Capacity building in Higher Education

The Capacity Building in Higher Education (CBHE) action supports international cooperation projects based on multilateral partnerships between organisations active in the field of higher education. It supports the relevance, quality, modernisation and responsiveness of higher education in third countries not associated to the Programme for socio-economic recovery, growth and prosperity and reacting to recent trends, in particular economic globalisation but also the recent decline in human development, fragility, and rising social, economic and environmental inequalities exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The action is expected to contribute to the overarching priorities of the European Commission

Green Deal

Higher Education systems are crucial for supporting the Green Deal, potentially enabling a profound change in peoplesâ behaviour and skills. CBHE 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. Erasmus+ also supports the testing of innovative practices to prepare learners and higher education providers to become true agents of change.

Digital transformation

Projects should support the development and uptake of digital skills to make the digital transformation as comprehensive and inclusive as possible. Encourage development and implementation of digital higher education strategies. Accompany the digital transition by mainstreaming digitalisation in higher education systems and reinforcing programmes covering digital skills. Provide assistance to teacher training and online education learning.

Integration of migrants

Projects should promote mobility and in particular support the recognition of degrees and credentials in the different regions, also to support intra-regional connectivity. Projects should support the integration of migrants and displaced persons through the access to education.

Governance, peace, security and human development

CBHE projects can help lay the foundations for strengthening active citizenship and build specific expertise in areas such as democracy, human rights and multilateralism. CBHE projects can help unlock long-term solutions to problems of weak governance in higher education.

Sustainable growth and jobs

Education is needed to build skills for life and work, such as foundational skills, âsoftâ skills (e.g. problem solving, communication), and Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths (STEAM). Education also supports employability and is a precondition for sustainable growth.

The action will contribute also to the external dimension of EU internal policies in the field of

education. It will support a successful green and sustainable global economic recovery in the third countries not associated to the Programme, linked to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement.

The activities and outcomes of CBHE projects must be geared to benefit **the eligible third countries not associated to theprogramme,** their higher education institutions and systems.

Objectives of the Action

Specifically, the action will:

- Improve the quality of higher education in third countries not associated to the Programme and enhance its relevance for the labour market and society;
- Improve the level of competences, skills and employability potential of students in HEIs in the third countries not associated to the programme by developing new and innovative education programmes;
- Promote inclusive education, equality, equity, non-discrimination and the promotion of civic-competences in higher education in the third countries not associated to the Programme;
- Enhance the teaching, assessment mechanisms for HEI staff and students, quality assurance, management, governance, inclusion, innovation, knowledge base, digital and entrepreneurial capacities, as well as the internationalisation of HEIs in the third countries not associated to the Programme;
- Increase the capacities of HEIs, bodies in charge of higher education and competent authorities of third countries not associated to the Programme to modernise their higher education systems, particularly in terms of governance and financing, by supporting the definition, implementation and monitoring of reform processes;
- Improve the training of teachers and continuous professional development in order to impact the longer term quality of the education system in the third countries not associated to the Programme;
- Stimulate cooperation of institutions, capacity building and exchange of good practice;
- Foster cooperation across different regions of the world through joint initiatives.

The action will ensure equity and inclusion, system strengthening and capacity building as well as employability transversally across the action. Interventions will no longer address only the modernisation of teaching programmes per se, but should also take into account governance, management and the strengthening of higher education's wider economic and social ecosystems. Addressing regional issues, building alliances and coalitions, piloting new approaches and initiatives built on country ownership will be strongly encouraged. Supporting the implementation of the Green Deal, increasing the capacity of ICT in the third countries not associated to the Programme and student participation in planning and learning processes will be cross-cutting elements of the action. Coherence, synergies and complementarity with other relevant European Union interventions in the field will be ensured.

Expected impact

- Modernised HEIs which will not only transfer knowledge but also will create economic and social value through the transfer of their teaching and research results to the community/country;
- Improved access to and quality of higher education, in particular for people with fewer opportunities and in the poorest countries in the different regions;
- Increased participation of HEIs located in remote areas;

- Governance for efficient and effective policymaking and policy implementation in the field of higher education;
- Regional integration and establishment of comparable recognition, quality assurance tools to support academic cooperation, mobility for students, staff and researchers;
- A stronger link and cooperation with the private sector, promoting innovation and entrepreneurship;
- Alignment of the academic world with labour market enhancing employability of students;
- Increased students sense of initiative and entrepreneurship;
- Increased level of digital competence for students and staff;
- Institutional ownership of the CBHE results thus ensuring sustainability;
- National ownership by experimenting and mainstreaming positive and best practices in HE;
- Increased capacity and professionalism to work at international level: improved management competences and internationalisation strategies;
- Increased quality in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and follow-up of international projects.

Activities

The activities proposed must be directly linked to the objectives above, the regional priority areas, the characteristics of the Strands (see below) and they must be detailed in a project description covering the entire implementation period.

In the context of this action, project activities must be geared to strengthen and benefit the eligible third countries not associated to the Programme, their HEIs and other organisations active in the field of higher education and systems.Â

Funded projects will be able to integrate a wide range of cooperation, exchange, communication and other activities, examples of which are provided under the description of the three Strands available under this action. The proposed activities should bring an added value and will have a direct impact on the achievement of the project results.

Geographical targets

CBHE projects can be implemented as:

- National projects, i.e. projects involving institutions from only one eligible third country not associated to the Programme;
- Multi-country (regional) projects within one single eligible Region;
- Multi-country projects involving more than one Region (cross-regional) and involving at least one country from each eligible Region[1] .

For each Region there is a defined budget and further information on the amounts available are published on the Funding and Tender Opportunities Portal (FTOP): https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home

In addition to special attention being paid to improve equitable and gender balanced access to HEIs in third countries not associated to the Programme, in particular for people with fewer opportunities, the action will take an inclusive approach in all regions with the aim to increase the participation of the poorest and least developed third countries not associated to the Programme.

Regional priority areas

For Strands 1 and 2, proposals must respect pre-defined regional priorities, which are published on the Funding and Tender Opportunities Portal (FTOP):
https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home

For Strand 3, the proposals must respect the requirements for Ukraine published on on the Funding and Tender Opportunities Portal (FTOP):
https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home

Project strands

In order to respond to the various challenges in the third countries not associated to the Programme, the CBHE action is composed of three specific Strands:

Strand 1 - Fostering access to cooperation in higher education

This Strand is designed to attract less experienced HEIs and small-scale actors to the CBHE action to facilitate access to newcomer organisations[2] . These partnerships should act as a first step for HEIs and organisations with a smaller operational capacity located in third countries not associated to the Programme to access and increase means to reach out to people with fewer opportunities.This Strand will finance small-scale projects to reduce the internationalisation gap among HEIs from eligible third countries not associated to the Programme, from the same country or Region. Projects should establish partnerships to develop cooperation ideas as well as to facilitate transfer of know-how, experience and good practices, fostering access to capacity building opportunities and improving social inclusion and the access of students/staff with fewer opportunities to a qualitative higher education offer. In particular, these projects will particularly focus on:

- HEIs from least developed countries not associated to the Programme;
- HEIs located in remote regions/areas of third countries not associated to the Programme;
- Newcomers or less experienced HEIs and Faculties from third countries not associated to the Programme;
- Students and staff with fewer opportunities.

Activities

The proposed activities and project results should have a clear added-value for the targeted beneficiaries. A non-exhaustive list of possible activities is provided below:

Activities aiming at enhancing the management/administrative capacity of the targeted HEIs such as:

- reforming and modernising the university governance, including the enhancement of services in particular for the benefit of students (student guidance, counselling and job orientation etc.);
- establishing or strengthening international relations offices and elaborating internationalisation strategies;
- establishing new or developing existing quality assurance units and processes/strategy within HEIs;
- creating or increasing the capacity of planning and evaluation units;
- enhancing mechanisms for communication and dissemination of results from international

cooperation projects;
- building capacities to support students and staff mobility activities.

Activities aiming at ensuring high quality and relevant education such as:

- modules or study programmes, technical or professional orientations of programmes
- establishing intensive study programmes bringing together students and teaching staff from participating HEIs for shorter study periods
- developing capacities for postgraduate students and academic staff as well as promoting their mobility;
- implementing training courses for HEI academic staff;
- creating synergies and strengthening the links with the business sector and with private or public organisations active in the labour market and in the fields of education, training and youth.

Activities aiming at increasing the accessibility of the students/staff with fewer opportunities such as:

- developing remote and inclusive learning pathways and opportunities by relying on digital technology and e-learning for vulnerable students;
- updating the digital technology to develop specific services aiming at ensuring equal and fair learning opportunities to students with disabilities;
- promoting initiatives aiming at positive discrimination by empowering women and ethnic/religious minorities;
- develop initiatives addressing and reducing barriers faced by disadvantaged groups in accessing learning opportunities;
- contributing to creating inclusive environments that foster equity and equality, and that are responsive to the needs of the wider community.

Strand 2 - Partnerships for transformation in higher education

Projects under this Strand shall address the different state of advancement and challenges of HEIs located in eligible third countries not associated to the Programme, enhance the impact of the Programme and where relevant complement other sources of funding. They shall introduce new approaches and initiatives in higher education, based on peer learning and transfer of experience and good practice affecting not only the institutions but also the society at large. Partnerships for transformation in higher education are complex and innovative capacity building projects based on a transfer of experience, competencies and good practice with a range of interconnected activities that aim to strengthen the capacities of the targeted HEIs to address the 21st century challenges such as migration, climate change, governance and shifts towards a digital economy. The projects outcomes should have a significant and long-term impact on the targeted HEIs beyond the projects' lifetime and as such benefitting the society as a whole.

In particular, these projects will combine the following elements for the benefit of HEIs in the third countries not associated to the Programme:

- **Innovation in higher education** in order to enhance its relevance for the labour market and the society. It is expected that the proposed projects address mismatches between the requirements of employers and the offer of higher education institutions and propose integral solutions to enhance better employability of students. This can be done by implementing comprehensive interventions that include:
    - the design of innovative curricula and introducing innovative elements in the existing

curricula;
- the implementation of innovative learning and teaching methods (i.e. learner-centred and real problem-based teaching and learning);
- the active engagement with the business world and with research, the organisation of continuing educational programmes and activities with and within enterprises;
- the strengthening of the capacities of HEIs in the third countries not associated to the Programme to network effectively in research, scientific and technological innovation.
- **Promoting reform in HEIs** to become catalysts of economic and social development in the third countries not associated to the programme. Projects should support HEIs to develop and implement the institutional reforms that will make them more democratic, inclusive, equitable and full-fledged constituents of the civil society. Institutional reforms include new governance and management systems and structures, readiness in terms of digital skills, modern university services, quality assurance processes, tools and methods for professionalisation and professional development of academic, technical and administrative staff. Â The development of an entrepreneurial mind-set and improved competencies and skills within the institutions are key aspects for the success of this Strand. Transversal skills learning, entrepreneurship education and the practical application of entrepreneurial skills will enable HEIs to put their knowledge and resources at the service of their local/national/regional communities.

Activities

The proposed activities and project results should have a clear added-value for the targeted beneficiaries. A non-exhaustive list of possible activities is provided below:

- development, testing and adaptation of innovative curricula in terms of content [key competences and transversal skills, (entrepreneurship, problem solving, green jobs etc.)], structure (modular, jointâ¦) and teaching/learning methods (including the use of open and flexible learning, virtual mobility, open educational resources, blended learning, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC), etc.;
- development, testing and implementation of new learning methods, tools and materials (like new multidisciplinary curricula, learner-centred and real problem-based teaching and learning) through practical training and placements of students;
- introduction of Bologna-type reforms (three-level cycle system, transparency tools such as credit systems and Diploma Supplement, quality assurance, evaluation, National/Regional Qualification Frameworks, recognition of prior and non-formal learning, etc.) at institutional level;
- introducing practical training schemes, internships and study of real-life cases in business and industry, which are fully embedded in the curriculum, recognised and credited;
- introducing dual learning systems bridging tertiary studies with upper secondary VET as a mean to boost the employability of graduates;
- development of solutions for challenging issues, product and process innovation (students, professors and practitioners together);
- development and testing solutions to pressing social demands not addressed by the market and directed towards vulnerable groups in society; addressing societal challenges or relating to changes in attitudes and values, strategies and policies, organisational structures and processes, delivery systems and services;
- support the creation of centres, incubators for innovation, technology transfer and business start-ups, and the integration of education, research and innovation at institutional/regional/national level;
- development and testing of continuous education programmes and activities with and within enterprises;

- set-ups to trial and test innovative measures; exchanges of students, researchers, teaching staff and enterprise staff for a limited period; providing incentives for involvement of enterprise staff into teaching and research;
- reform of governance and management systems and structures at institutional level (incl. quality assurance methods and systems, financial management and HEI autonomy, international relations, student services and counselling, career guidance, academic and research boards, etc.);
- development of strategies and tools for the internationalisation of HEIs (international openness of curricula, inter-institutional mobility schemes), and their capacity to network effectively in research, scientific and technological innovation (scientific cooperation and knowledge transfer, etc.);
- development and testing solutions to pressing social demands not addressed by the market and directed towards vulnerable groups in society; addressing societal challenges or relating to changes in attitudes and values, strategies and policies, organisational structures and processes, delivery systems and services;
- development of solutions for challenging issues, product and process innovation (students, professors and practitioners together);
- development, adaptation and delivery of tools and methods for the upskilling, evaluation/assessment, professionalisation and professional development of academic and administrative staff, for the initial training of teachers and continuous career development.

Strand 3 - Structural reform projects

Projects under this Strand shall support efforts in third countries not associated to the Programme to develop coherent and sustainable systems of higher education to meet their socio-economic needs and broad ambition to create a knowledge-driven economy. Mainstreaming and upscaling of successful results as well as synergies with ongoing or pipeline support in the area under bilateral support programmes are also elements of this Strand. Structural Reform projects will address the needs of eligible third countries not associated to the Programme to support sustainable systemic and structural improvement and innovation at the level of the higher education sector. More specifically, these projects will address the efforts of countries to develop coherent and sustainable systems of Higher Education to meet their socio-economic needs and ultimately create a knowledge-driven economy. By involving the competent National Authorities (notably Ministries of Education) of third countries not associated to the Programme, HEIs, Research institutions and other relevant authorities/bodies and stakeholders, these projects will particularly:

- Promote cooperation and mutual learning among and between public authorities at the highest institutional level of the EU Member states or third countries associated to the Programme and the eligible third countries not associated to the Programme to foster systemic improvement and innovation in the higher education sector.
- Promote inclusive higher education systems that can provide the right conditions for students of different backgrounds to access learning and succeed. Particular attention should therefore be paid to people with fewer opportunities.
- Increase the capacities of HEIs of third countries not associated to the Programme, bodies in charge of higher education and competent authorities (notably Ministries) through their participation in the definition, implementation and monitoring of reform processes to modernise their higher education systems, particularly in terms of governance and financing;
- Identify synergies with ongoing EU initiatives in the third country(ies) not associated to the Programme in areas covered by Erasmus+

Strengthening the education digital environment for Ukraine

Under this Strand 3, this action will also support a Structural reform project aimed at the creation of an open education digital environment to offer quality higher education for students enrolled in Ukrainian Higher Education Institutions, in particular for those fleeing from Ukraine or internally displaced students - as well as educational opportunities for the wide Ukrainian community abroad - based on cooperation between Ukrainian and other European universities. Such a digital environment would also support exchanges and cooperation with academic staff.

The expected goal of this project is to:

- support the development of a high-performing digital education ecosystem of Ukrainian universities, thus guaranteeing the continuation of their activities, as well as their performance during and after the conflict;
- support the digitalisation of teaching and learning methods and the provision of infrastructure required for online and inclusive learning, also in line with the general goals of the Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027.

More specifically, through this project a network of Ukrainian higher education institutions will be given the opportunity to set up a joint multi-institutional online platform which would also inter-connect existing digital education platforms. European education institutions experienced in distance and online learning may also provide support for setting up and running the joint platform.

This platform would bring together digital online courses and other relevant content taught at the Ukrainian universities before the war and updated according to the project quality standards. The platform could also allow for course management, registration, authentification of students, repository of learning materials, online exams and assessment etc. The main targets of the platform would be those HEIs that irrevocably or partly lost their infrastructure with academic staff and their students relocated to other regions of Ukraine or abroad, although it may also support other Ukrainian HEIs and their students.

During the project the Ukrainian partners would be given the opportunity to implement the following indicative list of activities:

- design inter-institutional rules and mechanisms for developing university courses and materials;
- design and deliver digital education content and courses, which will be made available to all Ukrainian HEIs through the online platform;
- provide training activities for academic staff delivering online and distance teaching through the platform;
- develop procedures for recognition of the learning outcomes and ECTS credits, in particular for the university courses;
- develop joint quality assurance mechanisms;
- any high-quality activity which will ensure continuity of the Ukrainian higher education system, despite the difficult circumstances.

In the medium term, the platform could serve as a basis for the establishment of an Open University in Ukraine, which would bring together the digital offer of the existing universities and on top of that, it would also allow for the development of new programmes, including new online courses and relevant study material. Additional information and requirements for will be published on the [Funding and Tender Opportunities Portal (FTOP)](#).

Activities

Projects should propose activities that will bring a clear added value to the higher education system as a whole and that will have a direct impact on the targeted beneficiaries. These activities should contribute to the reform of higher education policies that respond to societal and labour market needs.

A non-exhaustive list of possible activities is provided below:

- Foster national ownership by experimenting and mainstreaming positive and best practices in Higher Education at national and/or regional level:
  - to increase the employability of graduates;
  - to widen access to Higher Education to people with fewer opportunities;
  - to strengthen the links between, education, research and innovation.
- Contribute to efficient and effective policy making in the field of higher education by involving other stakeholders in the Higher Education field:
  - encouraging the participation of other responsible public authoritiesÂ to increase the relevance of the Higher Education sector and increase its impact on society at large;
  - enabling the active participation of students in governance and reform of the Higher Education system;
  - involving associations active in other relevant fields such as vocational training and youth;
  - enhancing the international dimension of higher education through cooperation between high-level institutions in EU Member states or third countries associated to the Programme and in eligible third countries not associated to the Programme. In particular, developing and implementing schemes that facilitate the mobility of students and academic staff such as the creation of a regional credit transfer system or support to the development of National Qualifications Frameworks;
  - defining a national / regional quality assurance framework;
- Foster regional academic cooperation and promote voluntary convergence of the third countries not associated to the Programme towards a common regional strategy in the field of Higher Education:
  - defining steps to create a regional Higher Education Area;
  - facilitating national and cross-border recognition;
  - removing barriers to learning, improving access to high quality and innovation-driven education and making it easier for teachers, learners and workers to move between countries
- Foster the introduction of funding mechanisms aiming at:
  - increasing the participation of people with fewer opportunities in higher education;
  - bridging the digital divide at institutional and individual level.
- Enhance the attractiveness of the teaching profession by introducing measures such as:
  - promoting initiatives for career development;
  - promoting their participation in the internationalisation of Higher Education by creating incentives.

Responsible public authorities with competences in the sectors touched upon by the project (e.g. employment, youth, finance, social affairs, home affairs, justice, health, etc.) are encouraged to participate in the projects as well as authorities from EU Member states or third countries associated to the Programme.

HEIs from eligible third countries not associated to the Erasmus + programme are particularly encouraged to act as applicants under this Strand.

Strengthening the education digital environment for Ukraine

More specifically for this initiative, it is expected that a network of Ukrainian institutions with support of European institutions experienced in distance learning will set up an online platform which brings together digital online courses and other relevant content taught at the Ukrainian universities before the war and updated according to the project quality standards (first stage) and or specially developed within/ for the Open (Virtual) Ukrainian University (second stage). The objective should be for the courses to be offered at the platform will be provided by Ukrainian Universities, therefore the students will would study and graduate similarly as an on-campus student.

During the project the institutions would need to design inter-institutional rules and mechanisms for developing the University courses and materials, as well as delivery, teaching and learning of the courses, which are to be available for all Ukrainian HEIs through the on line platform; to develop procedures of recognition of the learning outcomes and ECTS credits, in particular for the University Courses; to develop joint mechanisms of quality assurance including a self-evaluation framework of the OVUU courses and materials. The project will support the creation of new digital education content and courses.

Training activities for Ukrainian academics in distance teaching will be included in the platform.

It is expected that at the first stage the platform will mainly support HEIs that irrevocably or partly lost their infrastructure with academic staff and students relocated to other regions of Ukraine or abroad, other UA HEIs and students.

The platform will create visibility and access to the digital educational products, developed by the Ukrainian HEIs, for the wider public in Ukraine and worldwide through Open Courses.

Eligibility criteria

Who can apply?

Eligible third countries not associated to the Programme for this action:

All third countries not associated to the Programme (please see section "Eligible Countries" in Part A of this Guide) in Regions 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11[3] .

Exception: organisations from Belarus (Region 2) and the Russian Federation (Region 4) are not eligible to participate in this action.

For Strands 1 & 2

The applicants (coordinator and partners) must be legal entities:

- higher education institutions (HEIs) or organisations of HEIs[4] ;
- established in an EU Member State, in a third country associated to the Programme[5] or in eligible third countries not associated to the Programme.

For Strand 3

Strengthening the education digital environment for Ukraine:

Proposals must be submitted by a consortium (coordinator and partners), which complies with the

following conditions:

Geographical coverage:

- Territory of Ukraine as recognised by international law;
- at least 1 EU Member State or third country associated to the Programme;

Institutional coverage:

- at least 1 HEI from each participating country;
- national competent authority (e.g. Ministry) responsible for higher education in Ukraine.

Other Structural Reform Projects:

The applicants (coordinator and partners) must be legal entities:

- higher education institutions (HEIs), organisations of HEIs or recognised national or international rector, teacher or student organisations;
- established in an EU Member State, in a third country associated to the Programme or in eligible third countries not associated to the Programme;
- organisations from Syria are not eligible to participate in this Strand.

HEIs located in an EU Member State or in a third country associated to the Programme must hold a valid Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE).

The higher education institutions (HEIs), established in eligible third countries not associated to the Programme, and recognised as such by the competent authorities, with their affiliated entities (if any), have to offer full study programmes leading to higher education degrees and recognised diplomas at tertiary education qualifications level[6] .

Associations, public or private organisations, including their affiliated entities (if any), active in the labour market or in the fields of education, training and youth located in an EU Member State, in a third country associated to the Programme or eligible third countries not associated to the Programme, may also participate, but not as coordinator.

Consortium composition

For Strands 1 & 2

Proposals must be submitted by a consortium (coordinator and partners), which complies with the following conditions:

Geographical coverage:

- at least 2 EU Member States or third countries associated to the Programme;
- at least 1 eligible third country not associated to the Programme;
- at least 2 eligible third countries not associated to the Programme for Regions 1, 10 and 11;
- at least one third country not associated to the Programme from Region 10 and another one from Region 11 for projects involving both Regions[7] .

Institutional coverage:

- at least 1 HEI from each participating EU Member State or third country associated to the

Programme;
- at least 2 HEIs from each participating third countries not associated to the Programme.

Institutional coverage applies to all countries participating in the consortium.

The number of applicants from third countries not associated to the Programme must be equal or higher than the number of applicants from EU Member States and third countries associated to the Programme.

Exception:

In third countries not associated to the Programme where the number of HEIs is lower than 5 in the whole country, or in cases where one single institution represents more than 50% of the overall student population of the country, applications counting only one HEI from those countries will be accepted.

For Strand 3:

Proposals must be submitted by a consortium (coordinator and partners), which complies with the following conditions:

Geographical coverage:

- at least 2 EU Member States or third countries associated to the Programme;
- at least 1 eligible third country not associated to the Programme.

Institutional coverage:

- at least 1 HEI from each participating EU Member State or third country associated to the Programme;
- at least 2 HEIs from each participating third country not associated to the Programme;
- national competent authority (e.g. Ministry) responsible for higher education in each of the eligible third countries not associated to the Programme.

Institutional coverage applies to all countries participating in the consortium.

The number of applicants from third countries not associated to the Programme must be equal or higher than the number of applicants from EU Member states and third countries associated to the Programme.

Exception:

In third countries not associated to the Programme where the number of HEIs is lower than 5 in the whole country, or in cases where one single institution represents more than 50% of the overall student population of the country, applications counting only one HEI from those countries will also be accepted.

Venues of the activities

The activities should take place in the countries participating in the projects.

Duration of the project

For Strands 1 & 2

Projects should normally last 24 or 36 months (extensions are possible, if duly justified and through an amendment).

For Strand 3

Projects should normally last 36 or 48 months (extensions are possible, if duly justified and through an amendment).

Where to apply?

To the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA).

Strand 1

Call ID: ERASMUS -EDU-2023-CBHE

Topic ID: ERASMUS -EDU-2023-CBHE-STRAND-1

Strand 2

Call ID: ERASMUS -EDU-2023-CBHE

Topic ID: ERASMUS -EDU-2023-CBHE-STRAND-2

Strand 3

Call ID: ERASMUS -EDU-2023-CBHE

Topic ID: ERASMUS -EDU-2023-CBHE-STRAND-3

When to apply?

Applicants have to submit their grant application by **16 February at 17:00:00 (Brussels time)**.

Award criteria

The project will be assessed in a two-step procedure against the following criteria:

Step 1

Relevance of the project - (maximum score 30 points)

- **Purpose**: the proposal is relevant to the objectives and activities of the CBHE action and specificities of the Strand. It constitutes an adequate response to the current needs and constraints of the target country(ies) or Region(s) and of the target groupsÂ and final beneficiaries. The needs of the targeted participants with fewer opportunities (where applicable) are taken into account. The proposal addresses the EU overarching priorities.
- **Objectives**: the objectives are based on a sound needs analysis; they are clearly defined, specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound. They address issues relevant to the

participating organisations (in line with the modernisation, development and internationalisation strategy of the targeted HEIs), and development strategies for higher education in the eligible third countries not associated to the Programme.

- **Link to EU policy and initiatives**: the proposal takes into account and enhances complementarity/synergies with other interventions funded by the EU and other entities (donors, public and private), where appropriate.
- **EU added value**: The proposal demonstrates that similar results could not be achieved without the cooperation of HEIs from the EU Member states or third countries associated to the Programme and without the EU funding.

In particular for Strand 1

- The proposal clearly addresses the pre-defined regional priorities for the target country(ies) or Region(s).

In particular for Strand 2

- The proposal focuses on innovative elements and state of the art methods and techniques in the identified area of intervention.
- The proposal clearly addresses the pre-defined regional priorities for the target Region(s).

In particular for Strand 3

- The proposal addresses the reform and modernisation of the higher education system(s) in line with the development strategies of the targeted third countries not associated to the Programme.

Quality of the project design and implementation - (maximum score 30 points)

- **Coherence**: the overall project design ensures consistency between project objectives, methodology, activities and the budget proposed. The proposal presents a coherent and comprehensive set of appropriate activities to meet the identified needs and the expected results.
- **Methodology**: the logic of the intervention is of good quality, planned outputs and outcomes are coherent and feasible, and key assumptions and risks have been clearly identified. The structure and content of the Logical Framework Matrix (LFM) is adequate, i.e. the choice of objectively verifiable indicators, data availability, baseline data, target values, etc;
- **Work plan**: 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 theÂ deliverables; the relation between the resources and the expected results is adequate and the work plan is realistic, with well-defined activities, time-lines, clear deliverables and milestones.
- **Budget**: the proposal is cost efficient and allocates the appropriate financial resources necessary for a successful implementation of the project.
- **Quality control**: control measures (continuous quality evaluation, peer reviews, benchmarking activities, mitigating actions etc.) and quality indicators ensure that the project implementation is of high quality.
- **Environmental sustainability**: the project is designed in an eco-friendly way and incorporates green practices (e.g. green travel) in different project phases.

Quality of the partnership and the cooperation arrangements - (maximum score 20 points)

- Â **Management**: solid management arrangements are foreseen. Timelines, governance

structures, collaboration arrangements and responsibilities are well defined and realistic.

- **Composition**: the partnership gathers an appropriate mix of organisations with the necessary competences relevant to the objectives of the proposal and to the specificities of the Strand; the proposal includes the most appropriate and diverse range of non-academic partners.
- **Tasks**: roles and tasks are assigned on the basis of the specific know-how, profiles and experience of each partner and are appropriate.
- **Collaboration**: effective mechanisms are proposed to ensure efficient collaboration, communication and conflict resolution between the partner organisations and any other relevant stakeholders.
- **Commitment**: the contribution from the project partners is significant, pertinent and complementary; the proposal demonstrates the partners￼ involvement, commitment and ownership of the project￼s specific objectives and results, in particular from the third countries not associated to the Programme.

In particular for Strand 2

- The proposal involves relevant non-academic organisations and stakeholders that will bring an innovative added-value to the proposal objectives.

In particular for Strand 3

- The proposal demonstrates that the competent national authorities for higher education are strongly involved in the steering and implementation of the action.

Sustainability, impact and dissemination of the expected results - (maximum score 20 points)

- **Exploitation**: the proposal demonstrates how the outcomes of the project will be used by the partners and other stakeholders, how multiplier effects will be ensured (including scope for replication and extension of the outcome of the action at sectorial, as well as local/regional/national or international level) and it provides means to measure exploitation within the project funding time and after.
- **Dissemination**: the proposal provides a clear and efficient plan for the dissemination of results, and includes appropriate activities and their timing, tools and channels to ensure that the results and benefits will be spread effectively to all relevant stakeholders and non-participating audience, reaching out and attracting relevant stakeholders to the outcomes within and after the project￼s funding time;
- **Impact**: the proposal ensures a tangible impact on its target groups and relevant stakeholders at local, national or regional level. It includes measures, as well as goals and indicators to monitor progress and assess the expected impact (short-and long-term) at individual, institutional and systemic level.
- **Sustainability**: the proposal explains how the project results will be sustained financially (after the end of project funding) and institutionally (activities and services continuing to be in place) and how the local ownership will be ensured.

In particular for Strand 1:

- The proposal ensures a continuous and sustainable response to the existing barriers and the increase of accessibility of students/staff with fewer opportunities to the learning opportunities and resources offered by the HEIs.
- The proposal is likely to increase the international cooperation capacities of institutions in third countries not associated to the Programme.

In particular for Strand 2:

- The proposal ensures a significant impact on the institutions of the third countries not associated to the Programme, in particular on the development of their innovation capacities and the modernisation of their governance, in opening themselves up to the society at large, the labour market and the wider world.
- The proposal demonstrates its potential for wider impact on the society and/or the economic sector.

In particular for Strand 3:

- The proposal demonstrates how the project results will lead to policy reforms or modernisation in higher education at systemic level.

The applications may score up to 100 points. To be considered for funding, proposals must score at least 60 points in total and at least half of the maximum points for each award criterion.

In case of ex aequo proposals, priority will be given to projects scoring highest under the criterion "Relevance of the project" and then â□□Sustainability, impact and dissemination of the expected resultsâ□□.

Following this, proposals meeting the above quality requirements will be ranked in descending order of their total scores. In order to proceed to Step 2, a list of applications per region of two times the estimated number of funded projects per Strand (based on the available regional budget8) - will be established.

In addition, the Evaluation Committee will take into account:

- a thematic variety of projects and a sufficient geographical representation within a Region in terms of number of projects per country;
- compliance with the requirements applicable to the following Regions:
  - For Eastern Partnership countries: for Strands 1 and 2 priority will be given to HEIs from non-capital and/or rural and/or more remote regions;
  - For Asia, Central Asia, Middle East and Pacific: for Strands 1 and 2 priority will be given to the least developed countries;
  - For Sub-Saharan Africa: for all Strands, priority will be given to the least developed countries; a special emphasis shall also be put on migration priority countries and on regional projects involving HEIs from several countries. No country can obtain more than 8% of the funding foreseen for the Region.

Following this, proposals will be ranked in descending order by Region and by Strand.

In a second step, for proposals that are proposed by the Evaluation committee for funding (and the reserve list), the EU Delegation(s) in the relevant eligible third country(ies) not associated to the Programme will be consulted on the following aspects:

- Recognition of HEIs by the national competent authorities
- Feasibility of the project in the local context of the third country(ies)
- The project is contributing to the local needs in the priority area
- Overlapping with existing initiatives in the chosen thematic area funded by the EU Delegation, national or international donors

Only projects that have passed successfully the consultation of the EU Delegation(s) will be

maintained for an EU funding, within the limits of the available budget per Region and up to a maximum of two funded proposals per applicant organisation. An indicative budget is foreseen for each of the three Strands, however a budget transfer from one Strand to another is possible.

Additional information

The acceptance of an application does not constitute an undertaking to award funding equal of the amount requested by the applicant. The funding requested may be reduced on the basis of the financial rules applicable to the action Strands 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 authoritiesâ 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.

Setting up a project

The following points should be taken into consideration

1. Commitment of partner institutions in the project

An effective CBHE project must ensure a strong participation of all partner institutions especially the ones in the third countries not associated to the Programme. A shared ownership in the setting up of the proposal will make them responsible for the project outcomes and the sustainability of the project. CBHE projects may involve âAssociated partnersâ which contribute to the implementation of specific project tasks/activities or support the dissemination and sustainability of the project. For contractual management issues, âAssociated partnersâ are not considered as part of the partnership, and they do not receive funding.

2. Needs analyses

AssessingÂ needsÂ isÂ theÂ firstÂ importantÂ stepÂ inÂ theÂ development of a CBHE proposal. The purpose of a needs assessment is to identify those areas/fields that need to be strengthened, and the reasons for the gaps inÂ those areas.Â That, in turn, providesÂ theÂ basisÂ forÂ designingÂ appropriate interventions to address the gaps and, thereby, build the HEIsÂ capacity.

3. Implementation and monitoring

Once the needs analyses has been completed, an implementation plan can be set up to address the gaps that have been identified.

The following core elements should be taken into account:

- **Modernisation /new curricula**: For projects including âcurriculum developmentâ it is expected to include training for teaching staff and address related issues such as quality assurance and employability of graduates through links to the labour market. Study programmes should be officially accredited and or licensed before the end of the projectâs funding period. The teaching of new or updated courses must start during the lifetime of the project with an adequate number of students and retrained teachers and has to take place during at least one third of the project duration. Training within curriculum reform projects

can also target administrative personnel such as library staff, laboratory staff and IT staff. Projects are strongly encouraged to embed in the modernised curricula placements for students in the business/enterprise. The placements must have a reasonable duration to allow the acquiring of necessary skills

- **Involvement of students**: The projects should foresee the involvement of students (e.g. in the elaboration of new study programmes) and this not only during the testing/piloting phase of the project.
- **Mobility of staff and students**: Mobility must be targeted mainly at students from third countries not associated to the programme and staff from the third countries not associated to the Programme and are addressed to: staff (e.g. managers, research and technology transfer, technical and administrative staff) under an official contract in the beneficiary institutions and involved in the project ; students [at short cycle, first cycle (Bachelor or equivalent), second cycle (Master or equivalent) and third or doctoral cycle] registered in one of the beneficiary institutions. Mobility of students within and between EU Member states and third countries associated to the Programme is not eligible. The mobility must be of a reasonable duration to ensure learning and acquiring of necessary skills in line with project objectives and should normally not be shorter than one week. It is advisable to combine physical mobility with virtual mobility. It can be used to prepare, support and follow up physical mobility. It can also be organised to address people with special needs or with fewer opportunities to help them overcome the barriers to long-term physical mobility.
- **Quality assurance** must be an embedded project component to ensure that CBHE projects successfully deliver the expected results and achieve an impact beyond the partnership itself. Quality control measures, including indicators and benchmarks, must be put in place to ensure that the project implementation is of high quality, completed in time and cost-efficient.
- **Partnership agreement**: Detailed implementation modalities of the project must be agreed between the project partners and formalised in a â partnership agreementâ to be signed by the partners at the beginning of the project. A copy of the partnership agreement has to be submitted to the Executive Agency within six months of the signature of the grant agreement
- **Equipment**: Only the purchase of equipment which is directly relevant to the objectives of the Strand and made not later than 12 months before the end of the project can be considered as eligible expenditure. Equipment is intended exclusively for the HEIs of the third countries not associated to the Programme included in the partnership, where it must be recorded in the official inventory of the HEIs for which it is purchased.
- **Impact and sustainability**: CBHE projects are expected to have a long-term structural impact in the eligible third countries not associated to the Programme. The proposals will have to demonstrate the expected impact at the three levels (individual, institutional and system) where relevant and should set up a methodology and identify tools to measure it.
- **Eco-friendly implementation**: The projects should consider environmentally sound practices in the implementation of their activities, including the project management. Projects are expected to record and calculate systematically participantsâ individual transport-related carbon footprint.
- **Open access**: The proposal should ensure that the materials, documents and media produced will be made freely available and promoted through open licenses and without 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 applicant. 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 is as follows:

- For **Strand 1** – Fostering access to cooperation in higher education: Between EUR 200,000 and EUR 400,000 per project
- For **Strand 2** - Partnerships for transformation in higher education: Between EUR 400,000 and EUR 800,000 per project
- For **Strand 3** - Strengthening the education digital environment for Ukraine: up to EUR 5,000,000. Other Structural Reform projects: between EUR 600,000 and EUR 1,000,000 per project

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:

- The budget should be detailed as necessary by beneficiaries and organised in coherent work packages (for example divided into "project management", "training", "organisation of events", "mobility preparation and implementation", "communication and dissemination", "quality assurance", "equipment" etc.;
- The proposal must describe the activities/deliverable covered by each work package;
- Applicants must provide in their proposal a breakdown of the estimated costs showing the share per work package (and, within each work package, the share assigned to each beneficiary and affiliated entity;
- Costs described can cover staff costs, travel and subsistence costs, equipment costs and subcontracting as well as other costs (such us dissemination of information, publishing or translation);
- The costs for equipment should present a maximum of 35% of the awarded EU grant and the EU grant will cover 100% of the eligible costs;
- The subcontracting should represent a maximum of 10% of the awarded EU grant.

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. The lump sum value will be limited to a maximum of 90% of the estimated budget determined after evaluation and the grant parameters (maximum grant amount, funding rate, total eligible costs, etc.) will be fixed in the Grant Agreement.

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):
https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home

- [1] Cross-regional projects must be in the priority areas of all Regions involved, demonstrate their relevance for each Region and justify this by a detailed analysis of common needs and objectives.
- [2] Please see definition of newcomer organisation in Part D - Glossary.
- [3] With the exception of high income countries (HICs) in Regions 5, 7 and 8 (please see section "Eligible Countries" in Part A of this Guide).
- [4] An organisation of HEIs will not be considered as HEIs. Only those members, which are

established in an EU Member state or third country associated to the Programme or eligible third country not associated to the Programme can benefit from the grant.

- [5](#) Countries which are in ongoing negotiations for an association agreement and where the agreement enters into force before grant signature are eligible.
- [6](#) International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 2013), tertiary education, at least level 5. Post-secondary non-tertiary education ISCED 2011 level 4 is not accepted.
- [7](#) It is possible to present interregional projects with only one third country not associated to the programme from the region 10 and another one from the region 11.
- [8](#) Indicative amounts available per region are published on the Funding and Tender Opportunities Portal (FTOP): https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home

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