooperation Partnerships are independent and result in separate ranking lists.

- The final payment of the lump sum will depend on the level of achievement of the project objectives and the quality of the project results.

3.2. Lump sum amounts

The table below shows the different amounts as set out in the Erasmus+ Programme Guide.

Action	Single lump sum
Small-scale Partnerships	30.000 EUR
	60.000 EUR
Cooperation Partnerships	120.000 EUR
	250.000 EUR
	400.000 EUR

3.3. Co-financing and no-profit

All grants funded by the European Union budget in the context of this action shall comply with the principles of co-financing and no-profit.

The principle of **co-financing** implies that the resources necessary to carry out the action are not provided entirely by the grant.

The applicant are not required to demonstrate the co-financing by means of a detailed project budget. The compliance to this principle will be assessed based on the information provided in the description of the activities. The evaluators must be convinced that the value of the activities to be implemented is higher than the amount requested.

In line with the **no-profit** principle, grants shall not have the purpose or effect of producing a profit within the framework of the action or the work programme of the beneficiary.

3.4. Activities covered by the lump sum

The single lump sum shall be used to cover all costs related to the implementation of eligible activities falling within the scope of Partnerships for Cooperation (both Small-scale Partnerships and Cooperation Partnerships), such as for example:

- Project management (planning, finances, coordination and communication between partners, monitoring and supervision, etc.)
- Learning activities
- Teaching and training activities
- Meetings and events
- Project deliverables (publications, materials, documents, tools, products, etc.)

- Activities aimed at sharing project's results

In order to be eligible, the activities must take place in the countries of the organisations participating in the project, with the exception of the activities taking place at the seat of an institution of the European Union or, for Cooperation Partnerships, in relevant thematic transnational events or conferences.

Typical costs linked to such activities would be: travel and subsistence; equipment; costs for publication and editing of materials; IT development (such as creating a website); staff and human resources costs; etc.

Please note that any activity can be accepted when considered relevant for the project and compliant with the eligibility criteria. If an application presents activities that are deemed not relevant to achieving the objectives of the programme or are disproportionate in terms of costs, the project might be either ranked with a low score during the selection phase or even rejected.

3.5. Budget management and grant agreements amendments

Once a project is awarded, beneficiaries have full flexibility in the management of the lump sum as long as the activities are implemented as foreseen in the proposal and the expected results remain the same. If the beneficiaries would like to formalise a change in the breakdown of the lump sum shares, this will require an amendment.

If the beneficiary has to implement significant changes in terms of content in the project, it needs to request an amendment of the grant agreement. Depending on the changes, a modification of the budget allocation may be needed. The National Agency will assess the amendment request and, if approved, it will become part of the grant agreement.

The changes requested cannot call into question the decision awarding the grant or breach the principle of equal treatment of applicants.

In what concerns the planned activities, changes are possible on condition that the changed activities are content equivalent, meaning that the new/modified activity contributes to the project objectives, and budget equivalent, meaning that the modified activity has an approximately equivalent cost as the planned one. However, as the cases can be very different from each other it is recommended to always consult the NA.

The beneficiary can introduce changes to work packages/activities only if the work package/activity is not already completed.

At reporting stage, the amount paid for each activity or work package will always be the same as what was allocated at application stage or amendment stage, and grant reductions will only depend on the level of achievement of the objectives of the activities/work package and the quality of the results.

4. Small-scale Partnerships

4.1. Application form

Small-scale Partnerships are designed for inclusion and access of newcomers to the programme. That is why the structure of the application form is simpler than the one for Cooperation Partnerships and the level of information required is lower while ensuring compliance with EU Financial Regulation rules.

All project proposals should contribute to one or more of the **programme's policy priorities**. Applicants are asked to select at least one horizontal priority of the Programme and/or at least one specific priority relevant to the field of education, training, youth and sport that is mostly impacted.

The **project description** in the application form should explain in simple terms the objectives of the project and the expected results, relating them to the selected priorities. In order to come up with relevant project objectives the applicants should have identified the needs of the organisations and of the target groups. These needs should also be explained in the project description. Annex I of this document includes further information on how to conduct a needs analysis.

Applicants should take into account that the main element of these projects is the transnational nature, therefore, they have to clarify what are the benefits that cooperation with transnational partners brings and how this helps to achieve the objectives. All **participating organisations** have to be included in the application form, as well as information about the cooperation arrangements governing the partnership. In order to ensure sound management of the project, it is important to establish a clear division of tasks and responsibilities between the partners in the proposal. Annex III provides more information about the cooperation arrangements.

The applicant will have to choose one of the two **project lump sums.** A detailed budget is not requested in the application form. However, it is helpful to support the design of the proposal with an accurate cost estimate. This will allow applicants to choose the most appropriate lump sum to achieve their objectives.

Altogether, the project proposal should be coherent and should make clear links between the objectives, the proposed activities and the expected results.

Example:

Objective: promote the exchange of practices in teaching languages among different countries.

Activity: workshop for the exchange of good practices among teachers.

Expected result: successful participation of 40 participants (teachers) from at least four different countries in the workshop.

In the application form you will be asked to provide information about each **planned activity** as a whole (e.g. the content of the activity, its venue, duration, estimated number of participants, etc.), to define the activity's lead organisation and to list the other participating organisations. The lead organisation is typically the one organising the activity. The other participating organisations are all other project partners who will also take part in the particular activity. The estimated activity start and end dates can be changed during implementation without amendment.

The description of activities shall clearly show the results they are intended to produce and the link with project objectives. In the same way, the description of **expected results** shall show logical correlation with the objectives. Expected results correspond to the achievement of project objectives.

Applicants will have to assign a total amount to each activity and explain how it has been defined. This means that no detailed budget is required (e.g. no need to indicate the exact number of participants to an activity or the actual costs estimated for meals per participant). However, sufficient information should be provided so that evaluators can assess the appropriateness of each activity with the objectives of the action and with the requested amount, as well as the coherence of one activity with the others. As an example, if the activity in question is the organisation of a meeting, the description should indicate the order of magnitude.

In the **impact and follow up** section of the application form, applicants shall provide information about the tools and methods that will be used to evaluate the achievement of the objectives, the communication strategy for sharing the projects results, and the measures to be taken after the end of the project to ensure the sustainability of the activities and results.

The **budget summary** of the application form is completed automatically. It consists of a table with the list of activities and the estimated cost allocated to each one, whose total sum is equal to the requested project lump sum (30.000 EUR or 60.000 EUR).

4.2. Reporting

The reporting template requires beneficiaries to show the consistency of project outcomes and results with the proposal presented at application stage. The report presents a similar structure to the application form and shall explain how the action was implemented and the results were reached after completion of the project in line with the initial award criteria: Relevance of the project, Quality of the project design and implementation, Quality of the partnership and cooperation arrangements and Impact. However, considering that reporting takes place at the end of the project implementation, the perspective in the analysis of the criteria changes slightly:

- **Relevance of the project.** How the project has effectively addressed the objectives and priorities of the action, and has proven to build capacity of organisations to engage in transnational cooperation bringing added value at both national and EU level.
- **Quality of the partnership** refers to the quality of the cooperation among partners for the implementation of the project. This takes into account the respect of the project timeline and the overall management of the project.
- **Quality of the project implementation** refers to the quality and results achieved with the activities carried out in the context of the project.
- **Impact** refers to the integration of project results in the work of the participating organisations and their transferability to other stakeholders and sectors.

For each of the above, beneficiaries are requested to provide a description of how the criteria are fulfilled. The final report template provides guiding questions for this purpose. It includes questions related to the concrete outcomes and achievements of the project, the activities carried out, the implemented monitoring and assessment methods, the cooperation arrangements put in place and the dissemination of the project results but also its sustainability.

In addition, beneficiaries are invited to carry out a self-assessment/lesson learnt exercise and reflect on the quality of the implementation of their project, the successes and the problems encountered.

As part of the final report, the project results and outcomes must be uploaded on the Erasmus+ Project Results Platform as proof of the quality of the project. In addition, you can add other relevant documents that you consider useful to facilitate the evaluation of the project. If those documents are not considered sufficient for the quality assessment, the assessors can request specific documents related to the declared project results.

Proofs of incurred expenses is not required at final report stage. However, the beneficiary has to keep all relevant documentation to demonstrate that the activities for which the grant was awarded have actually been carried out in case it is required by the National Agency when conducting a check during project implementation or after the completion of the project. See more information about audits and check in section 5.3 of this document.

4.3. Quality assessment of the final report

Evaluators attribute an overall score to the project, calculated as the sum of the individual scores attributed to each of the criteria, namely relevance, quality of the partnership, quality of the project implementation, and impact as they are described in the final report. When scoring each criteria, the evaluator will consider all the information provided in the final report, including the self-assessment/lesson learnt made by the beneficiary.

Criteria	**Quality assessment score**
Relevance (maximum score 20 points)	
Quality of the partnership (maximum score 20 points)	
Quality of the project implementation (maximum score 30 points)	
Impact (Maximum score 30 points)	
Final score	

In case a grant reduction needs to apply, this is calculated on the total amount of the grant according to the following scale:

Project score	**% Grant Paid**
60 - 100	100%
45 - 59	90%
30 – 44	70 %
10-29	30%
0 – 9	0%

In exceptional cases where a planned project activity cannot be carried out and it is not replaced by another equivalent activity in terms of both its contribution to the objectives and its budget, the NA shall reduce the grant by the amount allocated to that activity in the project proposal.

5. Cooperation Partnerships

5.1. Application form

All project proposals should contribute to one or more of the programme's policy priorities. Applicants are asked to select at least one horizontal priority of the Programme and/or at least one specific priority relevant to the field of education, training, youth and sport that is primarily addressed.

The project description in the application form should explain the objectives of the project, the expected results and their link with the selected priorities. In order to come up with relevant project objectives the applicants must have identified the needs of the organisations and of the target groups. These needs should also be explained in the project description. Annex I of this document includes further information on how to conduct a needs analysis.

In Cooperation Partnerships, each project shall include a standard work package for project management and additional work packages for project implementation. The application form already makes a distinction between the work package dedicated to project management and other work packages for implementation of the project activities. The budget allocation between the work package for project management and the other work packages shall be indicated in the application form.

The description of the **project management** work package (WP1) shall include a project management methodology with a clear distribution of tasks and the financial arrangements among partners, a detailed timeline with milestones, the monitoring and control system and the tools put in place to ensure a timely implementation of the project activities. Those documents may be attached to the proposal.

The project management work package can represent maximum 20% of the total budget and does not require the indication of specific objectives, as it is considered to contribute horizontally to all the objectives of the project.

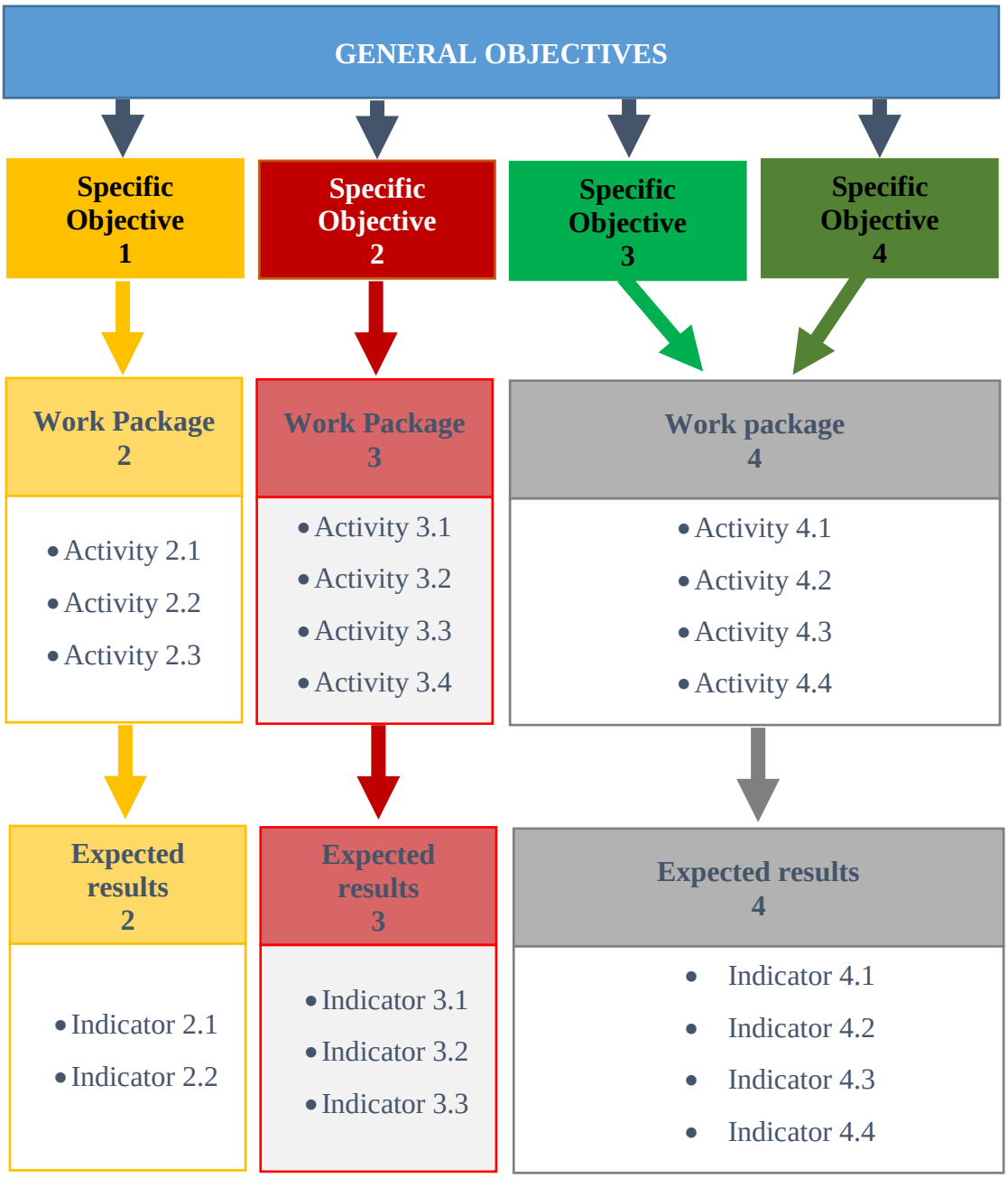
From a financial point of view, the costs that the applicant could consider in this work package when designing the project could be: costs for project management and administrative staff, project management meetings, accountancy, translations, monitoring of the project activities; IT equipment not linked to a specific activity, etc.

The description of all **other work packages** shall include a reference to the relevant specific objectives, illustrate the activities and deliverables proposed and clearly show how such activities are contributing to the achievement of the objectives.

The description of the expected results shall be supported by a system of quantitative and qualitative indicators enabling to assess the performance of the project and the relevance of each activity. Examples of indicators are presented in Annex II.

The costs that the applicant could consider in these work packages when designing the project must be the necessary for the implementation of the activities foreseen in the project, be in line with the applicant's practices and be cost-efficient.

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK



Applicants are requested to specify the timeline for all activities and deliverables within the work packages. In addition, it is highly recommended that the applicant includes an overview plan such as a GANTT chart in order to support the evaluation process, as in the example provided below. The chart can be complemented with a descriptive part.

		Period 1	Period 1	Period 3	Period 4
Project management					
Work package 2	Act 2.1				
	Act 2.2				
	Act 2.3				

Work package 3	Act 3.1				
	Act 3.2				
	Act 3.3				
Work package 4	Act 4.1				
	Act 4.2				
	Act 4.3				

The distribution of the budget shall be presented at the level of work package. In addition, applicants must also indicate the budget allocation at the level of activities.

The budget summary will be presented by work package and by beneficiary as in the example below:

	Coordinator	Partner 1	Partner 2	Partner 3	Total
PM	40.000	20.000	10.000	10.000	80.000
WP 2	50.000	20.000	30.000	20.000	120.000
WP 3	10.000	50.000	70.000	30.000	160.000
WP 4	10.000	15.000	5.000	10.000	40.000
Total	110.000	105.000	115.000	70.000	**400.000**

INDICATORS

Applicants for Cooperation Partnerships are requested to describe each work package with an indication of specific objectives, targets, qualitative and quantitative result indicators. This section provides methodological guidance for establishing of a set of indicators to support the assessment of the results achieved by the project.

What is an indicator?

An indicator is a measurable factor or value used to assess the quality of the project results and thus, the level of achievement of the objectives. An indicator can be quantitative or qualitative:

- **Quantitative:** defines measurable information about quantities, facts, and can be mathematically verified;

- **Qualitative:** describes events, reasons, causes, effects, experiences etc. Qualitative indicators can be made quantitative through scoring methods.

Quantitative and qualitative indicators complement each other: in addition to quantities and facts, it is also important to measure qualitative elements, so that the assessment on the level of achievement of objectives is not purely mechanical.

For information, annex 2 provides examples of indicators.

There are two main kinds of indicators:

- **Elementary Indicators:** provide basic information on which other indicators can be built
    - *Ex: Number of trainees, number of participants to a meeting, number of visits to a website, etc.*
- **Derived indicators:** based on the calculation of the ratio between two elementary indicators
    - *Ex: number of students who passed a test, participants to a conference who presented a paper, visitors to a website who downloaded a document, % budget used, etc.*

Indicator ≠ Target

An indicator is the measurement of a value at any moment in time. A target is the desired value of the indicator when the action is completed.

Example:

- *Target: 1000 visits to the website by December 2020*
- *Indicator: 500 visits in July; 750 in October; 1100 in December*

How many indicators?

There should be enough indicators so that all the major results of the project are covered, but not too many, so that the measurement of indicators requires more effort than the actual project activities.

A list with examples of result indicators used in the previous programmes can be found in Annex 2.

5.2. Reporting

The interim and the final reports for Cooperation Partnerships follow the structure of the application form, with the award criteria re-assessed by the (internal or external) experts when the project reaches its mid-term and at its completion. The overall structure of the report is:

- Project management
- Project implementation
- Impact and sharing results

In the section on project management, the beneficiaries are requested to report on aspects, related to the cooperation among partners, working arrangements, distribution of tasks and coordination, respect of project timeline.

In the section on project implementation, the beneficiaries elaborate on the achievement of their objectives set at application stage. This should be done with the support of the quantitative and qualitative indicators identified at application stage to measure the degree by which the project objectives have been achieved. Beneficiaries shall confront the quantitative and qualitative evidence of results obtained with the indicators and with the expected results stated in the application.

In the section on impact and sharing of results, beneficiaries shall show how the results of the projects were made available and produced benefits for the organisations participating in the project and for other stakeholders. The beneficiaries should also to provide information on the sustainability and the longer-term impact of the project.

In addition, beneficiaries are invited to carry out a self-assessment/lesson learnt exercise and reflect on the quality of the implementation of their project (including a comparison between the indicators proposed at application stage and the result achieved), the successes, the problems encountered and the lessons learnt. As part of the final report, the project results and outcomes must be uploaded on the Erasmus+ Project Results Platform as proof of the quality of the project. In addition, beneficiaries can add other relevant documents that they consider useful to facilitate the evaluation of their project. please They have to make sure that theyrefer to these documents in the description of the project result. If those documents are not considered sufficient for the quality assessment, the assessors can request specific documents related to the declared project results.

The description of results shall include the reference to relevant supporting documents such as meeting minutes, course materials, project deliverables, publications, photos etc. All necessary documents providing evidence for the achievement of reported results shall be submitted with final reports.

However, during the quality assessment, evaluators can request specific additional documents to analyse them in depth.

5.3. Quality assessment of the final report

The assessment of the final report of a lump-sum project focusses on the outputs of the project, their quality, the level of achievement of the indicators, the impact and the sustainability of the project. Each work package is evaluated separately according to specific quality criteria. The overall project score is calculated as the weighted average of the scores for each work package. However, for each work package, the percentage of the budget to be paid is calculated separately, based on the table presented as an example below.

The Project Management Work Package is not scored. As the project management work package does not produce concrete outputs and does not have specific indicators, the result of this work package is embedded in the level of achievement of the other work packages. The total project score (weighted average) is a good indication of the overall quality of the project management.

Work Package	Budget share	Activities	Indicators	Reported results (incl. impact)	Evidence	Evaluation (score 1-100)
WP 2	25%	1.1 ___ 1.2 ___				50
WP 3	25%	2.1 ___ 2.2 ___ 2.3___				80
WP 4	30%	3.1 ___ 3.2 ___				70
Project score						**67**

The evaluation score for each work package contributes to the overall project score. The system calculates this automatically as the weighted average of individual scores and budget shares, rounded to the nearest integer.
*In the above example: WA = [(50*25)+(80*25)+(70*30)]/80 = 66,875 =>* ***67.***

Based on the overall project score, a proportionate reduction may be applied to the whole grant, in accordance with a standard scale:

Project/WP score	% Grant Paid
70 - 100	100%
55 - 69	90%
40 – 54	60 %
10-39	30%
0 – 9	0%

In the example above, with an overall project score of 67, the National Agency shall apply a [10%] reduction on the entire grant amount and therefore only pay 90%: EUR 400.000 x 0,9 = EUR 360.000

If the overall project score is sufficient (i.e. higher than 70), but the score of one or more work packages is not sufficient (i.e. lower than 70), a specific grant reduction shall be applied only to those work packages, based on the same scale.

In the following example, WP2 has a score of 50, so only 60% of the budget allocated to it should be paid. The budget allocated to the other WP can be fully paid.

Work Package	Budget share	Activities	Indicators	Reported results (incl. impact)	Evidence	Evaluation (score 1-100)
WP 2	25%	1.1 ___ 1.2 ___				50
WP 3	25%	2.1 ___ 2.2 ___				80

		2.3___				
WP 4	30%	3.1 ___ 3.2 ___				90
Project score						**74**

In any case, the grant reductions cannot be cumulative: if the project score is above 70 points, they can only be applied at the level of individual work packages; if the score is below 70, only at the level of the overall project budget, but not at both levels for the same project.

6. Monitoring, checks and audits

6.1. Monitoring

Every project can be monitored by the National Agency. The purpose of this exercise is to check whether the implementation of the project is going well and to provide support and advice to the beneficiaries, if needed**.** The most common form of monitoring is a visit in the premises of the beneficiary, but other options exist as well – distance monitoring over the phone, online or through a dedicated survey, etc. Please note that the monitoring exercise is not an audit and no financial documents will be checked by the National Agency.

6.2. Checks and audits

The basis for quality checks are the expected results or result indicators included in the application form and approved by the granting authority. Controllers will verify the actual implementation of the activities, the achievement of the results and the reliability of the information presented in the reports. This includes compliance with rules on intellectual property, ethics and integrity, visibility of EU funding, etc.

The rules for checks, reviews, audits and investigations of lump sum grants are the same as for grant agreements based on unit contribution and actual costs, as far as general obligations and project implementation are concerned. As there is no financial reporting on real costs, no financial checks, reviews or audits related to actual costs and the resources used will be performed.

There is no contractual obligation from the grant agreement to keep financial records for the activities implemented in the project. You will, however, need to comply with record keeping and other legal obligations outside the lump sum grant agreement (e.g. under national law or internal procedures). You should also keep all relevant documentation that demonstrates the reality of the activities, i.e. that the activities or work packages have been carried out, by when, by whom, etc. This is the same documentation as for all grants (i.e. there is no additional documentation to be kept specifically for lump sum grants). For example, for events, documentation such as reports, agendas, presentations, media such as videos, photos and audio, minutes, and related publications should be kept.

Checks and audits may be performed, which would cover the reality of the implemented activities. In this case, the aforementioned documents could be reviewed, to establish whether all reported activities took place. These reviews would not lead to a verification of actual costs spent, but to assess whether the implemented and reported work packages/activities comply with the grant agreement and can be approved.

There are four levels of control:

- Final report check

The final report will serve to assess the results of the supported action in terms of quality and quantity, to establish the final amount of the EU grant and to issue the final grant payment or recovery order, as well as to administratively close the grant agreement. As the lump sum funding model includes no financial reporting but only implementation reporting, there are no financial checks as such at the time of the final report.

During the final report assessment, evaluators can request beneficiaries to provide or produce additional evidence in case the information they provided spontaneously is not sufficient to support the assessment.

- Desk checks

The desk check is an in-depth analysis of the final report and accompanying documentation proving the reality and quality of activities and deliverables. Only a sample of beneficiaries are subject to this kind of checks, which take place after the approval of the final report. These are administrative checks and their scope is different from the one of the final report assessment. Their aim at verifying the existence, correctness and compliance of project documentation with regulatory and contractual requirements, whereas the final report assessment focuses on the evaluation of the quality of results and deliverables of the project.

Desk checks also follow the proportionality principle:

  - For Small-scale Partnerships, the scope of checks is limited to the analysis of documental evidence for the actual implementation of project activities. In case specific risks are identified, NAs can select individual projects for in depth and on the spot checks. Documents proving the actual implementation of the activity could be, for example, attendance lists for meetings, training materials, deliverables produced, photos and videos taken during an event, etc.

  - For Cooperation Partnerships, checks will also analyse in depth the pieces of evidence supporting the final report assessment and justifying the values attributed to the indicators.

- On-the-spot checks

National Agencies perform checks at the premises of the beneficiary to collect additional evidence of activities carried out and deliverables produced. NAs carry out a double selection of projects to be included in the list for on-the-spot checks: one random and one risk-based sample. Apart from the checks carried out in the context of this periodical

exercise, NAs can decide to organise at any time an on-the-spot check, provided that the beneficiary is informed in a timely manner.

- Audits

After closure of an agreement, any project can also be selected for an audit by the independent audit body or by the European Commission. The scope of the audits can vary and is communicated to the beneficiary in due time, together with the necessary practical and logistic information. Also in this case, the documentation requested from the beneficiary will mainly be related to the implementation of the project activities and production of deliverables, and will not put the lump sum principle into question.

Beneficiaries are not requested to provide evidence for the actual costs incurred. However, in order to ensure sound financial management (efficiency, economy effectiveness), they should follow accounting procedures in line with national legislation and international standards.

Occasionally, in the context of a specific audit scope aimed at the periodical revision of the system of lump sums, auditors can request documentation proving the real costs incurred for some of the project activities. However, there are no obligations concerning the accounting system to be followed by beneficiary and any findings reported in such audits (except for cases of fraud) will only have the purpose to assess the effectiveness of the funding model, without any financial consequences for the beneficiary.

Annex 1 – Designing the project

Needs analysis

An evidence-based needs analysis is key to the good planning and implementation of a project. Needs can be defined as desired changes in the context in which an organisation is functioning. Once a number of needs have been identified, their analysis consists of two main aspects:

a) ranking the needs in terms of expected benefits for the organisation;

   Based on the expected benefits, needs can be categorised as follows:
   a. **Primary:** these needs must be addressed in order to complete the project successfully;
   b. **Secondary:** these needs can be addressed if project resources allow to;
   c. **Side effects:** these needs could be positively affected by the project but will not be addressed directly.

b) In the formulation of the project proposal, the main needs identified shall be operationalised by comparing the initial situation with the desired one (also known as "gap analysis"). As described in the following section, the formulation of general and specific objectives shall correspond to the description of all the conditions needed in order to fill the gap identified in the needs assessment.

Once project needs are identified and before they are translated into objectives, applicants shall carry out an initial assessment of the overall cost of project, aimed to quantify the financial support required and hence the lump sum amount to be requested as a grant.

Objectives setting

Having defined project needs and quantified the financial support required, applicants shall set the project objectives.
A general objective can be set as a summary of the desired benefits to be achieved with the project, and in line with the Action's priorities set out in the call for proposals.
The general objective shall then be detailed into more specific and operational objectives, constituting the purposes of the concrete activities carried out in the framework of the project.
Project objectives should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound (i.e. 'S.M.A.R.T')[1]

[1] Based on the European Commission Better Regulation toolbox #16 – How to set objectives - https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/better-regulation-toolbox-16_en_0.pdf

What are S.M.A.R.T. objectives?	
Specific	Objectives should be precise and concrete enough not to be open to varying interpretations by different people.
Measurable	Objectives should define a desired future state in measurable terms, to allow verification of their achievement. Such objectives are either quantified or based on a combination of description and scoring scales.
Achievable	Project aims should be set at a level which is ambitious but at the same time realistically achievable.
Relevant	The objectives should be directly linked to the problem and its root causes.
Time-bound	Objectives should be related to a fixed date or precise time period to allow an evaluation of their achievement.

Under the new funding model, it is particularly important to show a clear correlation between objectives, activities carried out and results achieved, as this constitutes the logical framework used in the quality assessment of projects. The quality assessment, in turn, constitutes the basis for payments and financial corrections.

Annex 2 - How to build your indicators

Are your indicators "RACER"?

Relevant	Closely linked to the objective to be achieved. They should not be overambitious and measure the right thing
Accepted	The definition of the indicator and the way it is measured should be agreed by all partners and responsibilities should be clearly attributed
Credible	Not ambiguous and verifiable, also for external observers
Easy	Data collection should be easy and not expensive. The information provided by the indicator should be easily understandable
Robust	The value of the indicator is not easy to manipulate

The set of indicators below is non-exhaustive, purely indicative and aims at facilitating the work of applicants in defining quantitative and/or qualitative measures for the achievement of project objectives.

Examples of indicators	
Quantitative	**Qualitative**
<u>Number of</u> • Participants in events, meetings, training activities, etc. • Partner meeting reports • Public events connected with objectives and results of the project • Registrations to e-learning courses • Hits at the project website • Unique visitors to websites • Visits to project's blog and documents downloaded • Public and private entities to which project's results are shared • Stakeholders and multipliers reached through the networking activities of the partners • Manuals in different languages • Certificates developed and their use in the participating countries	• How to improve media literacy by, for example, rating the information in the net, validating the resources, carrying out intelligent searching, etc. • Satisfaction level of the participating institutions • Participants' satisfaction in training activities • Satisfaction of participants with the provided educational materials and guest lecturers • Improved competences of the partners to teach intercultural competences • Quality and extent of the evaluation reports from participants • Involvement of the partners in the project activities through the lead-partners and quality of the results • Teachers with improved skills in curriculum delivery, employing a wider range of classroom strategies, evidenced in observations of teaching

• Modified or constituted internal norms or procedures that have been established in each country aimed at companies or teaching institutions • Gained Open Badges and usage of other digital tools • Questionnaires distributed and number of respondents **<u>Percentage of</u>** • Students who consider that their skills (e.g. IT) have been significantly enhanced • Students who consider that their intercultural values have been significantly promoted • Students who consider that their active youth participation voting have been significantly encouraged • Teachers who consider that their teaching competences have been significantly improved • Headmasters who consider the project has contributed significantly to cope with needs of the school • Teachers willing to exploit Handbooks as new method for early identification of learning difficulties in primary education	• Level of organisational know-how in the field of youth workers' training and learning app development • Positive feedback from end-user groups and experts as well as participants in the testing phase of the project • Best practices and stories developed and disseminated by participants • Socially responsiveness and willing to participate in change; • Assessment through comparing the project outputs with the original status quo before the beginning of the project activities • Feedback from students and direct observation of them in the classroom and virtually will show visible progress and the attainment of the planned aims and goals will be recorded by analysing their active participation in the activities • Compliance with work plan both in administrative and technical activities: respect of outputs/results standard provided within the proposal; • Punctuality, completeness and timeliness in the preparation and delivery of outputs, reports and other information; • Level of communication and participation of partners (meetings, workshop, conference call, collaboration in arranging working material and activities, etc.)

• Annex 3 – Recommendations on the drafting of a partnership agreement.

It is recommended that partners set partnerships agreements for a successful project implementation. They aim at defining the rights and obligation of each participant and settling issues that might hamper the smooth and seamless cooperation of the partners for the different parts of the project.

The partnerships agreement is a private agreement between the beneficiaries, to set out the rights and obligations amongst themselves. Therefore, the co-beneficiaries remain fully responsible for it. It should in principle be negotiated and concluded before signing the grant agreement and it must not contain any provision contrary to it.

It is recommended to start formalising your negotiations at the proposal stage by drawing up a draft agreement. This enables you to discuss and agree on how to handle important (and often sensitive) matters, and to involve all partners in the proposal drafting. The draft agreement will then be used as a starting point for further discussions if the proposal is accepted.

The partnerships agreement allows partners to agree on any specific details not covered by the grant agreement, such as the management and governance of the partnership, the organisation of work and division of tasks, the communication channels between the beneficiaries, budget distribution, payment arrangement, intellectual property management, liability, and future exploitation and dissemination of results.

In principle, the agreement may include any arrangements you wish to make, as long as they are not contrary to the grant agreement (e.g : frequency of meetings, the language of communication, methods for resolving disputes and conflict…).