EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS GUIDE

2021 Call

In case of discrepancy between language versions, the English text will prevail.

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INTRODUCTION

This Guide is a tool for anybody who would like to have a thorough knowledge of what the European Solidarity Corps (referred also as 'Corps' or 'Programme') is about. This document is mainly addressed to organisations, institutions, bodies willing to organise activities under the European Solidarity Corps and young people wishing to get involved in solidarity activities supported by the Corps.

All rules and conditions for receiving a grant from the European Solidarity Corps are specified in this Guide.

HOW TO READ THE EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS GUIDE

The Guide has four main parts:

- **Part A** offers a general overview of the European Solidarity Corps, its scope and structure. It provides information about its objectives, priorities and main features; eligible countries; implementing structures and the overall budget available.
- **Part B** provides information on the Actions of the European Solidarity Corps supported under the strand "Participation of young people in solidarity activities".
- **Part C** provides information about the Actions of the European Solidarity Corps supported under the strand "Participation of young people in humanitarian aid related solidarity activities".
- **Part D** provides important information concerning quality and support measures offered to participating organisations and participants during the preparation, implementation and follow-up of activities and projects[1]
- **Part E** gives detailed information on procedures for grant application and selection of projects, as well as the financial and administrative provisions linked to the award of a European Solidarity Corps grant[2].

Furthermore, this Guide includes the following Annexes:

- **Annex I**: Glossary of the key terms used in this Guide
- **Annex II**: Participations
- **Annex III**: Contact details

The European Solidarity Corps Guide is drafted in accordance with the 2021 Annual Work Programme adopted by the European Commission, and therefore may be revised to reflect the priorities and lines of action defined in the Work Programmes adopted in the following years. The implementation of this Guide is also subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the draft budget after the adoption of the budget for the year by the Budgetary Authority or as provided for in the system of provisional twelfths.

[1] Please note that this part is only relevant for the Actions covered by this guide.
[2] See previous footnote.

PART A - GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS

SINGLE ENTRY POINT FOR SOLIDARITY ACTIVITIES

The European Union is built on solidarity, a shared value which is strongly felt throughout European society. Solidarity defines the European project and provides the necessary unity to cope with current and future crises by holding a strong moral ground. Solidarity provides a clear compass to guide the European youth in their aspirations for a better Union.

Young people need easily accessible opportunities to engage in solidarity activities, which could enable them to express their commitment to the benefit of communities while acquiring useful experience and competences for their personal, educational, social, civic and professional development, thereby improving their employability.

The European Solidarity Corps brings together young people to build a more inclusive society, supporting vulnerable people and responding to societal and humanitarian challenges. It offers an inspiring and empowering experience for young people who want to help, learn and develop and provides a single entry point for such solidarity activities throughout the Union and beyond.

It opens up more and better opportunities covering a broad range of areas, such as integration of migrants, environmental challenges, prevention of natural disasters, education and youth activities, humanitarian aid. It also supports national and local actors, in their efforts to cope with different societal challenges and crises.

By extending its scope to cover volunteering activities in support of humanitarian aid operations, the European Solidarity Corps provides needs-based emergency aid and helps to deliver assistance, relief and protection where most needed. It thus helps addressing not only unmet societal needs in Europe but also humanitarian challenges in third countries.

The activities of the European Solidarity Corps support the objectives of the EU Youth Strategy for 2019-2027[3] which encourages young people to become active citizens, agents of solidarity and positive change for communities across Europe, inspired by EU values and a European identity.

BUILDING ON PAST EXPERIENCE, LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE

The European Solidarity Corps builds on the achievements of more than 25 years of European programmes in the field of youth and solidarity, especially on the success of the European Voluntary Service, on the EU Aid Volunteers initiative and on the previous European Solidarity Corps running from 2018 to 2020.

[3] https://europa.eu/youth/strategy_en

WHAT IS THE POLICY CONTEXT?

The EU Youth Strategy is the framework for EU youth policy cooperation for 2019-2027[4] within which it shall make the most of youth policy's potential. EU youth cooperation aims at tackling existing and upcoming challenges young people are facing all over Europe and provides a framework of objectives, principles, priorities, core areas and measures for youth policy cooperation for all relevant stakeholders.

An important aspect of the EU Youth Strategy is the 11 European Youth Goals[5], which were developed in the context of the EU youth dialogue through a participatory approach that involved decision-makers, young people and researchers. These Youth Goals present a vision for a Europe that enables young people to realise their full potential. They identify cross-sectoral areas that affect young people's lives and point out which challenges need to be tackled. Among others, the Youth Goals call for inclusive societies, space and participation for all and quality employment for all young people. The EU Youth Strategy should contribute to realising this vision of young people by mobilising EU level policy instruments as well as actions at national, regional and local level by all stakeholders.

The EU Youth Strategy is built on three core areas of action:

- ENGAGE
- CONNECT
- EMPOWER

Under ENGAGE, the EU Youth Strategy aims for a meaningful civic, economic, social, cultural and political participation of young people. The Strategy fosters youth participation in democratic life, supports social and civic engagement and aims to ensure that all young people have the necessary resources to take part in society.

Under CONNECT, the EU Youth Strategy underpins opportunities for young people to experience exchanges, cooperation and civic action in a European context first hand.

Under EMPOWER, the Strategy aims at supporting youth work in all its forms as catalyst for the empowerment of young people across Europe.

POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR VOLUNTEERING

Currently, the policy framework is mainly set by the 2008 Council recommendation on the mobility of young volunteers[6]. This Recommendation aims to eliminate obstacles to volunteering in Europe by raising awareness, increase the capacity to offer volunteering opportunities, reduce barriers to participation especially for disadvantaged groups and increase the recognition of skills gained. It should be, in the course of 2021, replaced by an updated policy guidance.

[4] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0269
[5] https://europa.eu/youth/strategy_en
[6] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2008:319:0008:0010:EN:PDF

WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES, PRIORITIES AND IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS?

OBJECTIVES

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

The general objective of the Programme is to enhance the engagement of young people and organisations in accessible and high-quality solidarity activities, primarily volunteering, as a means to strengthen cohesion, solidarity, democracy, European identity and active citizenship in the Union and beyond, addressing societal and humanitarian challenges on the ground, with a particular focus on the promotion of sustainable development, social inclusion and equal opportunities.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The specific objective of the Programme is to provide young people, including young people with fewer opportunities, with easily accessible opportunities for engagement in solidarity activities that induce positive societal changes in the Union and beyond, while improving and properly validating their competences, as well as facilitating their continuous engagement as active citizens.

PRIORITIES

INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

The European Solidarity Corps aims to promote social inclusion, tolerance, human rights and the value of differences and diversity of all kinds and to provide all young people equal access to opportunities offered under its Actions.

The Corps provides accessible and flexible formats of activities, additional financial support as well as a range of support measures (e.g. general and language training, insurance, support before and after solidarity activities, administrative assistance) to encourage the participation of young people with fewer opportunities and better cater for their specific needs. When designing their projects and activities, organisations should have an inclusive approach and make use of the available mechanisms to involve a diverse range of participants.

The European Solidarity Corps should also support projects and activities actively addressing the issue of inclusion and diversity more broadly in the society.

An Inclusion and Diversity Strategy has been developed to support organisations to better reach out to more participants with fewer opportunities and help addressing the barriers that different target groups may face.
Young people with fewer opportunities are young people who are at a disadvantage compared to their peers because they face one or more exclusion factors and obstacles. The list of barriers, spelt out below, is not exhaustive and is meant to provide a reference in taking action with a view to increasing accessibility and outreach to disadvantaged groups:

- **Disabilities**: This includes physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which may hinder someone's full and effective participation in society on the same footing as others.
- **Health problems**: Barriers may result from health issues including severe illnesses, chronic diseases, or any other physical or mental health-related situation that prevents from participating in the programmes.
- **Barriers linked to education and training systems**: Individuals performing poorly in education and training systems for various reasons and for early school-leavers, NEETs (people not in education, employment or training) and low-qualified adults may face barriers. Although other factors may play a role, these educational difficulties, while they may also be linked to personal circumstances, mostly result from an educational system which creates structural limitations and/or does not fully take into account the individual's particular needs. Individuals can also face barriers to participation when the structure of curricula makes it difficult to undertake a learning or training mobility abroad as part of their studies.
- **Cultural differences**: While cultural differences may be perceived as barriers by people from any backgrounds, they can particularly affect people with fewer opportunities. Such differences may represent significant barriers to learning in general, all the more for people with a migrant or refugee background – especially newly-arrived migrants -, people belonging to a national or ethnic minority, sign language users, people with linguistic adaptation and cultural inclusion difficulties, etc. Being exposed to foreign languages and cultural differences when taking part in any kind of programme activities may put off individuals and somehow limit the benefits from their participation. And such cultural differences may even prevent potential participants from applying for support through the programmes, thereby representing an entry barrier altogether.

- **Social barriers**: Social adjustment difficulties such as limited social competences, anti-social or high-risk behaviours, (ex-)offenders, (ex-)drug or alcohol abusers, or social marginalisation may represent a barrier. Other social barriers can stem from family circumstances, for instance being the first in the family to access higher education or being a parent (especially a single parent), a caregiver, a breadwinner or an orphan, or having lived or currently living in institutional care.
- **Economic barriers**: Economic disadvantage like a low standard of living, low income, learners who need to work to support themselves, dependence on the social welfare system, in long-term unemployment, precarious situations or poverty, being homeless, in debt or with financial problems, etc, may represent a barrier.
- **Barriers linked to discrimination**: linked to gender, age, ethnicity, religion, beliefs, sexual orientation, disability, or intersectional factors (a combination of one or several of the mentioned discrimination barriers).
- **Geographical barriers**: living in remote or rural areas, on small islands or in peripheral/outermost regions, in urban suburbs, in less serviced areas (limited public transport, poor facilities), etc, may constitute a barrier. Other difficulties may derive from the limited transferability of services (in particular support to people with fewer opportunities) that needs to be "mobile" together with the participants when going to a far place or, all the more, abroad.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CLIMATE ACTION

The European Solidarity Corps can make a meaningful contribution to the Commission's commitment to tackling climate and environmental-related challenges. To contribute to the European Green Deal[7], the Programme aims at integrating green practices into all projects and activities as well as promoting environmentally sustainable and responsible behaviour among participants and participating organisations. Organisations and participants should thus have an environmental-friendly approach when designing and implementing their activities.

The Programme also supports projects and activities addressing the topic of environmental protection, sustainability and climate goals and aiming to protect, conserve and enhance natural capital, to raise awareness about environmental sustainability and to enable behavioural changes for individual preferences, consumption habits and lifestyles.

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

The political guidelines of the European Commission underline the need for Europe to lead the digital transition[8]. The European Solidarity Corps can play a role by supporting Europeans, regardless of their gender, age and background to live and thrive in the digital age through projects and activities that aim to boost digital skills, foster digital literacy and/or develop an understanding of the risks and opportunities of digital technology.

The European Solidarity Corps also promotes the use of virtual components such as information, communication and technology tools in all projects and activities.

PARTICIPATION IN DEMOCRATIC LIFE

The programme promotes participation of young people in democratic processes and civic engagement. With volunteering at its heart, the programme engages and empowers young people to be active in society and addresses the Europe-wide trends of youth limited participation in democratic life and the low levels of knowledge and awareness about European matters that have an impact on the lives of all European citizens.

The European Solidarity Corps should also strive to strengthen EU identity and raise participants' awareness of common EU values, the principles of unity and diversity, as well as social, cultural and historical heritage.

PREVENTION, PROMOTION AND SUPPORT IN THE FIELD OF HEALTH

The European Solidarity Corps can add a significant value to the work ahead of Europe and beyond in addressing the COVID-19's impact and recovery, particularly when it comes to prevention, promotion and support in the field of health. It should play an important role in supporting the health and social care system, under extreme pressure, improving people's experience of care, building stronger relationships between services and communities.

The European Solidarity Corps should also aim at mobilising volunteers around other health challenges, such as those related to cancer, and around health, sport and well-being in general including the promotion of a healthy lifestyle and physical activity[9].

[7] https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/actions-being-taken-eu_en
[8] https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/shaping-europe-digital-future_en
[9] In line with the HealthyLifeStyle4All initiative

IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS

In line with the objectives of the European Solidarity Corps, the following features deserve special attention.

VOLUNTEERING IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CORPS

In the context of the European Solidarity Corps, volunteering is a full-time[10] unpaid activity that has a duration of up to 12 months and contributes to the achievement of the common good. This type of solidarity activity is undertaken through participating organisations that offer young people the opportunity to carry out a wide variety of activities, in a structured way. Volunteering is one of the most visible manifestation of solidarity.

Volunteering also enables young people to acquire useful experience, skills and competences for their personal, educational, social, cultural, civic and professional development, thereby improving their employability and active citizenship. Activities supported under volunteering constitute a rich experience in a non-formal and informal learning context, which enhances young people's competences.

NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

Non-formal learning refers to learning which takes place outside formal education and training through learning activities and with some form of learning support. It has a participative and learner-centred approach; it is carried out by learners on a voluntary basis and is therefore closely linked to young people's needs, aspirations and interests.

Informal learning refers to the learning in daily life activities, at work, with peers, etc. It can often be characterised as learning by doing. In the youth sector, informal learning has an important role for example in peer group discussions, in voluntary activities and in a variety of other situations.

Non-formal and informal learning enable young people to acquire essential competences that contribute to their personal and socio-educational development and foster their active participation in society, thereby - amongst others - improving their employment prospects. Such learning experiences have also a strong potential to improve the attainment in formal education and training as well as to address young NEETs (i.e. young people not in employment, education or training) or young people with fewer opportunities and combat social exclusion.

Learning activities within the youth field are meant to have a significantly positive impact on young people as well as on the organisations involved, the communities in which these activities take place, the youth field itself and the European economic and societal sectors at large.

RECOGNITION AND VALIDATION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

To ensure the impact of European Solidarity Corps activities on the personal, educational, social, civic and professional development of the participants, the competences that are the learning outcomes of the solidarity activities should be properly identified and documented.

To that end, the use of effective instruments at Union and national level for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, such as Youthpass and Europass should be encouraged, as appropriate. For further information, see part D of this Guide.

EUROPEAN ADDED VALUE

The European Solidarity Corps shall support solidarity activities which present a clear European added value, for example by virtue of their:

- transnational character, particularly with regard to learning mobility and cooperation;
- ability to complement other programmes and policies at local, regional, national, Union and international level;
- European dimension with regard to the topics, aims, approaches, expected outcomes and other aspects of these solidarity activities;
- approach with regard to involving young people from different backgrounds;
- contribution to the effective use of Union transparency and recognition tools.

[10] at least 30 and not more than 38 hours per week

INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION

European Solidarity Corps includes a strong international dimension (i.e. cooperation with partner countries, through involvement of young people and organisations). Through its extended geographical scope, the Corps contributes to the EU efforts to support and strengthen capacity and resilience in non-EU countries.

MULTILINGUALISM

Multilingualism is one of the cornerstones of the European project and a powerful symbol of the EU's aspiration to be united in diversity. Foreign languages have a prominent role among the skills that will help equip people better for the labour market and make the most of available opportunities. The EU has set the goal that every citizen should have the opportunity to acquire at least two foreign languages, from an early age.

While the promotion and support of language learning is primarily covered under other EU initiatives, it has been demonstrated that the lack of language competences is one of the main barriers to European cross-border mobility in general such as those supported by the European Solidarity Corps. In order to help overcoming this barrier, linguistic support is provided in the context of the European Solidarity Corps. For further information, see part D of this Guide.

PROTECTION AND SAFETY OF PARTICIPANTS

Protection and safety of participants involved in the activities supported by the European Solidarity Corps are key elements of the programme. All persons participating in the European Solidarity Corps should have the opportunity to take full advantage of the possibilities for personal and professional development and learning. This should be assured in a safe environment which respects and protects the rights of all persons, their physical and emotional integrity, their mental health and wellbeing.

To this end, each organisation participating in the European Solidarity Corps must have in place effective procedures and arrangements to promote and guarantee the safety, protection and non-discrimination of the participants in their activity. Such measures should be adapted based on the needs of the participants. With this regard, all volunteers must be insured against the risks linked to their participation. A specific insurance policy is foreseen for cross-border volunteers. For further information, see part D of this Guide.

COMMUNICATING PROJECTS AND THEIR RESULTS TO MAXIMISE IMPACT

Communicating projects and their results (outcomes and outputs) is crucial to ensure impact at different levels. Applicants are required to plan their communication activities to share information about their project and results during and beyond the project life cycle.

Beneficiaries must clearly acknowledge the European Union's support in all communication and dissemination activities and products, such as events, internet websites and publications. In particular, they must ensure that the European Union emblem[11] is included in all communication material and they respect the provisions laid out in the grant agreement. The beneficiary's grant may be reduced if such provisions are not respected.

[11] The emblem can be downloaded here : https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity/organisations/reference-documents-resources_en

WHAT IS SUPPORTED UNDER THE EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS?

In order to achieve its objectives, the European Solidarity Corps implements four Actions structured into two strands:

- Participation of young people in solidarity activities:
  - Volunteering Projects;
  - Volunteering Teams in High Priority Areas;
  - Solidarity Projects.
- Participation of young people in humanitarian aid related solidarity activities ("Volunteering under the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps"):
  - Humanitarian Aid Volunteering projects [12].

Additionally, the European Solidarity Corps supports a series of activities and measures aiming at providing high-quality solidarity activities.

- Quality and Support measures
  - networking activities for individuals and organisations participating in the European Solidarity Corps;
  - appropriate measures to provide clearance requirements in accordance with applicable national law;
  - measures taken before, during or after the solidarity activities that aim to ensure the quality and accessibility of volunteering, including online and offline training, adapted, where appropriate, to the solidarity activity in question and its context, language support, insurance, including accident and sickness insurance, the further use of Youthpass, which identifies and documents the competences acquired by participants during the solidarity activities, capacity building, and administrative support for participating organisations;
  - the development and maintenance of a quality label;
  - the activities of European Solidarity Corps Resource Centres to support and raise the quality of the implementation of the Programme actions and enhance the validation of their outcomes; and
  - the establishment, maintenance and updating of an accessible European Solidarity Corps Portal and of other relevant online services, as well as necessary IT support systems and web-based tools.

[12] This Action is planned to be opened in a subsequent call.

WHAT IS THE BUDGET?

The European Solidarity Corps has an overall indicative financial envelope of EUR 1.009 billion of the EU Budget for the period 2021-2027. The annual budget is adopted by the Budgetary Authority. The different steps for the adoption of the EU budget can be followed at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/about-european-commission/eu-budget/how-it-works/annual-lifecycle/preparation_en

For information about the available budget by action, planned number of projects to be granted as well as indicative average grants, please consult the 2021 European Solidarity Corps Annual Work Programme: (https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity/organisations/reference-documents-resources_en).

WHO IMPLEMENTS THE EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS?

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

The European Commission is ultimately responsible for the running of the European Solidarity Corps. It manages the budget and sets priorities, targets and criteria for the initiative on an on-going basis. Furthermore, it guides and monitors the general implementation, follow-up and evaluation of the initiative at European level. The European Commission also bears the overall responsibility for the supervision and coordination of the structures in charge of implementing the initiative at national level.

At European level, the European Commission's **Education and Culture Executive Agency** (Executive Agency) is responsible for the implementation of the centralised Actions of the European Solidarity Corps. The Executive Agency is in charge of the complete life-cycle management of the projects under these Actions, from the promotion, the analysis of the grant requests, the monitoring of projects on the spot, up to the dissemination of the project and Programme results.

The European Commission, directly or through the Executive Agency, is also responsible for:

- improving the visibility and the systemic impact of the European Solidarity Corps through dissemination and exploitation of the results;
- managing calls for tenders to provide services within the framework of the Corps.

THE NATIONAL AGENCIES

The European Solidarity Corps is mainly implemented through Indirect Management, meaning that the European Commission entrusts budget implementation tasks to National Agencies; the rationale of this approach is to bring the European Solidarity Corps as close as possible to its beneficiaries and to adapt to the diversity of each country. For this purpose, one or more National Agencies is appointed in each programme country. These National Agencies promote and implement the European Solidarity Corps at national level and act as the link between the European Commission and participating organisations at local, regional and national level. It is their task to:

- provide appropriate information on the European Solidarity Corps;
- administer a fair and transparent selection process for project applications to be funded in their country;
- monitor and evaluate the implementation of the European Solidarity Corps in their country;
- provide support to project applicants and participating organisations throughout the project life-cycle;
- collaborate effectively with the network of all National Agencies and the European Commission;
- ensure the visibility of the Corps;
- promote the dissemination and exploitation of the results at local and national level.

In addition, National Agencies play an important role as intermediate structures for the qualitative development and implementation of the European Solidarity Corps by:

- carrying out the Training and Evaluation Cycle in programme countries;
- carrying out projects and activities such as networking Activities - outside the tasks of project life-cycle management - that support the qualitative implementation of the European Solidarity Corps and/or trigger policy developments;
- contributing to the links and synergies between the European Solidarity Corps and the Union youth policy;
- providing a supportive approach to newcomers and less advantaged target groups in order to remove the obstacles to full participation;
- seeking cooperation with external bodies and National Authorities in order to increase the impact of the European Solidarity Corps in their country and in the European Union.

The supportive approach of National Agencies aims at guiding the users through all phases, from the first contact with the European Solidarity Corps through the application process to the realisation of the project and the final evaluation. This principle is not in contradiction with the fairness and the transparency of selection procedures. Rather, it is based on the idea that in order to guarantee equal opportunities for everybody, it is necessary to give more assistance to some target groups through advising, counselling, monitoring and coaching systems tailored to their needs.

WHAT OTHER BODIES ARE INVOLVED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS?

Apart from the European Commission, the Executive Agency and the National Agencies, the following bodies provide complementary expertise to the implementation of the Corps:

RESOURCE CENTRES

The Resource Centres are part of the quality and support measures mentioned in the legal base establishing the European Solidarity Corps. They constitute additional entrusted tasks to be performed by designated National Agencies to support the development, implementation and quality of Actions under the European Solidarity Corps. The European Solidarity Corps will benefit from the already well-established network of Resources Centres under the Erasmus programme. In addition, a dedicated European Solidarity Corps Resource Centre was set up.

SALTO-YOUTH RESOURCE CENTRES

SALTO[13]-YOUTH Resource Centres are structures mainly supported through the Erasmus programme aiming to improve the quality of projects in the field of youth. Through their thematic (participation, information, inclusion, diversity, training and recognition) or geographical (Eastern Partnership countries and Russia, Southern Mediterranean, Western Balkans) focus, they provide resources, information and training in specific areas for National Agencies and other actors involved in the youth field, and foster the recognition of non-formal and informal learning. The SALTO resource centres also offer support and develop trainings, tools and resources for the European Solidarity Corps. Their experience and knowledge thus alsobenefit the stakeholders of the European Solidarity Corps.

Their work, directly linked to the Corps, involves:

- coordinating the implementation of Youthpass;
- carrying out the award and monitoring of the Quality Label in partner countries;
- carrying out the Training and Evaluation Cycle in partner countries;
- supporting the inclusion dimension of the Corps and the implementation of the "Inclusion and Diversity Strategy".

More information available at: www.salto-youth.net.

EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS RESOURCE CENTRE

The European Solidarity Corps Resource Centre aims to assist the implementing bodies, the participating organisations and the young people taking part in the European Solidarity Corps in raising the quality of implementation of solidarity activities and actions. Its work involves:

- organising training courses, study visits, forums, cooperation and partnership-building activities;
- developing and documenting training methods and tools related to the activities supported by the European Solidarity Corps;
- issuing practical publications and guidance;
- gathering evidence and carrying out analysis of good practice and obstacles during implementation;
- contributing to the links and synergies between the European Solidarity Corps and the Union youth policy; supporting the National Agencies in the development and implementation of networking activities;
- acting as central point of support to bring together National Agencies and SALTOs to reflect on and improve certain aspects related to the Corps implementation
- contribute to building a European Solidarity Corps community of organisations.

More information available at: www.salto-youth.net/EU-Solidarity-Corps.

EURODESK NETWORK

The Eurodesk network is supported through the Erasmus Programme and offers information services to young people and those who work with them on European opportunities in the education, training and youth fields, and the involvement of young people in European activities.

Present in all countries participating in the European Solidarity Corps and coordinated at European level by the Eurodesk Brussels-link Office, the Eurodesk network offers enquiry answering services, funding information, events and publications. For more information on Eurodesk, go to: http://www.eurodesk.eu.

[13] SALTO stands for 'Support for Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities'

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS?

Young people constitute the target population of the European Solidarity Corps. With the exception of Solidarity Projects where young people can apply directly, the Corps mainly involves young people through organisations, institutions, public or private bodies that organise solidarity activities. The conditions of access to the Corps therefore relate to these two actors: the "participants" (young people participating in the Corps) and the "organisations". For both participants and participating organisations, the conditions for participation depend on the country in which they are legally based and on the Action concerned. These conditions are specified in Part B and C of this Guide, under each specific Action.

PARTICIPANTS

Young people express their willingness to participate in the European Solidarity Corps by registering on the European Solidarity Corps Portal. The registration at the European Solidarity Corps Portal is possible as of 17 years of age but participants must have reached 18 and must not be older than 30 at the start date of the activity. For participants in humanitarian aid related solidarity activities, the upper age limit at the start of the activity is 35 years old.

European Solidarity Corps projects are mainly submitted and managed by organisations. Organisations participating in European Solidarity Corps projects must be established in a programme country or a partner country.

ELIGIBLE COUNTRIES[14]

Members States of the European Union and third countries associated to the Programme can fully take part in all the Actions of the European Solidarity Corps (Programme Countries). In addition, some Actions are open for participation of other countries (Partner Countries). Please refer to the Actions in Part B and Part C of this Guide for the specific conditions.

Under the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps, volunteering activities may only take place in those regions of third countries where humanitarian aid activities and operations take place and where there are no ongoing international or non-international armed conflicts. A list of eligible safe countries of destination will be published under each specific call.

PROGRAMME COUNTRIES

Member States of the European Union (EU)[15]			
Belgium	Greece	Lithuania	Portugal
Bulgaria	Spain	Luxembourg	Romania
Czechia	France	Hungary	Slovenia
Denmark	Croatia	Malta	Slovakia
Germany	Italy	Netherlands	Finland
Estonia	Cyprus	Austria	Sweden
Ireland	Latvia	Poland	

Non EU programme countries[16]		
Iceland Republic of North Macedonia	Liechtenstein	Turkey

[14] Entities from EU Member States and people legally residing in them can fully take part in all the Actions of the European Solidarity Corps. In addition, in accordance with article 13 of the Regulation, the following third countries can be associated to the programme subject to agreements between the European Union and those countries: members of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) which are members of the European Economic Area (EEA); acceding countries, candidate countries and potential candidates. The EU Member States and the above mentioned third countries associated to the programme are, for the purpose of this call, called "Programme Countries". In addition, in accordance with article 14 of the Regulation, entities from other third countries and people residing in them can be eligible in some Actions in duly justified cases and in the Union interest. These countries are called "Partner Countries".

[15] According to Article 33.3 of the Council Decision 2013/755/EU on the Association of the OCTs with the European Union, the Union shall ensure that individuals and organisations from or to Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT) shall be eligible to participate in the European Solidarity Corps on a Programme Country status, subject to the rules of the Programme and the arrangements applicable to the Member State with which these OCTs they are connected. The list of OCTs can be found at: https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/regions/overseas-countries-and-territories-octs/oct-eu-association_en.

[16] Subject to the signature of the Association Agreements between the European Union and those countries.

PARTNER COUNTRIES

EFTA countries
Norway

Partner countries neighbouring the EU[17]			
Western Balkans	**Eastern Partnership countries**	**South-Mediterranean countries**	**Russian Federation**
Albania Bosnia and Herzegovina Kosovo[18] Montenegro Serbia	Armenia Azerbaijan Belarus Georgia Moldova Territory of Ukraine as recognised by international law	Algeria Egypt Israel Jordan Lebanon Libya Morocco Palestine[19] Syria Tunisia	Territory of Russia as recognised by international law

[17] The eligibility criteria formulated in commission notice Nr.2013/C-205/05 (OJEU C-205 of 19/07/2013, pp. 9-11) shall apply for all actions implemented through this Programme Guide, including with respect to third parties receiving financial support in the cases where the respective action involves financial support to third parties by grant beneficiaries in accordance with article 204 of the EU's Financial Regulation.

[18] This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

[19] This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue.

PART B – PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN SOLIDARITY ACTIVITIES

In this part, readers will find, for all of the Actions and activities under this strand and covered by the European Solidarity Corps Guide, the following information:

- a description of their objectives and expected impact;
- a description of the supported activities;
- tables presenting the criteria which are used to assess proposals;
- additional information on quality features of activities;
- a description of the funding rules.

Before submitting an application, applicants are advised to read carefully the entire section concerning the Action under which they wish to apply.

WHICH ACTIONS ARE SUPPORTED?

The following Actions may be supported and covered in this section:

- Volunteering Projects;
- Volunteering Teams in High Priority Areas;
- Solidarity Projects.

This section also covers all relevant information and criteria for the Quality Label, pre-requisite to participate in Volunteering Projects and Volunteering Teams in High Priority Areas.

In line with the general and specific objectives of the European Solidarity Corps, the above actions supported by the Programme are expected to bring positive and long-lasting effects on the participants and participating organisations involved, as well as on the communities in which these actions take place.

As regards participants, the solidarity activities, as well as any other supported activities related to them (e.g. quality and support measures), are meant to produce the following main outcomes:

- improved skills and competences for personal, educational, social, civic, cultural and professional development;
- more active participation in democratic life and in society in general;
- enhanced employability and transition into the labour market;
- increased sense of initiative and entrepreneurship;
- increased self-empowerment and self-esteem;
- improved foreign language competences;
- enhanced intercultural awareness;
- better awareness of the European project and the EU common values;
- increased motivation for further engagement in solidarity activities.

Supported solidarity activities are also expected to produce the following outcomes on participating organisations:

- increased capacity to operate at EU/international level;
- innovative and improved way of operating towards their target groups;
- greater understanding and responsiveness to diversity (social, linguistic, cultural, gender and ethnic diversity, diverse abilities etc.);
- more modern, dynamic, committed and professional environment inside the organisations.

As regards communities where the activities related to supported solidarity activities are implemented, the following outcomes are expected:

- increased ability to address societal challenges;
- greater understanding and responsiveness to diversity (social, linguistic, cultural, gender and ethnic diversity, diverse abilities etc.);

In the long run, the combined effect of supported solidarity activities is expected to have a positive impact on a large number of stakeholders in programme and partner countries.

VOLUNTEERING PROJECTS

WHAT ARE VOLUNTEERING PROJECTS?

Volunteering projects offer opportunities for young people to take part in solidarity activities and help to address identified needs within local communities and contribute to overcoming important societal challenges on the ground. Volunteering may take place in a country other than the country of residence of the participant (cross-border) or in the country of residence of the participant (in-country).

The scope of volunteering projects is broad, covering a wide range of areas, such as environmental protection, climate change mitigation or greater social inclusion.

WHICH ACTIVITIES CAN BE SUPPORTED UNDER THIS ACTION?

The following activities are supported.

INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTEERING

Individual Volunteering is a solidarity activity of a duration of 2 to 12 months. This type of solidarity activity provides young people with the opportunity to contribute to the daily work of organisations in solidarity activities to the ultimate benefit of the communities within which the activities are carried out.

In duly justified cases, especially to encourage the participation of young people with fewer opportunities, volunteering activities of 2 weeks – 2 months can be accepted and implemented.

Individual volunteering activities can take place:

- **Cross-border** i.e. activities taking place in a country different from the country of residence of the participant(s); or
- **In-country,** i.e. activities taking place in the same country as the country of residence of the participant, in particular, to encourage and facilitate the participation of young people with fewer opportunities.

> **In-country activities** should present a clear European added value including complementarity to existing national schemes. Projects with in-country activities presenting a weak or a lack of European added value will not be considered as relevant in the context of the Corps.

VOLUNTEERING TEAMS

Volunteering teams are solidarity activities that allow teams of participants coming from at least two different countries to volunteer together for a period between 2 weeks and 2 months. Such solidarity activities could especially contribute to the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities in the European Solidarity Corps. The composition of the volunteering teams must be international; at least a quarter of the volunteers must come from a country other than the one where the activity takes place. In volunteering teams, European Solidarity Corps' volunteers will carry out tasks for a project over a short period of time (usually, but not exclusively, during holidays, breaks between study periods, transition from education to work, etc.). Despite their shorter duration, these activities will be valuable both for the individuals and for the communities in which the volunteering takes place.

Examples of the valuable work that can be accomplished even over a short period of time include: e.g. restoring cultural heritage damaged by natural disaster, catering for species threatened by extinction; organising educational activities in refugee camps, etc.

The advantages of this specific type of group activities compared to standard individual volunteering activities include the following:

- Volunteers will carry out the activity in a group. This can be an incentive for youngsters who do not feel ready to embark into challenging experiences on their own. The activity will also be shorter in its duration. This can foster the participation of those youngsters who cannot commit for a long period of time because of their studies or jobs, but still want to be of help for the community;
- The above makes volunteering teams particularly suitable for a first experience in volunteering. They can thus serve as an entry-way for long-term activities or provide an incentive to start an own solidarity project.

Furthermore, the following additional type of activity can also be funded:

- **Preparatory visits** to the venue of the volunteering activities before the start of the activities. The purpose of the preparatory visits is to ensure high quality activities by facilitating and preparing administrative arrangements, building trust and understanding and setting-up a solid partnership between the organisations and the people involved. The visits will be organised for activities involving young people with fewer opportunities or when the visit is necessary for the implementation of an activity with a strong inclusion dimension. Participants with fewer opportunities that will take part in the planned activities can be involved in the visit, in order to help with their preparation and involve them in activity design so that their needs are taken into account from the start.

HOW TO SET UP A PROJECT ?

A Volunteering Project consists of four stages: planning, preparation, implementation and follow-up. Participating organisations and young people involved in the activities should take an active role in all those stages enhancing thus their learning experience.

- Planning (including defining the learning outcomes, activity formats, development of work programme, schedule of activities)
- Preparation phase, including practical arrangements, selection of participants, set up of agreements with partners and participants, tailor-made linguistic/intercultural/task-related preparation based on the needs of participants before departure;
- Implementation of activities;
- Follow-up phase, including the evaluation of the activities, issue of the certificate of participation, support to participants upon return as well as the evaluation, dissemination and use of the activities' outcomes.

Most European Solidarity Corps activities are implemented by one or several organisations. All organisations involved in a volunteering activity must hold a valid Quality Label or Erasmus+ volunteering accreditation. The organisations involved assume the roles of "supporting" the implementation of the activities and the volunteers and/or "hosting" the volunteers:

- The host role covers the full range of activities related to hosting a Solidarity Corps participant, including the development of a programme of the young person's activities and providing guidance and support to the participant during all the phases as appropriate (some of these activities can be carried out by a support organisation involved in the same project).
- The support role entails supporting, preparing and/or training participants before departure, a mediation between them and their host organisations and/or providing support to participants upon return from their activity as well as project management and coordination.

Where only one organisation is involved, the organisation has to ensure that all phases are carried out and the above tasks and responsibilities are fulfilled. In all cases, the involvement of a support organisation in activities involving young people with fewer opportunities is highly recommended.

In addition, organisations applying for grant must hold a valid Quality Label for lead organisations. For more information on the Quality Label, please refer to the relevant section of this Guide.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Young people who want to participate in the European Solidarity Corps must register on the European Solidarity Corps Portal. Young people with fewer opportunities may receive support from organisations to complete the registration phase. The European Solidarity Corps Portal offers a place for those young people and organisations holding a Quality Label and willing to implement solidarity activities to find each other. Organisations have to select the participants from the database of registered young people.

QUALITY AND SUPPORT MEASURES

A set of measures and services, such as training, language learning support, identification and documentation of the competences acquired, insurance are foreseen to ensure the quality of the volunteering activities and a strong learning dimension for the participants. Some of these measures are optional and could be used depending on the interest and needs of the participants and some of them are compulsory. Organisations should aim to promote the use of the the General Online Training as part of the volunteers' learning experience. Detailed information on those measures is available in Part D of this Guide.

INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

The European Solidarity Corps seeks to promote equal opportunities and access, inclusion and fairness. Organisations should design accessible and inclusive activities, taking into account the views and needs of participants with fewer opportunities.

To support **inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities**, additional support measures and funding that allow participating organisations to better accommodate and cater for the needs of young people with fewer opportunities are available.

In order to benefit from additional funding applicants will be required to describe how they involve young people who are at comparative disadvantage i.e they have comparatively fewer opportunities than their peers in the same country/area/age group/situation, what are the specific needs to ensure their participation on equal terms as others and what specific measures they plan to put in place to cater for these needs.

In this sense, "involving" does not refer to a target group the organisations work with. It means to facilitate the participation of young people with fewer opportunities by designing the measures of outreach and support as well as the project activities in an inclusive and accessible way.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CLIMATE ACTION

Volunteering activities should promote environmentally sustainable and responsible behaviour among participants, raising the awareness about the importance of acting to reduce or compensate for the environmental footprint of activities. Volunteering activities should be designed and implemented with environmental consciousness by e.g. integrating sustainable practices such as reducing waste and recycling, using sustainable means of transportation.

DIGITAL TRANSITION

Participating organisations are encouraged to make use of digital tools and learning methods to complement their physical activities, to improve the cooperation between partner organisations, and the quality of the activities.

WHAT ARE THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR VOLUNTEERING ACTIVITIES?

Here below are listed the formal criteria that the volunteering activities implemented under Volunteering Projects must respect in order to be eligible for a grant.

Eligible participating organisations	Any organisation legally established in a programme country or a partner country that holds a valid volunteering Quality Label or Erasmus+ volunteering accreditation[20]. Participating organisations must hold a valid volunteering Quality Label or an Erasmus+ volunteering accreditation at the latest at the start of the activities and during the entire duration of the activities[21].	
Number of participating organisations	Individual Volunteering	For cross-border activities at least two organisations must participate, one host organisation and one support organisation from the country in which the participant is legally residing (country of origin of the participant). For in-country activities, at least one host organisation is required.
	Volunteering Teams	At least one organisation – either host or support - is required.
Duration	Individual Volunteering	From 2[22] to 12 months, excluding travel time. In the case of young people with fewer opportunities, the activity can start as from 2 weeks, excluding travel time.
	Volunteering Teams	2 weeks to 2 months[23], excluding travel time.
Venue	Individual Volunteering	Activities have to take place in a host organisation or one if its locations in the country of a participating organisation. A volunteer from a programme country must carry out the activity in a programme country or in a partner country. A volunteer from a partner country must carry out the activity in a programme country.
	Volunteering Teams	Activities have to take place in the country of a participating organisation.
	Preparatory Visits	Preparatory Visits must take place at the venue of the main activity

[20] The obligation to be established in a programme country or a partner country does not apply to international organisations.

[21] Organisations holding an Erasmus+ accreditation or a Quality Label that expires during the activities should apply for a new Quality Label in due time to ensure eligibility of the activities.

[22] As from 60 days, excluding travel days.

[23] Up to 59 days, excluding travel days.

Eligible participants	Individual Volunteering Volunteering Teams	Young people between 18 and 30 years[24] who are legally residing in a programme country or in a partner country and have registered in the European Solidarity Corps Portal. A volunteer can take part in only one Solidarity Corps individual volunteering activity. Volunteers who have taken part in an Erasmus+ volunteering activity or a European Voluntary Service (EVS) are not eligible. A volunteer can take part in more than one Solidarity Corps volunteering teams activity. **Exceptions**: In duly justified cases, volunteers who carried out an Erasmus+ volunteering activity, an EVS or a European Solidarity Corps individual volunteering activity lasting up to 2 months[25] can take part in one additional European Solidarity Corps individual volunteering activity, cross-border. The reverse is not possible. In such cases, the total amount of time must not exceed 14 months. Please refer to Annex II for more details.
	Preparatory Visits	Representatives of the participating organisations and volunteers with fewer opportunities who will take part in the main activity.
Number of participants	Volunteering Teams	10 to 40 participants per volunteering teams activity coming from at least 2 different countries out of which one is a programme country. At least a quarter of the volunteers should be legally residing in a country other than the one where the activity takes place.
Other criteria	In order to maintain a clear link to the country where the National Agency is based, either ▪ the venue of the activity must be the country of the National Agency to which the application is submitted; or ▪ the participant must be from the country of the National Agency to which the application is submitted. For volunteering teams, participant(s) from the country of the National Agency to which the application is submitted must be involved.	

[24] Participants must have reached 18 and must not be older than 30 at the start date of the activity.
[25] Up to 59 days, excluding travel days.

WHAT ARE THE FUNDING RULES?

Eligible costs		Financing mechanism	Amount	In case of "green" travel	Rule of allocation
Travel	Contribution to the travel costs of participants from their place of origin to the venue of the activity and return.	Contribution on the basis of unit costs	For travel distances between 0 and 99KM: EUR 23 per participant		Based on the travel distance per participant, including accompanying persons. Travel distances must be calculated using the distance calculator supported by the European Commission[26]. The applicant must indicate the distance of a one-way travel to calculate the amount of the EU grant that will support the round trip[27].
			For travel distances between 100 and 499 KM: EUR 180 per participant	210 EUR	
			For travel distances between 500 and 1 999 KM: EUR 275 per participant	320 EUR	
			For travel distances between 2 000 and 2 999 KM: EUR 360 per participant	410 EUR	
			For travel distances between 3 000 and 3 999 KM: EUR 530 per participant	610 EUR	
			For travel distances between 4 000 and 7 999 KM: EUR 820 per participant		
			For travel distances of 8 000 KM or more: EUR 1 500 per participant		

[26] https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity/organisations/reference-documents-resources_en

[27] https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/resources/distance-calculator_en For example, if a person from Madrid (Spain) is taking part in an activity taking place in Rome (Italy), the applicant will a) calculate the distance from Madrid to Rome (1365,28 KM); b) select the applicable travel distance band (i.e. Between 500 and 1999 KM) and c) calculate the EU grant that will provide a contribution to the costs of travel of the participant from Madrid to Rome and return (275 EUR).

Eligible costs		**Financing mechanism**	**Amount**	**Rule of allocation**
Management costs	Management costs (e.g. planning, finances, coordination and communication between partners, administrative costs).	Contribution on the basis of unit costs	2 000 EUR per volunteering team activity 225 EUR per participant in individual volunteering Maximum 4 500 EUR per grant request.	Based on the number of activities for volunteering teams and the number of participants in individual volunteering activities, excluding accompanying persons.
Organisational Support	Costs directly linked to the implementation of volunteering activities (e.g. preparation, monitoring and support of participants, validation of learning outcomes) and costs linked to the subsistence of participants (e.g. boarding, lodging and local travel).	Contribution on the basis of unit costs	A1 per day per participant	Based on the host country and the duration of the activity per participant, including accompanying persons; (if necessary), including also one travel day before the activity and one travel day following the activity, and up to four additional days for participants receiving a green travel grant.
Inclusion Support	Contribution to costs incurred by organisations related to reinforced mentorship, i.e. the preparation, implementation and follow-up of tailor-made activities to support participation of young people with fewer opportunities.	Contribution on the basis of unit costs	A2 per day per participant	Based on the host country and the duration of the activity per participant with fewer opportunities, excluding accompanying persons; (if necessary), including also one travel day before the activity and one travel day following the activity, and up to four additional days for participants receiving a green travel grant.
Pocket Money	Contribution to additional personal expenses for participants.	Contribution on the basis of unit costs	A3 per day per participant	Based on the host country and the duration of the activity per participant, excluding accompanying persons; (if necessary), including also one travel day before the activity and one travel day following the activity, and up to four additional days for participants receiving a green travel grant.
Language learning support	Costs linked to the support offered to participants - prior to departure or during the activity – in order to improve the knowledge of the language they will use to carry out their volunteering tasks.	Contribution on the basis of unit costs	150 EUR per participant	Conditional: Only for activities lasting 60 days and more. For cross-border activities - Only for languages and/or levels not offered by the Online Language Support.

Preparatory Visit	Costs linked to the implementation of the preparatory visit including travel and subsistence.	Contribution on the basis of unit costs	575 EUR per participant per preparatory visit.	Based on the number of participants, including accompanying persons. A maximum of 1 participant per participating organisation can be funded per activity. Conditional: the need for a Preparatory Visit and objectives must be motivated and approved by the National Agency.
Eligible costs		**Financing mechanism**	**Amount**	**Rule of allocation**
Exceptional costs	Costs for providing a financial guarantee, if the National Agency asks for it. Visa and visa-related costs, residence permits, vaccinations, medical certifications, clearance requirements costs. Costs connected to personal insurance for in-country activities. Expensive travel costs for participants (e.g. from and to outermost regions), including for the use of cleaner, lower carbon emission means of transport which result in expensive travel costs. Costs incurred by organisations to support the participation of young people with fewer opportunities on equal terms as others related to reinforced mentorship, i.e. the preparation, implementation and follow-up of tailor-made activities. Costs incurred by organisations to support the participation of young people with fewer opportunities on equal terms as others related to reasonable adjustments or investment in physical assets.	Real costs	Costs for financial guarantee: 80 % of eligible costs Expensive travel costs: 80 % of eligible costs Other costs: 100 % of eligible costs	Conditional: The request for financial support for exceptional costs must be motivated and approved by the National Agency. For exceptional costs related to insurance, only for in-country participants in need of private personal insurance to reach the same coverage as the insurance coverage for cross-border activities. For exceptional costs for expensive travel, applicants must justify that the standard funding rules (based on unit costs per travel distance band) do not cover at least 70 % of the travel costs of participants. If awarded, the exceptional costs for expensive travel replace the standard travel grant. For exceptional costs for reinforced mentorship, applicants must justify that the standard funding rules ("Inclusion support" unit cost per day per participant) do not cover at least 80 % of the costs incurred. If awarded, the exceptional costs to support the participation of young people with fewer opportunities will replace the inclusion support grant.

WHAT ARE THE RATES?

	Organisational Support – Activity Costs (EUR per day)	Inclusion Support (EUR per day)	Pocket Money (EUR per day)
	A1	A2	A3
Austria	24	8	**5**
Belgium	27	9	4
Bulgaria	18	6	4
Croatia	20	7	5
Cyprus	22	7	5
Czechia	18	6	5
Denmark	27	9	6
Estonia	19	6	4
Finland	27	9	5
France	21	7	6
Germany	24	8	5
Greece	22	7	5
Hungary	18	6	5
Ireland	27	9	6
Italy	22	7	5
Latvia	20	7	4
Lithuania	19	6	4
Luxembourg	27	9	5
Malta	23	8	5
Netherlands	27	9	5
Poland	19	6	4
Portugal	21	7	5
Romania	18	6	3
Slovakia	20	7	5
Slovenia	21	7	4
Spain	19	6	5
Sweden	27	9	5
Republic of North Macedonia	16	5	3
Iceland	27	9	6
Liechtenstein	25	8	6
Norway	27	9	6
Turkey	18	6	4
Partner country neighbouring the EU	16	5	3

HOW TO ACCESS FUNDING?

Only organisations that are holders of a Quality Label for lead organisation[28] can apply for funding under Volunteering Projects, in a simplified way.

Applications are based on the previously approved activities in the Quality Label, so a detailed list and description of the planned activities is not required. Instead, the applications focus on estimating the number of activities to be implemented and number of participants involved.

The activities to be implemented must follow the rules and principles laid down for each activity type in the respective sections of this Guide.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Eligible applicants	• Organisations holding a valid Quality Label for lead organisation at the application deadline • Organisations who have applied for a Quality Label for lead organisation by the application deadline
Eligible activities	▪ Individual Volunteering Activities ▪ Volunteering Teams Activities Additionally, the following support activities can be implemented: ▪ Preparatory visits Description and eligibility criteria for each of these activities are defined under the relevant sections of this Guide.
Duration of projects	Up to 24 months
Where to apply?	To the National Agency of the country in which the applicant organisation is established[29].
When to apply?	Applicants have to submit their grant applications by the following dates: ▪ 28 May at 12:00 (midday Brussels time) for projects starting between 1 September and 31 December of the same year; ▪ 5 October at 12:00 (midday Brussels time) for projects starting between 1 January and 31 May of the following year. National Agencies may organise two selection rounds by setting both deadlines as above or only the first one. Applicants are invited to check the website of the National Agency for more precise information.
How to apply?	Please see part E of this Guide for details on how to apply.
Other criteria	An organisation can apply only once per round. A declaration of honour of the legal representative must be annexed to the application form.

BUDGET ALLOCATION

The applications do not undergo a qualitative assessment and therefore no award criteria are applied. The awarded grant amount will depend on a number of elements:

- the total budget available for allocation ;
- the requested activities;
- the minimum and maximum grant;
- the score of their Quality Label application for lead organisation;
- policy priorities and thematic areas addressed by the activities applied for.

Detailed rules on basic and maximum grant, scoring of the allocation criteria, weighting of each criterion, the allocation method, and the budget available for accredited projects will be published by the National Agency ahead of the call deadline.

[28] Please refer to the Quality Label section for further information.
[29] Exceptionally, international organisations must apply to the National Agency which awarded their Quality Label for lead organisation.

VOLUNTEERING TEAMS IN HIGH PRIORITY AREAS

WHAT ARE VOLUNTEERING TEAMS IN HIGH PRIORITY AREAS?

Volunteering Teams in high priority areas are large scale, high impact projects supporting voluntary activities carried out by young people from at least two different countries coming together to express solidarity by implementing short-term interventions that address common European challenges in policy areas defined each year at EU level.

WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES?

This year's priority is focused on COVID-19 impact and recovery, particularly through supporting the health and social care systems with activities tackling prevention, promotion and support in the field of health; addressing major health challenges (i.e. life-threatening illnesses like cancer) and promoting health, healthy lifestyle, physical activity and well-being overall.

For the purpose of this call, applications for funding could:

- contribute to the improvement of health and well-being of vulnerable people, including persons affected by chronic or life-threatening diseases (e.g. cancer);
- contribute to building inclusive societies through protecting vulnerable groups as people with drug-alcohol dependence, elderly and children, migrants, homeless etc. from COVID-19 impact and other diseases.

Additionally, to increase the quality and impact of the action, projects would integrate complementary activities to:

- foster European cooperation to strengthen the capacity of the solidarity sector to tackle common European challenges, such as health crisis, protection of vulnerable groups through networking and exchanging experiences;
- raise awareness about prevention through campaigns, promotion and information dissemination, public discussions in order to improve the general health of European populations.

WHICH ACTIVITIES CAN BE SUPPORTED?

The following activities are supported:

Volunteering Teams

Volunteering Teams are solidarity activities that allow groups of minimum 5 participants to volunteer together for a period between 2 weeks and 2 months. Composition of the team should be international (including participants from at least two different countries) with at least a quarter of team members coming from countries that are different from the country where the activity takes place. In volunteering teams, European Solidarity Corps' volunteers carry out tasks for a project over a short period of time (usually, but not exclusively, during holidays, breaks between study periods, transition from education to work, etc.).

Examples of the valuable work that can be accomplished by volunteering teams under this Action include: organising information campaigns, providing critical community services to most vulnerable populations e.g. arranging grocery shopping for elderly, organizing recreational activities for children with cancer, intergenerational workshops on use of online tools for socialising and communicating, supporting vaccination campaigns.

In Volunteering Teams, volunteers will carry out the activity in a group. This can be an incentive for youngsters who do not feel ready to embark into challenging experiences on their own; The activity will be shorter in its duration. This can foster the participation of those youngsters who cannot commit for a long period of time because of their studies or jobs, but still want to be of help for the community.

The above makes also Volunteering Teams an **inclusive format**, particularly suitable for a first experience in volunteering and the participation of young people with fewer opportunities. They can thus serve as an entry-way for long-term activities or even provide an incentive to start an own solidarity project.

Complementary activities

Complementary activities are relevant side activities designed to add value and augment the results of the project as well as to strengthen its impact on the local, regional, and/or European level. These complementary activities aim at raising awareness of the value of volunteering for young people and for communities as well as at strengthening the recognition of the skills and competences gained by the volunteers. These activities could also enhance the capacity of the solidarity sector organisations to tackle common European challenges and their abilities to develop volunteering projects.

Complementary activities could include workshops, conferences, seminars, training courses, job shadowing, coaching, exchange of good practices etc.

Preparatory Visit

Preparatory visits are visits to the venue of the volunteering activities before they start. They should ensure high quality of activities involving young people with fewer opportunities or when the visit is necessary for the implementation of an activity with a strong inclusion dimension. The visit can focus on facilitating and preparing administrative arrangements, building trust and understanding and setting-up a solid partnership between the organisations and the people involved. Participants with fewer opportunities that will take part in the planned activities can be involved in the visit, in order to help with their preparation and involve them in activity design so that their needs are taken into account from the start.

HOW TO SET UP A PROJECT?

A project is implemented by at least three organisations from at least two different eligible countries and will typically consist of the following stages:

- Planning (defining the needs, objectives, development of work programme, schedule of activities etc.);
- Preparation (practical arrangements, selection of participants, set up of agreements with partners and participants, linguistic/intercultural/task-related preparation of participants before departure);
- Implementation of activities (including support and guidance to participants during the activities);
- Follow-up (the evaluation of the activities, follow-up of participants, issue of the certificate of participation as well as the dissemination and use of the project's outcomes).

Implementation of cross-border solidarity activities for groups of volunteers are the core of a project. A project must thus include at least one volunteering team activity.

A project should also include complementary activities. Furthermore, organisations are encouraged to organise preparatory visits to ensure high quality of activities involving young people with fewer opportunities.

Eligibility criteria laid down below must be respected.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Young people who want to participate in the European Solidarity Corps must register on the European Solidarity Corps Portal. Young people with fewer opportunities may receive support from organisations to complete the registration phase. The European Solidarity Corps Portal offers a place for those young people and organisations holding a Quality Label and willing to implement solidarity activities to find each other. Organisations have to select the participants from the database of registered young people.

QUALITY AND SUPPORT MEASURES

A set of measures and services, such as training, language learning support, identification and documentation of the competences acquired, insurance are foreseen to ensure the quality of the volunteering activities and a strong learning dimension for the participants. Some of these measures are optional and could be used depending on the interest and needs of the participants, and some of them are compulsory. Organisations should aim to promote the use of the General Online Training as part of the volunteers' learning experience. Detailed information on those measures is available in Part D of this Guide.

INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

The European Solidarity Corps seeks to promote equal opportunities and access, inclusion and fairness. Organisations should design accessible and inclusive activities, taking into account the views and needs of participants with fewer opportunities.

To support **inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities**, additional support measures and funding that allow participating organisations to better accommodate and cater for the needs of young people with fewer opportunities are available.

In order to benefit from additional funding applicants will be required to describe how they involve young people who are at comparative disadvantage i.e they have comparatively fewer opportunities than their peers in the same country/area/age group/situation, what are the specific needs to ensure their participation on equal terms as others and what specific measures they plan to put in place to cater for these needs.

In this sense, "involving" does not refer to a target group the organisations work with. It means to facilitate the participation of young people with fewer opportunities by designing the measures of outreach and support as well as the project activities in an inclusive and accessible way.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CLIMATE ACTION

Volunteering activities should promote environmentally sustainable and responsible behaviour among participants, raising the awareness about the importance of acting to reduce or compensate for the environmental footprint of activities. Volunteering activities should be designed and implemented with environmental consciousness by e.g. integrating sustainable practices such as reducing waste and recycling, using sustainable means of transportation.

DIGITAL TRANSITION

Participating organisations are encouraged to make use of digital tools and learning methods to complement their physical activities, to improve the cooperation between partner organisations, and the quality of the activities.

WHAT ARE THE CRITERIA USED TO ASSESS PROJECTS?

The projects are selected and managed at EU level, by the Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). The centralised approach ensures the underlying pan-European dimension of these projects and enables large projects with increased number of participants and high impact.

Projects will be assessed against the following criteria: eligibility, exclusion, selection and award.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Here below are listed the formal criteria that the projects must respect in order to be eligible for a grant.

GENERAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Eligible participating organisations	Any organisation legally established[30] in a programme country or a partner country that holds a valid volunteering Quality Label or Erasmus+ volunteering accreditation. Participating organisations must hold a valid volunteering Quality Label or Erasmus+ volunteering accreditation at the latest at the start of the activities they are involved in and during the entire duration of the activities[31].
Eligible applicants	Any eligible participating organisation legally established in a programme country and any international organisation. The organisation applies on behalf of all participating organisations involved in the project. The applicant organisation must hold a valid volunteering Quality Label or Erasmus+ volunteering accreditation at the application deadline and during the entire duration of the project[32].

[30] The obligation to be established in a programme country or a partner country does not apply to international organisations.
[31] Organisations holding a Quality Label that expires during the activities should apply for a new Quality Label in due time to ensure eligibility of the activities.
[32] Organisations holding a Quality Label that expires during the project should apply for a new Quality Label in due time to ensure eligibility of the project.

Number of participating organisations	At least three eligible organisations, from at least two different programme countries.
Venue of activities	Activities have to take place in the country of one of the participating organisations except in duly justified cases, related to the objectives of the call. The activities have to take place in a programme country or a partner country.
Number of activities	At least one volunteering team activity must be implemented.
Number of participants[33]	Minimum 40 participants per project.
Duration of project	12, 24 or 36 months. The duration has to be chosen at application stage, based on the objectives of the project and on the type of activities planned over time. The start cannot be before the signature of the Grant Agreement by the Agency.
Where to apply?	To the Education and Culture Executive Agency.
When to apply?	Applicants have to submit their grant application by 5 October 2021 at 17:00 (Brussels time)[34].
Other criteria	A Declaration of Honour signed by the legal representative must be provided with the application.

ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR VOLUNTEERING TEAMS ACTIVITIES

Duration of activity	2 weeks to 2 months[35], excluding travel time.
Eligible participants	Young people between 18 and 30 years[36] who are legally residing in a programme country or in a partner country and have registered in the European Solidarity Corps Portal.
Number of participants and composition of teams[37]	Minimum 5 participants. The team should be composed of participants coming from at least two different countries and at least a quarter of team members coming from countries that are different from the country where the activity takes place. . Young people can only be involved in one activity at a time.

AWARD CRITERIA

To be considered for funding, proposals must score at least 60 points. Furthermore, they must score at least half of the maximum points in each of the categories of the award criteria mentioned below. In ex aequo cases, priority will be given to highest scores for "relevance, rationale and impact" and then “Quality of project management” and then “Quality of project design”.

Relevance, rationale and impact (maximum 30 points)	▪ The relevance of the project to the objectives of the European Solidarity Corps and the thematic priority set for this Action; ▪ The extent to which the proposal will address well defined and important societal needs; ▪ The relevance of the project to the needs and objectives of individual participants and participating organisations; ▪ The extent to which the project will provide benefits to the communities within which the activities are carried out; ▪ The potential impact of the project at local, regional, national and/or European levels; ▪ The extent to which the project provides European added value; ▪ The extent to which the project involves young people with fewer opportunities as participants.

[33] The Agency may authorise minor deviations from the requirements only in exceptional and duly justified circumstances.
[34] The application form will be made available in early summer 2021.
[35] Up to 59 days, excluding travel days.
[36] Participants must have reached 18 and must not be older than 30 at the start date of the activity.
[37] The Agency may authorise minor deviations from the requirements only in exceptional and duly justified circumstances.

Quality of project design (maximum 40 points)	▪ The consistency between project objectives and activities proposed; ▪ The clarity, completeness and quality of all the phases of the project (preparation of participants, implementation of activities, follow-up and support provided on participants' return); ▪ The quality of arrangements for the recognition and validation of participants' learning outcomes, as well as the consistent use of European transparency and recognition tools; ▪ The appropriateness of measures for selecting and/or involving participants in activities; ▪ The quality of proposed measures to reach out and involve young people with fewer opportunities; ▪ The quality of the non-formal learning methods and measures proposed to enable the participants to gain skills and competences that are valuable for their personal, educational, social, civic and cultural development; ▪ The added value of the complementary activities to the project objectives and the impact of the project.
Quality of project management (maximum 30 points)	▪ The quality of the practical arrangements, management and support modalities; ▪ The quality of cooperation and communication between the participating organisations, as well as with other relevant stakeholders; ▪ The quality of measures for evaluating and disseminating the outcomes of the project;

WHAT ARE THE FUNDING RULES?

Maximum EU grant per project: 400.000 EUR

Eligible costs		Financing mechanism	Amount	Rule of allocation
Participants support	Contribution to travel costs and exceptional costs such as visa and vaccinations costs, personal insurance for in-country activities, expensive travel costs and contribution to additional personal expenses for participants (pocket money).	Contribution on the basis of unit costs	23 EUR per day per participant	Based on the duration of the activity (if necessary, including also one travel day before the activity and one travel day following the activity) per participant, including accompanying persons.
Organisational Support	Contribution to management costs (e.g. planning, finances, coordination and communication between partners, administrative costs) and to costs directly linked to the implementation of volunteering activities (e.g. preparation, monitoring and support of participants, validation of learning outcomes) and costs linked to the subsistence of participants (e.g. boarding, lodging and local travel). Contribution to complementary activity costs. Contribution to exceptional costs such as financial guarantee and audit report.	Contribution on the basis of unit costs	37 EUR per day per participant	Based on the duration of the activity (if necessary, including also one travel day before the activity and one travel day following the activity) per participant, including accompanying persons.
Inclusion support	Contribution to costs incurred by organisations to support the participation of young people with fewer opportunities on equal terms as others such as investment in physical assets, reinforced mentorship, prepartory visits.	Contribution on the basis of unit costs	20 EUR per day per participant	Based on the duration of the activity (if necessary, including also one travel day before the activity and one travel day following the activity) per participant with fewer opportunities, excluding accompanying persons.

QUALITY LABEL

WHAT IS THE QUALITY LABEL?

The Quality Label is a process that certifies that an organisation is able and willing to carry out high quality solidarity activities in compliance with the principles, objectives and quality standards of the European Solidarity Corps. Obtaining a Quality Label is a precondition for participation in Volunteering activities.

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF QUALITY LABEL

There are two main types of Quality Label, depending on the role(s) that the organisation wishes to play in the process:

- **Host role** - covers the full range of activities related to hosting a Solidarity Corps participant, including the development of a programme of the young person's activities and providing guidance and support to the participant during all the phases as appropriate
- **Support role** - entails supporting, preparing and/or training participants before departure, a mediation between them and their host organisations and/or providing support to participants upon return from their activity

All organisations who are awarded a Quality Label will be able to publish their opportunities in the European Solidarity Corps Portal and also to join other organisations in developing and providing opportunities for young people.

NB: In addition to these roles, those organisations who wish to apply for grants, manage and coordinate volunteering activities under Volunteering Projects will be required to obtain a Quality Label for lead organisation. Organisations who do not hold a Quality Label for lead organisation may act as partners in projects. Further information on the lead organisations is available in the relevant section of this Guide.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The requirements to obtain the Quality Label vary depending on the type of Quality Label requested.

The Quality Label is awarded following a fair and transparent selection process, involving three main stages: submission of Quality Label application, assessment and award.

The applications for the Quality Label can be submitted on a continuous basis (i.e. at any time) during the programming period. The organisations will submit application forms for one or for both roles, filling in parts which are relevant for the Quality Label roles they wish to play.

Applications will be assessed against eligibility criteria, award criteria as well as exclusion criteria (for more information on this last criterion, see Part E of this Guide).

The Quality Label is awarded for the entire duration of the programming period, subject to continued compliance with requirements. The Quality Label remains valid until the end of the last activity in which the organisation is involved as partner, implemented through a grant of the current programming period. The National Agencies will monitor compliance and may carry out periodical reassessments.

In order to facilitate partner-finding, profiles of all organisations holding a Quality Label are published in a database[38] of Quality Label organisations.

Once awarded a Quality Label, organisations have access to the European Solidarity Corps Portal where they are invited to advertise activities for which they are looking for participants. Organisations have to make use of the European Solidarity Corps Portal's database to search for potential participants. Information in the database is published as it is formulated in the Quality Label application form.

[38] https://europa.eu/youth/volunteering/organisations_en

TRANSITION ARRANGEMENTS FOR ORGANISATIONS HOLDING AN ERASMUS+ (EUROPEAN VOLUNTARY SERVICE) ACCREDITATION OR A QUALITY LABEL AWARDED UNDER THE PREVIOUS PROGRAMMES

The following provisions have been put in place for organisations who have been awarded a Quality Label or Erasmus+ accreditation under the previous programmes and that wish to continue to participate in the Programme.

- Organisations who are holders of a Quality Label for volunteering

These organisations will have their Quality Label validity extended for the same role, until 31 December 2027. In specific cases the NAs may ask some Quality Label holders to submit new applications, under the new programme. If these organisations wish to change role or add another role, they will be required to submit a new application for Quality Label. Those that intend to keep the same role but also wish to act as lead organisation under Volunteering Projects in the new programme will be required to fill in the lead organisation section in the application form.

- Organisations who are holders of Erasmus+ volunteering accreditations

These organisations will be able to use their accreditation to take part in activities for the same role until 31 December 2021. They are required to apply for a Quality Label if they want to participate as lead organisation under Volunteering Projects in the new programme. In such cases, organisations will be required to submit a new application for Quality Label.

PRE-DEFINED ACTIVITIES AND LOCATIONS

An organisation applying for the Quality Label with a host role must declare pre-defined activities, i.e. standard activities in which volunteers are involved, with a set of tasks that they will carry out in the organisation.

Organisations applying for a host role may also declare locations during the application for a Quality Label. A location is a placein which the activities are organised for a specific number of volunteers. A location is not required to have legal personality. By default, the main address of the host organisation is considered as a first location but organisations can declare and host volunteers in more than one location. Organisations can organise an activity for volunteers that are hosted in different locations, provided that the hosting capacity in terms of number of volunteers is not exceeded. The locations' appropriateness to accommodate volunteering activities should be demonstrated in the Quality Label application. The awarding bodies will assess all declared locations against the award criteria. All locations must be in the same country where the organisation is based.

The pre-defined activities that the volunteers will be involved in, in terms of tasks to be performed, must also be defined for each location.

WHAT ARE THE PRINCIPLES AND QUALITY STANDARDS?

The European Solidarity Corps guarantees high-quality volunteering activities, through the Quality Label process. The activities are based on a common understanding of key principles and standards, including:

- **Equal opportunities and non-discrimination**. Volunteers are to be selected in a fair, transparent and objective way, regardless of their gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, political opinion or disability. No previous qualifications, educational level, specific experience or language knowledge must be required. A more specific profile of the volunteer might be drawn up if justified by the nature of the tasks of the activity or by the project context. In order to promote inclusion, participation in volunteering activities must be free of charge for the volunteer, with the exception of possible contributions to travel costs (if the grant does not fully cover these costs). The activities should respect the principles set out in Article 9 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- **Avoidance of job substitution**. Volunteering activities must not substitute traineeships or jobs, so that any adverse effect on potential or existing paid employment is avoided. The involvement of volunteers should complement the work of paid staff. They should not replace paid staff or undercut their pay and conditions of service.
- **Avoidance of harmful activities**. Security and safety of the participants, participating organisations and target groups must be ensured. Such security and safety should include appropriate clearance requirements for participants working with vulnerable groups in accordance with applicable national law. Volunteering activities should be implemented with due consideration for the impact of unforeseen circumstances such as environmental crises, conflicts or pandemics. The activities should respect the principles set out in the EU Guidelines for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child[39].

[39] https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/sites/antitrafficking/files/eu_guidelines_rights_of_child_0.pdf

- **Provision of high quality, easily accessible and inclusive activities**. The volunteering tasks should enable participants to develop skills and competencies for personal, social and civic development. Organisations should embed the activities of volunteers within the local context and to facilitate volunteers' interaction with the local community and civil society. The value and benefits of European Solidarity Corps volunteering should be recognised for volunteers, through validation of learning outcomes.
- **Adequate training, working and volunteering arrangements**. Safe and decent living and working conditions must be ensured for participants. The young people and the organisations must sign a volunteering agreement that will outline the rights and responsibilities of both parties and will include a well-defined set of volunteering tasks.
- **"No profit"**. In accordance with the Financial Regulation, beneficiaries must not derive any profit from the activities funded by the grants awarded (see part E of this Programme Guide for further details). Furthermore, organisations should cover the participants' expenditure arising from participation in such solidarity activities but should not provide them with salaries or an economic benefit.

In addition to complying with the above-mentioned principles, organisations implementing volunteering activities must carry out the following set of tasks and responsibilities.

When applying for a Quality Label, organisations must be able to demonstrate their capacity to perform the tasks and responsibilities relevant to the role they are applying for.

TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ORGANISATIONS HOLDING A QUALITY LABEL

Management *(Lead organisation)*	▪ Ensure effective coordination of the project in cooperation with all other participating organisations; ▪ Ensure that the volunteering principles and quality standards are respected by all organisations taking part in the project; ▪ Submit the grant requests and bear the financial and administrative responsibility for the entire project towards the National Agency; ▪ Carry out all or some of the administrative tasks of the other organisation(s) involved; ▪ Distribute the grant between all organisations; ▪ Carry out monitoring, reporting and evaluation in compliance with programme procedures ▪ Carry out dissemination and information activities
Before the Activity *(Support role)*	▪ Select and match registered candidates in the European Solidarity Corps Portal or support the registered candidates to find suitable opportunities (this task may also be undertaken by the host organisation); ▪ Ensure that the volunteer signs a volunteering agreement which includes a learning and training component; ▪ Encourage the volunteer to enrol and take part in the general online training offered through the European Solidarity Corps portal; ▪ Ensure that the volunteer receives support in carrying out language preparation (if applicable, support to carry out the online language course and assessment provided by the Commission); ▪ Provide adequate preparation for the volunteer before departure, according to the individual needs and in line with the Training and Evaluation Cycle (in specific cases this task may also be undertaken by the host organisation); ▪ Ensure the participation of the volunteer in the pre-departure training session, if organised by the National Agency or SALTO; ▪ Ensure that the volunteer is in possession of the European Health Insurance Card and is covered by the obligatory Insurance plan foreseen by the Corps (if applicable); ▪ Ensure that the volunteer receives the European Solidarity Corps Info Kit; ▪ Stay in touch with the volunteer and the host organisation throughout the activity.
During the activity *(Host role)*	*Learning, mentoring and support* ▪ Ensure that the volunteer attends the full Training and Evaluation Cycle (if applicable); ▪ Ensure that the volunteer makes proper use of the European Health Insurance Card, and only uses the insurance scheme when required by the circumstances (if applicable); ▪ Offer to the volunteer the opportunity to carry out a well-defined set of tasks, allowing some of the volunteer's ideas, creativity and experience to be integrated; ▪ Identify clear learning opportunities for and with the volunteer; ▪ Provide task related support, supervision and guidance to the volunteer; ▪ Provide support to the volunteers to reflect on the learning process and to identify and document their learning outcomes, through EU validation tools, in particular Youthpass or Europass or national tools (this task may also be undertaken by the support organisation); ▪ Support the volunteers undertaking language courses, if necessary; ▪ Identify a mentor who is responsible for providing to the volunteers: – support to carry out self-reflection on the learning – personal support ▪ Encourage contact with other European Solidarity Corps participants whenever possible; ▪ Provide opportunities to integrate in the local community, meet other people, etc. *Living and working conditions* ▪ Provide suitable accommodation and healthy meals (or a food allowance) to the volunteer, including during the holiday period; ▪ Ensure that means of local transport are available for the volunteer; ▪ Provide the due allowance to the volunteer on a weekly or monthly basis.
After the activity *(Support role)*	▪ Provide support for the reintegration of the volunteer into the home community; ▪ Provide the volunteer with the opportunity to exchange and share experiences and learning outcomes; ▪ Encourage the involvement of the volunteer in dissemination and exploitation of results; ▪ Provide guidance regarding further education, training or employment opportunities; ▪ Ensure the participation of the volunteer in the annual European Solidarity Corps event.

WHAT IS THE QUALITY LABEL FOR LEAD ORGANISATIONS?

Obtaining a Quality Label for lead organisations is a precondition for applying for funds to implement Volunteering Projects.

Those who request lead role will be required to fill in an additional module in the application form and answer supplementary questions. Lead organisations will be required to lay down their longer-term objectives and activity plan, expected benefits as well as their approach to project management. Applications for a Quality Label for lead organisations will be assessed against selection criteria. The relevant section in application form will also be assessed against a supplementary set of award criteria.

Awarding of the Quality Label for lead organisations confirms that the applicant has appropriate and effective processes and measures in place to coordinate and implement high quality solidarity activities as planned. Previous experience in the European Solidarity Corps or Erasmus+ (2014-2020) is not a requirement for participation.

The award of a Quality Label for lead organisations depends on being successful in the application for a Quality Label for host and/or support role (partner organisations). Organisations who are holders of a Quality Label will have the possibility to apply for Quality Label for lead organisations at any time during the programming period.

Successful applicants for such a Quality Label type will gain access to funding opportunities for the duration of their Quality Label, subject to funding availability and performance assessments. They will sign an agreement with the National Agency awarding the Quality Label.

The National Agencies will determine the duration of the Quality Labels awarded to lead organisations, with a minimum of three years.

WHAT ARE THE CRITERIA USED TO ASSESS THE QUALITY LABEL?

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR THE QUALITY LABEL

Eligible organisations	Quality Label - any public or private entity, whether non-profit or profit making, local, regional, national or international, legally established in a programme country or a partner country[40]. Quality Label for lead organisations - any public or private entity, whether non-profit or profit making, local, regional, national or international that has been legally established in a programme country for at least one year[41].
	A Quality Label application should only refer to the entirety of an organisation with its departments and/or branches in general terms[42]. Groups of young people are not eligible.
Duration	The whole duration of the programming period, 2021 – 2027, subject to periodical reassessments which may be carried out by the National Agency. The Quality Label for lead organisations may be awarded for shorter durations, of at least 3 years. The Quality Label remains valid until the end of the last activity in which the organisation is involved, implemented through a grant of the current programming period. The Quality Label for lead organisations remains valid until the end of the last grant agreement signed under the current programming period.
When to apply?	Applications can be submitted on a continuous basis. The Quality Label for lead organisations should be submitted by taking into account the deadlines for submitting the grant requests.

[40] The obligation to be established in a programme country or a partner country does not apply to International organisations.

[41] The obligation to be established in a programme country does not apply to International organisations.

[42] Departments within an organisation can not apply for separate Quality Labels. Quality Labels are awarded at organisation level (one legal entity = one Quality Label).

Where to apply?	To the National Agency of the country in which the applicant organisation is established[43] for organisations established in a programme country. International organisations that are not established in a programme country may apply at any National Agency. To the relevant SALTO for organisations established in a partner country: ▪ SALTO South East Europe for organisations established in Western Balkans countries; ▪ SALTO Eastern Europe and Caucasus for organisations established in Eastern Partnership countries, the territory of Russia as recognised by international law and Norway; ▪ SALTO EuroMed for organisations established in Southern Mediterranean.
Other Criteria	A declaration of honour signed by the legal representative must be annexed to the application form.

SELECTION CRITERIA [ONLY FOR THE QUALITY LABEL FOR LEAD ORGANISATIONS]

OPERATIONAL CAPACITY

The lead organisation must have sufficient professional and operational capacity to carry out the proposed activity plan.

Operational capacity will be verified based on the application (including information about the applicant's past participation in the Erasmus+ programme or/and European Solidarity Corps) and the documents submitted in the Organisation Registration System. Applicants that do not complete the information requested in the application form may be disqualified. The National Agency reserves the right to ask for additional supporting documents to verify the information included in the application.

FINANCIAL CAPACITY

Organisations applying for lead type must have stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain their regular activities during the implementation of the proposed activity plan. However, financial capacity will not be checked as part of the selection procedure for the Quality Label. It will be checked when the Quality Label organisations apply for a grant. Please see more information in Part E of this Guide.

AWARD CRITERIA

The awarding of a Quality Label is subject to an assessment of the capacity of the organisation to carry out the relevant tasks and responsibilities and to comply with the principles mentioned above. The following award criteria will be used to assess applications.

Some criteria are specific to the role applied for.

Relevance	The extent to which: ▪ the organisation's motives for participation in the European Solidarity Corps are convincing and clearly explained; ▪ the organisation's objectives and regular activities address issues relevant for the objectives of the European Solidarity Corps and have a strong solidarity dimension
Quality of measures	The extent to which the organisation respects the programme quality standards by: ▪ selecting and/or involving participants in activities through a transparent and fair process; ▪ ensuring adequate practical and logistical arrangements; ▪ ensuring adequate support for participants before, during and after the activity, as appropriate; ▪ ensuring that participants meet relevant clearance requirements, and undergo specific preparation, particularly for participants working with vulnerable groups in accordance with applicable national law; ▪ ensuring adequate personal support for participants; ▪ ensuring a solid learning component for participants and the recognition and validation of learning outcomes;

[43] Please note: organisations under the supervision of national authorities of another country apply to the NA of the supervising country.

	▪ guaranteeing the safety and protection of participants and target groups, in line with the avoidance of harmful activities principle; ▪ avoiding job substitution, routine tasks and tasks with low learning impact; ▪ designing and implementing high quality standard activities that respond to unmet societal needs and benefit participants, communities and target groups; ▪ reaching out, supporting and involving young people with fewer opportunities.
Organisational Capacity	The extent to which: ▪ the organisation has demonstrated the ability and commitment to allocate appropriate resources to manage the European Solidarity Corps activities in accordance with applicable quality standards; ▪ the organisation has proposed appropriate steps to ensure continuity of activities in case of organisational changes; ▪ the organisation demonstrates a good approach towards identifying and working with partners.

ADDITIONAL AWARD CRITERIA FOR LEAD ORGANISATIONS

Proposals must score at least 60 points. Furthermore, they must score at least half of the maximum points in each of the categories of award criteria mentioned below.

Strategic approach *(maximum 50 points)*	The extent to which: ▪ the applicant formulates a convincing long-term framework for achieving well-defined objectives, with clear milestones and adjustment measures; ▪ the stated objectives will address important societal needs and are relevant to the objectives of the European Solidarity Corps; ▪ the planned activities are suitable to address the identified needs and objectives; ▪ the targets proposed are realistic and sufficiently ambitious relative to objectives and capacity; ▪ the planned activities bring clear benefits to the participants, participating organisations and target groups and have a potential broader impact (e.g. on local, regional, national and transnational level); ▪ the planned activities and objectives demonstrate European added value; ▪ the applicant aims to promote environmental sustainability and responsibility and is planning to incorporate sustainable and environmental-friendly practices in the activities ▪ the applicant is planning to make use of digital tools and methods to complement and improve activities.
Project management and coordination *(maximum 50 points)*	The extent to which: ▪ the organisation ensures quality project management, including proper communication and coordination measures with partners; ▪ the measures aimed at disseminating the outcomes of the activities within and outside the participating organisations are appropriate and of high quality; ▪ the measures for monitoring and evaluating the activities are appropriate and of high quality.

WHAT ARE THE MONITORING AND QUALITY ASSURANCE MEASURES?

CHANGING/UPDATING THE QUALITY LABEL

The organisations holding a Quality Label must notify the awarding body of any changes in their organisation that should be reflected in their Quality Label. The awarding body can reassess whether that organisation continues to comply with the conditions that led to the attribution of the Quality Label.

MONITORING AND CHECKS

The Quality Label will be periodically reassessed. The bodies in charge of the Quality Label may carry out regular or ad hoc monitoring visits to verify that the organisations holding a Quality Label still meet the quality standards.

REMEDIAL MEASURES

In case of new lead applicants, high risk organisations, failure to comply with National Agency's instructions and deadlines, very low performance resulting from reporting, monitoring and quality assurance checks, or violations of the rules of the Programme (including in another action), the National Agency may take the following remedial measures:

- Observation: The National Agency may limit the level of funding that an organisation holding a Quality Label for lead organisations can apply for. Organisations who received the Quality Label for the first time may be put under observation if risk of low quality implementation is identified during the operational capacity check.

Suspension: in the case of applicant organisations, suspended organisations are no longer able to apply for funding. The National Agency may also terminate some or all ongoing grant agreements awarded under the Quality Label of an applicant organisation. If suspended, partner organisations will no longer be able to participate in the programme until it has taken measures and improved performance. The observation or suspension period will continue until the National Agency determines that the conditions and quality requirements set in this Call are once again fulfilled, and that the risk of low performance has been addressed by the organisation.

Organisations under suspension or observation may not apply for a new Quality Label.

TERMINATION

In cases of serious underperformance, failure to comply with National Agency's instructions and deadlines or repeated violations of the Programme rules, the Quality Label can be withdrawn. The National Agency will give due consideration to each case of non-compliance and will prompt the organisation well in advance to allow enough time to take corrective measures.

In addition, the National Agencies may terminate a Quality Label if the organisation ceases to exist or, in the case of lead organisations, following a period of at least three years in which no grant requests have been made.

SOLIDARITY PROJECTS

WHAT IS A SOLIDARITY PROJECT?

A **Solidarity Project** is a non-profit solidarity activity initiated, developed and implemented by young people themselves for a period from 2 to 12 months. It gives a group of minimum five young persons the chance to express solidarity by taking responsibility and committing themselves to bring positive change in their local community. The project should have a clearly identified topic which the group of young people wish to explore together and which has to be translated into the concrete daily activities of the project and involve all the members of the group. Solidarity Projects should address key challenges within the communities, where relevant including those identified jointly in the border regions and it should also present European added value. Participation in a solidarity project is an important non-formal learning experience through which young people can boost their personal, educational, social and civic development.

A solidarity project will typically consist of the following stages:

- Planning;
- Preparation;
- Implementation of the activities;
- Follow-up (including the evaluation of the activities as well as the sharing of project's results).

WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES AND IMPACT?

A Solidarity Project should clearly refer to the **European Solidarity Corps' objectives and principles** in particular towards solidarity. This common value provides the necessary unity to cope with current and future societal challenges, which young Europeans are willing to help address by expressing their solidarity in practice. A Solidarity Project could address young people facing situations that make their inclusion in society more difficult. A solidarity project should also consider sustainable and environmental-friendly practices in the planned activities.

The young people should take the initiative to respond to the issues and challenges around them, which is why a solidarity project should be directly linked to the **local community** they live in, although some of them can also tackle regional or even national issues. Some solidarity projects could also tackle common challenges identified jointly in the border regions. A Solidarity Project should have an impact on the local community by addressing local issues, targeting a specific group or developing local opportunities (particularly in communities located in rural, isolated,marginalised or corss-border areas) but also through involving different actors and developing new partnerships. Thus, by setting common goals and cooperating together to achieve them, communities can benefit from a solidarity project.

Together with addressing the local challenges, a solidarity project should also demonstrate **European added value** by addressing priorities identified at European level. A solidarity project should reflect a common concern for topics within the European society, such as for example integrating third-country nationals, climate change or active democratic participation. The European added value can be expressed through any element of a solidarity project that is linked with European issues, values and priorities. The European priorities will also be promoted through sharing of the results of the project.

Participation in a Solidarity Project will also be an important **non-formal learning experience** for young people. It should foster sense of initiative, active European citizenship and entrepreneurial spirit. In particular, young people managing the project could absorb in practice the concept of social entrepreneurship by creating new products or services that benefit local community or society in general and address important societal challenges. By putting their own ideas into practice, meeting unexpected situations and finding solutions for them, trying out innovative and creative measures, young people will learn new skills and develop their capacities, express their own creativity and take responsibility for their action. They will boost their self-esteem, autonomy and motivation to learn. Participation in managing and implementing a solidarity project could be also a first step into self-employment or setting up organisations in the solidarity, non-profit or youth sectors.

HOW TO SET UP A SOLIDARITY PROJECT?

Young people who want to form a group to run a solidarity project must be registered in the European Solidarity Corps portal. There is no maximum number of the group's members. The activities will take place in the country of residence of the applicant, facilitating in particular the participation of young people who may encounter difficulties to engage in transnational activities.

The group will decide autonomously on the working methods and how the project will be managed. One of the group's members will assume a role of legal representative who will submit the application (unless an organisation applies on behalf of the group). The group will arrange the distribution of tasks and responsibilities, ensure efficient coordination and communication between its members and define the amount of time spent in carrying out the tasks in relation to the goals of the project. Working methods should aim to involve all members of the group through various phases of the project and of activities (preparation, implementation and sharing the results). The phases should be clearly structured with the help of a project's timetable.

A group of young people who plan a solidarity project can seek for support from **an organisation** (any public or private body). An organisation may apply on their behalf for a grant under the European Solidarity Corps. The role of the organisation should be mainly administrative, to support the group in the project life-cycle administrative and financial tasks. However, it can also offer support and guidance in identifying and documenting learning outcomes.

Young people carrying out a Solidarity Project may be supported by **coaches**. A coach is a resource person who could have youth work experience to accompany groups of young people and support their participation through different phases of the project. The coach will remain outside the Solidarity Project, so he/she will not be a member of the group. The coach empowers the group of young people in those areas and topics they need support in, in order to successfully implement the project by themselves and can play different roles based on the needs of the group. This could be done through regular coaching sessions throughout the project period, punctual trainings on specific topics or a combination of both. The coach can provide advice on having quality learning process and assist in identifying and documenting learning outcomes at the end of the project. The group of young people can use the support of one or several coaches depending on their needs. As a principle, the coach works with the applying group of young people, not with the target group(s) of the project.

For example a coach could be a person to turn to with doubts, questions, conflicts in the group; a trainer to give a workshop on project management; to teach the group certain skills needed for the project; a person supporting and monitoring the learning process.

Through the different phases of the project, the group should reflect on the **learning process**, which they experience and have experienced. During the planning phase of the project, the learning goals should be discussed together with the general aims of the project. During the implementation, regular reflection is encouraged and towards the end of the project, the group should consider measures that make the learning outcomes visible. For recognising and validating these learning outcomes it is recommended to use Youthpass and the related learning process reflection.

The group should reflect together on measures aimed at the visibility of their project and the visibility of the European Solidarity Corps in general. The group should also reflect on **follow-up measures**. This means that the project should be framed within a longer-term perspective and planned with a view to have effects after it ends. In order to make the project and its results more sustainable, the group is expected to carry out a final evaluation. This should make possible to assess whether the objectives of the project have been achieved; the expectations of the group have been met and evaluate the overall success. The group should consider the ways of sharing the results of the project and reflect on with who they should be shared.

INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

The European Solidarity Corps seeks to promote equal opportunities and access, inclusion and fairness. Young people implementing Solidarity Projects should design accessible and inclusive activities, taking into account the needs of participants with fewer opportunities.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CLIMATE ACTION

Solidarity Projects should promote environmentally sustainable and responsible behaviour among participants, raising the awareness about the importance of acting to reduce or compensate for the environmental footprint of activities. Solidarity Projects should be designed and implemented with environmental consciousness by e.g. integrating sustainable practices such as reducing waste and recycling, using sustainable means of transportation.

DIGITAL TRANSITION

The European Solidarity Corps supports incorporating the use of digital tools and learning methods in Solidarity Projects.

WHAT ARE THE CRITERIA USED TO ASSESS PROJECTS?

Projects will be assessed against eligibility criteria, award criteria as well as exclusion and selection criteria (for more information on these two last criteria, see Part E of this Guide).

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Here below are listed the formal criteria that the projects must respect in order to be eligible for a grant:

Who implements the project?	A group of minimum 5 young people aged between 18 and 30 years[44] who are legally residing in one and the same programme country and have registered in the European Solidarity Corps Portal.
Who can apply?	The group that will implement the project. One of the young people in the group assumes the role of the legal representative and takes the responsibility of submitting the application. Any public or private body, legally established in a programme country, on behalf of the group that will implement the project.
Number of members	Minimum 5. There is no maximum number of members of the group.
Venue of the project	The project should take place in the country of the applicant. In cases in which the project addresses cross-border challenges, project activities can also take place in the programme countries sharing the border with the country of the applicant.
Duration of project	2 to 12 months.
Where to apply?	To the National Agency of the country where the applicant is legally resident.
When to apply?	Applicants have to submit their grant application by the following dates: ▪ 28 May at 12:00 (midday Brussels time) for projects starting between 15 August and 31 December of the same year; ▪ 5 October at 12:00 (midday Brussels time) for projects starting between 1 January and 31 May of the following year.
How to apply?	Please see part E of this Guide for details how to apply.
Other criteria	A Declaration of Honour signed by the legal representative must be annexed to the application form.

[44] Participants must have reached 18 and must not be older than 30 at the start date of the project.

AWARD CRITERIA

To be considered for funding, proposals must score at least 60 points. Furthermore, they must score at least half of the maximum points in each of the categories of award criteria mentioned below.

Relevance, rationale and impact of the project *(maximum 40 points)*	▪ The relevance of the project to the objectives and priorities of the European Solidarity Corps; ▪ The degree to which the project takes into account the European Solidarity Corps principles; ▪ The extent to which the project provides European added value by addressing relevant topics ▪ The relevance of the project to the needs of members of the group; ▪ The relevance of the project to the needs of a target group (if any) and communities; ▪ The potential impact of the project on members of the group, incl. their personal, entrepreneurship skills and social involvement; ▪ The potential impact on the target group (if any) and on communities.
Quality of the project design *(maximum 40 points)*	▪ The consistency between project objectives and proposed activities; ▪ The extent to which the project is designed, developed and implemented by young people; ▪ The extent to which the composition of the group permits to reach the project objectives; ▪ The involvement of the members of the group at the various phases of the project; ▪ The clarity, completeness and quality of all the phases of the project (planning, preparation, implementation, evaluation and sharing the results); ▪ The extent to which learning process and learning outcomes in the project is thought through, identified and documented, in particular through Youthpass; ▪ The extent to which the project incorporates sustainable and environmental-friendly practices, accessible and inclusive activities, as well as makes use of digital tools and methods to complement and improve activities.
Quality of project management *(maximum 20 points)*	▪ The practical arrangements, management, cooperation and communication between the members of the group; ▪ The measures for evaluating the outcomes of the project; ▪ The measures for making the project visible to others who are not involved in the project; ▪ The measures for sharing the outcomes of the project.

WHAT ARE THE FUNDING RULES?

Eligible costs		Financing mechanism	Amount	Rule of allocation
Project Management	Costs linked to the management and implementation of the project (e.g. preparation, implementation, of activities, evaluation, dissemination and follow-up activities).	Contribution on the basis of a unit cost	500 EUR per month	Based on the duration of the Solidarity Project.
Coaching costs	Costs linked to the involvement of a coach in the project.	Contribution on the basis of a unit cost	B1 per day of work. Maximum 12 days.	Based on the country of the applicant and the working days. Conditional: The request for financial support to cover coach costs must be motivated in the application form. The duration of coaching is not linked to the project duration.
Exceptional costs	Costs to support the participation of young people with fewer opportunities (members of the group implementing the project)	Real costs	100 % of eligible costs	Conditional: The request for financial support to cover exceptional costs must be motivated in the application form.

WHAT ARE THE RATES?

	Coaching Costs (EUR per day)
	B1
Austria, Denmark, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Sweden, Liechtenstein	241
Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Iceland	214
Cyprus, Czechia, Greece, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain	137
Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Republic of North Macedonia, Turkey	74

PART C – PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN HUMANITARIAN AID RELATED SOLIDARITY ACTIVITIES

"VOLUNTEERING UNDER THE EUROPEAN VOLUNTARY HUMANITARIAN AID CORPS"

In this part, readers will find relevant information and criteria for the Quality Label for Humanitarian Aid Volunteering, pre-requisite for organisations to participate in Humanitarian Aid Volunteering projects:

- a description of the Quality Label;
- tables presenting the criteria which are used to assess proposals;
- additional information on quality features of activities.

Before submitting an application, applicants are advised to read carefully the entire section concerning the Action under which they wish to apply.

WHICH ACTIONS ARE SUPPORTED?

Under this strand, the European Soldiarity Corps supports volunteering in humanitarian aid related solidarity activities.

Given the significant increase in global humanitarian needs and with a view to enhancing the promotion of solidarity and the visibility of humanitarian aid among Union citizens, there is a need to develop solidarity between Member States and with third countries affected by man-made or natural disasters. Contributing to assistance to people and communities outside the Union in need of humanitarian aid, based on the fundamental principles of neutrality, humanity, independence and impartiality, is an important expression of solidarity.

Activities implemented under the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps aim at contributing to providing needs-based humanitarian aid aimed at preserving life, preventing and alleviating human suffering and maintaining human dignity and to strengthening the capacity and resilience of vulnerable or disaster-affected communities. Humanitarian Aid Volunteering projects funded under this strand will offer the opportunity to young people aged 18 to 35 years old to participate in volunteering activities, aiming at supporting humanitarian aid operations. Such activities will provide young people with the opportunity to carry out tasks needed to support the activities undertaken by their host organisation.

To ensure the safety of participants, volunteering under this strand may only take place in countries:

- where humanitarian aid activities and operations take place; and
- where there are no ongoing international or non-international armed conflicts.

NB: The Action 'Humanitarian Aid Volunteering projects' is not covered under this Guide and will be open under a subsequent call for proposals. In order to be able to take part in volunteering activities under this strand, organisations need to hold a Quality Label for volunteering under this strand. This section therefore covers all relevant information and criteria for the Quality Label, pre-requisite for organisations to participate in Humanitarian Aid Volunteering projects, enabling organisations that wish to participate in the strand to prepare and apply for the relevant Quality Label, and be ready and compliant with all the standards and requirements necessary to engage in project activities.

QUALITY LABEL FOR HUMANITARIAN AID VOLUNTEERING

WHAT IS THE QUALITY LABEL?

The Quality Label for Humanitarian Aid Volunteering certifies that an organisation is able to carry out high quality solidarity activities in compliance with the principles, objectives and requirements of the action 'European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps'. Obtaining this Quality Label is a precondition for participation only in volunteering activities in support of humanitarian aid operations.

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF QUALITY LABEL?

When applying for a Quality Label for Humanitarian Aid Volunteering, applicant organisations can choose one of the following roles:

- **Support role** - entails supporting, preparing and/or training participants before departure, mediation between them and their host organisations and/or providing support to participants upon return from their activity. The support role also entitles the organisation to submit project applications and coordinate partnerships for Humanitarian Aid Volunteering projects;
- **Host role** - covers the full range of activities related to hosting a Solidarity Corps participant, including the development of a programme of the young person's activities and providing guidance and support to the participant during all the phases as appropriate.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The Quality Label for Humanitarian Aid Volunteering is awarded following a selection process, involving three main stages: submission of application, assessment and award.

The applications for the Quality Label for Humanitarian Aid Volunteering can be submitted on a continuous basis (i.e. at any time) during the programming period, to the Executive Agency, which is the sole implementing body for this action. The applications will be evaluated at set intervals, according to an annual timetable, which is aligned to the timetable of the Humanitarian Aid Volunteering call for projects.

Applications will be assessed against eligibility, selection, exclusion and award criteria (for more information on the selection and exclusion criteria, see Part E of this Guide). Successful organisations will be awarded the Quality Label for Humanitarian Aid Volunteering. The Executive Agency will award this Quality Label and monitor compliance and may carry out periodical reassessments. The Quality Label will be valid for the entire duration of the programming period and until the end of the last project in which the organisation is involved.

In order to facilitate partner-finding and the setting up of project consortia, profiles of all organisations holding this Quality Label are published in a database[45] of Quality Label organisations on the European Solidarity Corps Portal. To identify potential partners, partner searching tool on the Funding and Tender Opportunities Portal[46] can be used.

Once awarded a Quality Label, organisations gain access to the European Solidarity Corps Portal where they are invited to advertise activities. Organisations have to make use of the European Solidarity Corps Portal's database to search for potential partners and participants. Information in the database is published as it is formulated in the Quality Label application form.

APPLYING FOR A QUALITY LABEL ON BEHALF OF HOSTING ORGANISATIONS – THE SIMPLIFIED HOST PROCEDURE

An organisation established in a programme country that applies for support role may also apply for host role on behalf of its branches located in non programme countries with which it shares the same legal personality (simplified hosting procedure). This procedure is designed to help larger organisations, with several branches located in different countries.

The applicant supporting organisation is accountable for the quality and safety of the activities offered by the simplified hosting organisation(s) on behalf of which it is applying.

[45] https://europa.eu/youth/volunteering/organisations_en
[46] https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/how-to-participate/partner-search

TRANSITION ARRANGEMENTS FOR ORGANISATIONS HOLDING AN EU AID VOLUNTEERS CERTIFICATION

The organisations which have been awarded an EU Aid Volunteers certification under the EU Aid Volunteers initiative (programme period 2014-2020) and that wish to continue to participate in the new European Solidarity Corps programme will have the possibility to apply for the Quality Label for Humanitarian Aid Volunteering by following a lighter procedure compared to organisations without the EU Aid Volunteers certification. In order to qualify for this procedure, these organisations will be required to hold a valid EUAV certification at application stage.

EU Aid Volunteers certified sending and hosting organisations are considered to already fulfil essential requirements for the award of the Quality Label for Humanitarian Aid Volunteering notable in relation to safety and security measures, documentation of humanitarian aid experience, travel, working and living conditions of volunteers, equal treatment policies etc.

WHAT ARE THE QUALITY STANDARDS ?

The European Solidarity Corps guarantees high-quality volunteering activities, through the Quality Label process. Participating organisations must respect the following principles and standards:

- **Equal opportunities and non-discrimination**. Volunteers are to be selected in a fair, transparent and objective way, regardless of their gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, political opinion or disability. No previous qualifications, educational level, specific experience or language knowledge must be required. A more specific profile of the volunteer might be drawn up if justified by the nature of the tasks of the activity or by the project context. In order to promote inclusion, participation in volunteering activities must be free of charge for the volunteer, with the exception of possible contributions to travel costs (if the grant does not fully cover these costs). The activities should respect the principles set out in Article 9 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- **Avoidance of job substitution**. Volunteering activities must not substitute traineeships or jobs, so that any adverse effect on potential or existing paid employment is avoided. The involvement of volunteers should complement the work of paid staff. They should not replace paid staff or undercut their pay and conditions of service.
- **Avoidance of harmful activities**. Security and safety of the participants, participating organisations and target groups must be ensured. Such security and safety should include appropriate clearance requirements for participants working with vulnerable groups in accordance with applicable national law. Volunteering activities should be implemented with due consideration for the impact of unforeseen circumstances such as environmental crises, conflicts or pandemics. The activities should respect the principles set out in the EU Guidelines for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child[47].
- **Provision of high quality, easily accessible and inclusive activities**. The volunteering tasks should enable participants to develop skills and competencies for personal, social and civic development. Particular attention will be given to the capacity of hosting organisations in third countries and the need to embed the activities of volunteers within the local context and to facilitate volunteers' interaction with local humanitarian actors, the hosting community and civil society. The value and benefits of European Solidarity Corps volunteering should be recognised for volunteers, through validation of learning outcomes.
- **Adequate training, working and volunteering arrangements**. Safe and decent living and working conditions must be ensured for participants. The young people and the organisations must sign a volunteering agreement that will outline the rights and responsibilities of both parties and will include a well-defined set of volunteering tasks.
- **"no profit"**. In accordance with the Financial Regulation, beneficiaries must not derive any profit from the activities funded by the grants awarded. Furthermore, volunteering should cover the participants' expenditure arising from participation in such solidarity activities but should not provide them with salaries or an economic benefit.

TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ORGANISATIONS HOLDING A QUALITY LABEL FOR HUMANITARIAN AID VOLUNTEERING

In addition to complying with the above-mentioned principles, organisations implementing humanitarian aid volunteering projects must carry out specific tasks and responsibilities in order to ensure high quality activities. When applying for a Quality Label, organisations must be able to demonstrate their capacity to perform the tasks and take up responsibilities relevant to the role they are applying for, as outlined in the requirements below. This list is not comprehensive and, in some

[47] https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/sites/antitrafficking/files/eu_guidelines_rights_of_child_0.pdf

cases, the set of tasks and responsibilities may overlap between host and support organisations, without prejudice to the overall quality of the activity.

ORGANISATIONS APPLYING FOR A SUPPORT ROLE

Management	▪ Ensure compliance with the European Solidarity Corps Regulation, in particular the articles and the recitals which concern the Humanitarian Aid strand ▪ Ensure effective coordination in cooperation with all other participating organisations; ▪ Prepare risk assessment/security procedures/evacuation plan; ▪ Carry out monitoring, reporting and evaluation in compliance with programme procedures ▪ Carry out dissemination and information activities.
Before the activity	▪ Ensure selection procedure in line with the principles for transparency and equal treatment; ▪ Select volunteers from the relevant pool of trained candidates; ▪ Ensure that the volunteer signs a volunteering agreement which includes at least the following provisions: – Volunteer's role, title, duration and location of placement, and tasks to be performed; – Duration of the contract, including start and end date; – Performance management; – Working conditions, including working hours and leave; – Financial rights and obligations; – Practical arrangements: medical checks; visa and work permits, relevant clearance requirements; – Specific induction for participants working with children and vulnerable groups in accordance with applicable national law; – Expected conduct from the volunteer; – Disciplinary policy and termination of volunteer status; – Mediation mechanism; – Responsibilities and policies applicable to security management and health and safety; – Learning and development: training and induction, debriefing. ▪ Ensure that the volunteer receives support in carrying out language preparation (if applicable, support to carry out the online language course and assessment provided by the Commission); ▪ Identify learning needs and set learning objectives; ▪ Provide adequate preparation for the volunteers before departure, according to the individual needs and tailored to the specificities of the project, the activity and the host country and in line with the Training and Evaluation Cycle; ▪ Ensure that volunteers meet relevant clearance requirements, and undergo specific preparation, particularly for participants working with vulnerable groups in accordance with applicable national law; ▪ Ensure the participation of the volunteers in the pre-departure training session including security briefing; ▪ Ensure that the volunteers has pre-deployment medical assessment; ▪ Ensure that the volunteer is covered by the obligatory Insurance plan foreseen by the Corps; ▪ Ensure that the volunteer has all necessary visas and work permits; ▪ Ensure that the volunteer receives the European Solidarity Corps Info Kit; ▪ Make or facilitate travel arrangements to/from the country of deployment; ▪ Take necessary measures to ensure the security and safety of the participants; ▪ Designate support contact for the volunteer and stay in touch with the volunteer and the host organisation throughout the activity; ▪ To support the settlement and the transition of the volunteer; ▪ To provide necessary additional support to the volunteer and the hosting organisation; ▪ Ensure that the volunteer understands the terms and conditions of the insurance scheme; ▪ Provide support to the volunteers to reflect on the learning process and to identify and document their learning outcomes, through EU validation tools, in particular Youthpass, Europass or national tools.
During the activity	▪ Coordinate with the hosting organisations to ensure that the project is progressing as planned; ▪ To take part in the mid-term evaluation and final reviews; ▪ To provide mediation support in case of disagreement between the HO and the volunteer.
After the activity	▪ Provide medical and psychological examination of volunteers; ▪ Provide support to help reintegration of the volunteer into the home community; ▪ Provide the volunteer with the opportunity to exchange and share experiences and learning outcomes; ▪ Encourage the involvement of the volunteer in dissemination and exploitation of results; ▪ Provide guidance regarding further education, training or employment opportunities;

	▪ Ensure the participation of the volunteer in the annual European Solidarity Corps event.

ORGANISATIONS APPLYING FOR A HOST ROLE

Management	▪ Ensure compliance to the European Solidarity Corps Regulation, in particular the articles and the recital which concern the Humanitarian Aid strand.
Before the activity	▪ Co-operate, as necessary, with the support organisation (coordinator) in preparing the activity and, in particular, the volunteers for their volunteering activities.
During the activity	*Learning, mentoring and support* ▪ Ensure that the volunteer attends on-arrival training , including security briefing; ▪ Ensure organisation of mid-term evaluation; ▪ Ensure that the volunteer attends the full Training and Evaluation Cycle (if applicable); ▪ Offer to the volunteer the opportunity to carry out a well-defined set of tasks, allowing some of the volunteer's ideas, creativity and experience to be integrated; ▪ Identify clear learning opportunities for and with the volunteer; ▪ Provide task related support, supervision and guidance to the volunteer through experienced staff; ▪ Provide support to the volunteers in their learning process; ▪ Support the volunteers undertaking language courses, if necessary; ▪ Identify a mentor who is responsible for providing to the volunteers: – support to carry out self-reflection on the learning – personal support *Volunteering living and working conditions* ▪ Support the volunteers' visa and work permit applications ▪ Ensure safety and security of participants in accordance with the approved procedures/evacuation plan; ▪ Provide adequate living and working conditions to the volunteer; ▪ Facilitate integration of volunteers in the local community and interaction with expatriate community; ▪ Ensure conflict prevention, mediation and well-being, including psychological support where necessary; ▪ Ensure that means of local transport are available for the volunteer; ▪ Ensure access to means of communication for contact with participating organisations and relatives; ▪ Provide due allowances to the volunteer.
After the activity	▪ Provide final performance review and debrief to the volunteer; ▪ Follow up and evaluation of the action with the support organisation immediately after the voluntary activity is completed; ▪ Contribute to impact and dissemination of result phases and support the final evaluation of the project.

WHAT ARE THE CRITERIA USED TO ASSESS THE QUALITY LABEL?

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Eligible organisations	Quality Label for support role - any organisation legally established in a programme country[48]. Quality Label for host role - any organisation legally established in a non programme country.
	An organisation established in a programme country that applies for support role may also apply for host role on behalf of its branches with which it shares the same legal personality. Groups of young people are not eligible are not eligible.
Duration	The whole duration of the programming period, 2021 – 2027, subject to periodical reassessments which may be carried out by the EACEA.
When to apply?	Applications can be submitted on a continuous basis. Organisations willing to take part in Humanitarian Aid Volunteering projects under the 2022 call must submit their application for Quality Label by 22 September 2021 at 17:00 (Brussels time).
Where to apply?	To the Education and Culture Executive Agency.
Other Criteria	A declaration of honour signed by the legal representative must be annexed to the application form.

AWARD CRITERIA

The awarding of a Quality Label is subject to an assessment of the capacity of the organisation to ensure the relevant tasks and responsibilities, which are mentioned above. The following award criteria will be used to assess applications.

ORGANISATIONS APPLYING FOR A SUPPORT ROLE

Relevance	The extent to which: ▪ the organisation's motives for participation in the European Solidarity Corps are convincing and clearly explained ▪ the organisation's objectives address issues relevant for the objectives of the European Solidarity Corps ▪ the organisation's activities and its experience relevant for the humanitarian aid field and have a strong solidarity dimension ▪ the organisation demonstrates commitment to the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, as well as with the 'do no harm' principle
Quality of measures	The extent to which the organisation respects the programme quality standards by: ▪ carrying out activities that respond to humanitarian aid needs and provide tangible benefits to target groups and local communities ▪ ensuring that security, health and safety of participants are guaranteed and any risks concerning the proposed accommodation and work placement are properly tackled ▪ taking necessary measures to respect the avoidance of harmful activities principle ▪ ensuring adequate practical and logistical arrangements ▪ ensuring adequate mentoring support for participants ▪ ensuring adequate personal support for participants, including conflict prevention and mitigation measures and psychological support ▪ taking adequate measures to ensure appropriate living and working conditions for the volunteers ▪ avoiding job substitution, routine tasks and tasks with low learning impact ▪ promoting environmental sustainability and responsibility and incorporating sustainable and environmental-friendly practices in activities ▪ making use of digital tools and methods to complement and improve activities

[48] The obligation to be established in a Programme Country does not apply to international organisations.

Organisational Capacity	The extent to which: ▪ the organisation has demonstrated the ability, capacity and commitment to allocate appropriate resources to manage the European Solidarity Corps activities in accordance with applicable quality standards, in particular the safety and security standards for the Humanitarian Aid Volunteering ▪ the organisation has proposed appropriate steps to ensure continuity of activities in case of organisational changes ▪ the organisation demonstrates a good approach towards working with partners ▪ the measures for assuring the sustainability of the planned activities are of appropriate high quality ▪ the organisation ensures quality project management, including proper communication and coordination measures with other support or host organisations ▪ the measures aimed at disseminating the outcomes of the activities within and outside the participating organisations are appropriate and of high quality ▪ the measures for monitoring and evaluating the activities are appropriate and of high quality.

ORGANISATIONS APPLYING FOR A HOST ROLE

Relevance	The extent to which: ▪ the organisation's motives for participation in the European Solidarity Corps are convincing and clearly explained ▪ the organisation's objectives address issues relevant for the objectives of the European Solidarity Corps ▪ the organisation's activities and its experience relevant for the humanitarian aid field and have a strong solidarity dimension ▪ the organisation demonstrates commitment to the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, as well as with the 'do no harm' principle
Quality of measures	The extent to which the organisation respects the programme quality standards by: ▪ carrying out activities that respond to humanitarian aid needs and provide tangible benefits to target groups and local communities ▪ ensuring that security, health and safety of participants are guaranteed and any risks concerning the proposed accommodation and work placement are properly tackled ▪ taking necessary measures to respect the avoidance of harmful activities principle ▪ ensure adequate mentoring support for participants ▪ ensuring adequate practical and logistical arrangements ▪ ensuring adequate mentoring support for participants during the activity ▪ ensuring adequate personal support for participants, including conflict prevention and mitigation measures and psychological support ▪ taking adequate measures to ensure appropriate living and working conditions for the volunteers ▪ avoiding job substitution, routine tasks and tasks with low learning impact ▪ promoting environmental sustainability and responsibility and incorporating sustainable and environmental-friendly practices in activities ▪ making use of digital tools and methods to complement and improve activities
Organisational Capacity	The extent to which: ▪ the organisation has demonstrated the ability, capacity and commitment to allocate appropriate resources to manage the European Solidarity Corps activities in accordance with applicable quality standards, in particular the safety and security standards for the Humanitarian Aid Volunteering ▪ the organisation has proposed appropriate steps to ensure continuity of activities in case of organisational changes ▪ the organisation demonstrates a good approach towards working with partners ▪ the measures for assuring the sustainability of the planned activities are of appropriate high quality ▪ the organisation ensures quality project management, including proper communication and coordination measures with the support organisation ▪ the measures aimed at disseminating the outcomes of the activities within and outside the participating organisations are appropriate and of high quality ▪ the measures for monitoring and evaluating the activities are appropriate and of high quality.

MONITORING, REPORTING AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

CHANGING/UPDATING THE QUALITY LABEL

The organisations holding a Quality Label for Humanitarian Aid Volunteering must notify the awarding body of any changes in their organisation that should be reflected in their Quality Label.

MONITORING AND CHECKS

The Quality Label will be periodically reassessed. The Executive Agency may carry out regular or ad hoc monitoring visits to verify that the organisations holding a Quality Label still meet the quality standards.

TERMINATION

In cases of serious underperformance, failure to comply with Executive Agency's instructions and deadlines or repeated violations of the Programme rules, the Quality Label can be withdrawn. The Executive Agency will give due consideration to each case of non-compliance and will prompt the organisation well in advance to allow enough time to take corrective measures.

In addition, the awarding body may terminate a Quality Label if the organisation ceases to exist.

PART D –QUALITY AND SUPPORT MEASURES

In this Part, readers will find the following information:

- a description of the support measures;
- a description of their objectives and for whom they are;
- additional information on key elements of the participation in a European Solidarity Corps project.

The Quality and Support measures described in this section are relevant only for the Actions covered under this Guide.

Before submitting an application, applicants are advised to read carefully the entire section.

WHICH MEASURES ARE SUPPORTED?

The European Solidarity Corps provides a range of quality and support services for participants and participating organisations. These measures vary depending on the Action and the type of activity the participants and organisations are involved in. .

- Support to learning
  - General Online Training;
  - Language Learning Support;
  - Training and Evaluation cycle;
  - Mentoring;
  - Recognition of Learning Outcomes.
- Insurance
- European Solidarity Corps Portal
- Other important elements
  - Certificate of participation;
  - Agreements;
  - Visa.

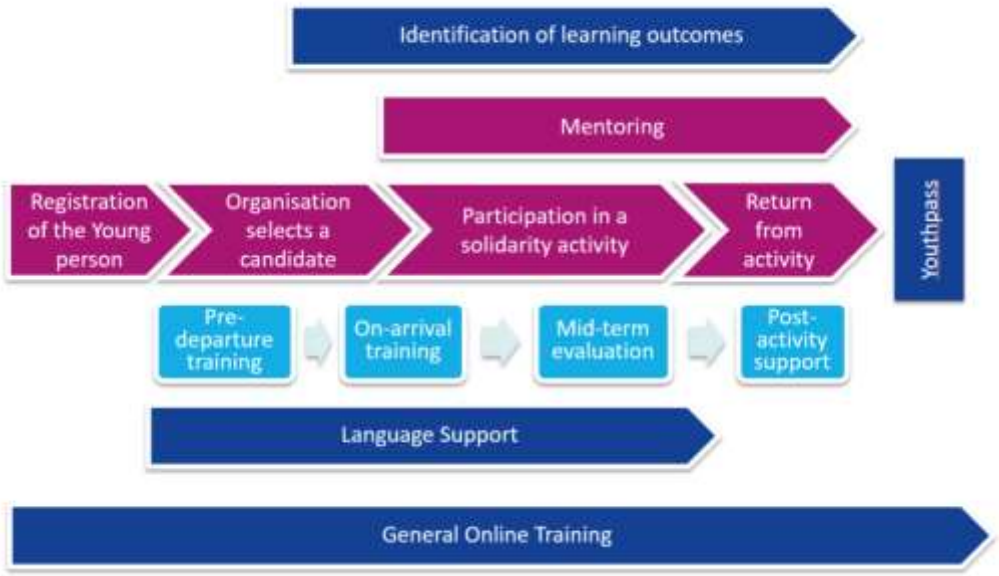
WHAT ARE THE AIMS OF THESE MEASURES?

Insofar as quality and support measures are concerned, the specific objectives of the European Solidarity Corps shall be pursued through actions that aim:

- to ensure compliance with the principles and objectives of the European Solidarity Corps on the part of all public and private organisations seeking to participate in the activities of the European Solidarity Corps;
- to ensure that the solidarity activities that are offered to the European Solidarity Corps participants contribute to addressing concrete, unmet societal needs and strengthening communities and are of high quality and properly validated.

SUPPORT TO LEARNING

To support, reinforce and complement the learning acquired through participation in the activities, specific quality and support measures are foreseen: the General Online Training, language learning support, the Training and Evaluation Cycle, mentoring and recognition of learning outcomes.



GENERAL ONLINE TRAINING

WHAT IS THE GENERAL ONLINE TRAINING?

The General Online Training is a set of training modules for the registered candidates and participants selected for an activity provided via the European Solidarity Corps' portal. General Online Training is a general induction with various modules that apply to participants and registrants, regardless of their status within the European Solidarity Corps. Topics include: the mission of the European Solidarity Corps, ethics, integrity, roles and responsibilities of the participants, European values, inter-cultural awareness, thematic training, health and safety etc. The objective of the training is to support European Solidarity Corps registered candidates in their engagement in quality solidarity activities and contribute to the building of the community of the European Solidarity Corps. The training should become part of a non-formal learning process of European Solidarity Corps participants who will be involved in specific projects and for the registered candidates in the portal not yet selected to capture their attention and stimulate their motivation. Likewise, the General Online Training will include a Guidebook that is deemed suitable for youth workers to both enrich the General Online Training experience and empower young people to also carry out activities offline.

FOR WHOM?

General Online Training is available to the registered candidates and participants selected for an activity via the European Solidarity Corps' portal.

LANGUAGE LEARNING SUPPORT

WHAT IS THE LANGUAGE LEARNING SUPPORT?

Language learning support is available for participants carrying out a solidarity activity in the framework of the European Solidarity Corps. Depending on the Action, Language learning support takes the form either of a grant, either of an online course via the Online Language Support platform. Online courses are encouraged as e-learning offers advantages for language learning in terms of access and flexibility. The Online Language Support platform (OLS) allow participants to assess, practise and improve their knowledge of the language chosen. The platform will provide features such as social networking to enable collaborative learning as well as free language learning material. The provision of linguistic support shall be based on mutual trust between organisations who should ensure appropriate linguistic support. Other forms for support may be offered to support the language learning needs of particular target groups. A specific grant for language learning support may be provided for that purpose. In such cases, such language learning must be arranged by the participating organisations. Beneficiaries of this grant should encourage participants to start learning the language before their activity. Furthermore, organisations involved can use the "organisational support" grant to address the needs of participants in terms of pedagogical, task-related, intercultural or specific linguistic preparation (see the "funding rules" section in Part B of this Guide).

FOR WHOM?

Participants in volunteering activities and Solidarity Projects are eligible to receive language learning support through the Online Language Support Platform. In justified cases, participants undertaking a volunteering activity may be eligible for a grant.

TRAINING AND EVALUATION CYCLE

WHAT IS THE TRAINING AND EVALUATION CYCLE (TEC)?

One of the key features of the European Solidarity Corps is the training and evaluation it provides to participating organisations and participants. Firstly, guiding young participants through a non-formal learning process before, during and after their period of activity. Secondly, supporting Quality Label organisations in offering a qualitative frame for the experience to take place. The training and evaluation dimension within the European Solidarity Corps aims at:

- Providing young participants with continuous guidance and support throughout their activity period. Such training and evaluation contributes to the education and development of each young person and facilitates contacts between participants, participating organisations and National Agencies / SALTOs (Support, Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities centres). It also helps resolve conflicts and prevent risks, and it provides a means of assessing the participants' experience. The training and evaluation cycle for participants complements other ongoing support offered by the participating organisations before and during the activity period;
- Providing organisations involved with the necessary support and tools to develop and carry out qualitative projects as well as the opportunity to exchange and network with other European Solidarity Corps actors.

Quality is the main objective of preparation, training and evaluation. Given the diversity of countries, National Agencies, organisations holding a Quality Label and participants, there is a large degree of flexibility in the training format, whereas the quality indicators should be common to all training sessions.

What follows outlines the minimum that should be covered by a training/evaluation session. Trainers and organisers are of course free to add any country-specific or project-specific features they deem necessary or interesting for the people attending their training/evaluation event. The minimum quality standards clarify what can be expected to be achieved at a training/evaluation session, whether by the organisers of the event, the project supervisors, the mentors or the participants themselves. At the same time, concerning training of participants, the National Agencies, regional SALTOs and the participating organisations should as far as possible try to ensure that the training/evaluation opportunities offered to each participant are in line with their specific needs.

Training providers can link the different training/evaluation stages while avoiding any overlaps in the content, and can thus help create a continuous learning process for the participants before, during and following their activity period.

In addition to the Training and Evaluation Cycle, participants receive continuous counselling and guidance before, during and after the activity period, while training for project managers, mentors and trainers adds up to a complex set of measures, accompanying participants and participating organisations throughout the European Solidarity Corps experience.

FOR WHOM IS THE TRAINING AND EVALUATION CYCLE?

- Participants: The training and evaluation cycle is mandatory for volunteers. Participants in Solidarity Projects can take part only in annual event.

- Organisations holding a Quality Label.

TRAINING AND EVALUATION CYCLE FOR PARTICIPANTS – HOW DOES IT WORK?

The Training and Evaluation Cycle for participants consists of the following sessions:

- pre-departure training for participants in cross-border volunteering activities – ensured by support organisations for individual volunteering or host/support organisation for volunteering teams (for those volunteers coming from countries other than the one where the activity takes place).
- on-arrival training for participants in volunteering activities of at least 2 months – ensured by National Agencies (in case of volunteering in Programme countries), SALTOs (in case of volunteering in partner countries), host or support organisations (in case of individual volunteering activity of less than 2 months and volunteering teams).
- mid-term evaluation (only volunteering activities of 6 months and longer) – ensured by National Agencies or SALTOs;

In addition to the above sessions, an annual European Solidarity corps event is foreseen for all participants taking part in Volunteering and those implementing Solidarity Projects. Volunteers have the right and obligation to attend the pre-departure training, the on-arrival training and the mid-term evaluation sessions and the participating organisations must ensure that their participants take part in the TEC, which is considered an integral part of the activity. Given the different requirements of information between participants in cross-border and in-country activities or volunteering, the training providers can tailor the content of the trainings to each target group.

PRE-DEPARTURE TRAINING

In order for the project to be successful and the European Solidarity Corps experiences to be positive and enriching for the participant, it is crucial that the support or host organisation adequately prepares the participant prior to departure. This training is only mandatory to participants in cross-border volunteering activities. This preparation should take place at least one month before departure and should be tailored to the individual needs of the participant and the specificities of the project, the activity and the host country. The organisation in charge of the training is responsible for ensuring that the Info-Kit is given to all participants involved in its project.

It is essential to provide information on "What to expect from the European Solidarity Corps" (part of the Info-Kit) — as well as on the basics of conflict prevention and crisis management. It must provide participants with practical and technical information on matters such as insurance, visa, pocket money and working hours, etc.

Whereas the main responsibility of organising the pre-departure training lies with the applicant organisation, the National Agencies may organise a one-day pre-departure information session to establish contact with outgoing participants and make sure they are prepared for their upcoming activities by the support organisations.

ON-ARRIVAL TRAINING

The main objective of the on-arrival training is to introduce the participants to the host country, preparing them for the activity period and the European Solidarity Corps experience. On-arrival training helps the participants adapt to cultural and personal challenges. It allows participants to get to know each other and to build a network. Participants should also receive guidance on conflict prevention and crisis management. They should be informed about environmentally sustainable behaviour that the Programme encourages.

At the same time, this training session equips the participants with communication skills, including aspects of intercultural learning. It helps them become aware that cultural differences require different models of behaviour. The training is also a good time for the participants to plan the coming months and to develop their own personal goals for their activity period, in line with the non-formal learning philosophy of the European Solidarity Corps.

On-arrival training for long-term cross-border and in-country participants is organised by the National Agencies or SALTOs.

For volunteers in activities with a duration of less than two months, the host or support organisation has to organise a training in line with the minimum quality standards detailed in the table below, although possibly with a shorter duration.

MID-TERM EVALUATION

The mid-term evaluation allows participants to assess their experience up to that point and to reflect on the activities, role and support of the host organisation and on their own contribution. The evaluation provides the opportunity to learn from everybody's experience and enables the participants to plan developments and/or further improvements in their activity and to think about what they will do in the longer term, once their experience is over. The evaluation should also raise awareness of the personal learning process, linking it to the key competences of the Youthpass and Europass. Mid-term evaluation is also mandatory for in-country participants.

It is essential that the event is designed as a meeting between participants. It takes place long enough after their arrival for the participants to have gained enough experience to review their situation, but also sufficiently long before the end of the activity period so that there is still time to improve the situation if necessary.

ANNUAL EVENTS

The European Solidarity Corps event is an opportunity to bring together former, current and potential participants in Volunteering and Solidarity Projects. The event is organised by the National Agencies or SALTOs. It may serve as an evaluation meeting, alumni meeting and/or promotional event. It is particularly important as an opportunity for those who have finished their solidarity activity during the past year to discuss and evaluate their experiences and to pass them on to current and potential participants. One of the objectives of the event is to ensure that the National Agency receives feedback about the projects, the participating organisations, the practical arrangements and the overall impression of the participation in the activities. A key question will be what learning effect the activity period had for the participant.

OVERVIEW OF THE TRAINING AND EVALUATION CYCLE FOR PARTICIPANTS

	Pre-departure	On-arrival	Midterm	Annual
Long term individual cross-border volunteers	Mandatory (organised by support organisation)	Mandatory (organised by NAs for programme countries or Regional SALTOs for partner countries)	Mandatory (Organised by NAs for programme countries or Regional SALTOs for partner countries)	Mandatory (Organised by NAs for programme countries or Regional SALTOs for partner countries)
Long term individual in-country volunteers	Optional (organised by host organisation)	Mandatory (organised by NAs)	Mandatory (Organised by NAs)	Mandatory (Organised by NAs)
Short term individual cross border volunteers	Mandatory (organised by support organisation)	Mandatory (organised by host organisation)	N/A	Mandatory (Organised by NAs for programme countries or Regional SALTOs for partner countries)
Short term individual in-country volunteers	Optional (organised by host or support organisation)	Mandatory (organised by host organisation)	N/A	Mandatory (Organised by NAs)
Volunteering teams cross-border volunteers	Mandatory (organised by host or support organisation)	Mandatory (organised by host or support organisation)	N/A	Mandatory (Organised by NAs for programme countries or Regional SALTOs for partner countries)
Volunteering teams in-country volunteers	Optional (organised by host or support organisation)	Mandatory (organised by host or support organisation)	N/A	Mandatory (Organised by NAs)
Solidarity projects	N/A	N/A	N/A	Optional (organised by NAs)

EXPECTED ACHIEVEMENTS

Pre-departure training	The pre-departure preparation will vary according to training practices, organisational possibilities and participant needs. Nevertheless, pre-departure preparation should ensure that, by the time they leave, all participants: ▪ know about the concept of the European Solidarity Corps; ▪ are familiar with the partners involved in the activity, i.e. the host and support organisation in volunteering activities, the mentor and, where applicable, the National/Executive Agency, Resource Centres and the European Commission; ▪ are familiar with the documents in the Info-Kit; ▪ are encouraged to profit from the learning opportunities in the General Online Training; ▪ have shared their motivations, expectations and fears, and have reflected on their goals, including goals for learning; ▪ have received appropriate practical and technical information on visas, residence permits, their legal status as a participant, their insurance (including guidance on how to obtain the mandatory European Health Insurance Card before the departure), pocket money, the relevant agreement under the European Solidarity Corps; ▪ understand the meaning of intercultural learning and are aware of the ongoing intercultural learning process; ▪ have received guidance or at least hints on crisis management; ▪ are aware about sustainability dimension of the Programme ▪ understand the importance and usefulness of getting recognition for the individual learning outcomes, in particular through EU level tools such as Youthpass and Europass. The training should also contain modules for language learning in the host country's language or the language used in the context of the activity if such language training is not offered through the Online Language Support or through grants for language learning..
On-arrival training	On-arrival training will vary according to national conditions, realities and training practices. Nevertheless, it should ensure that each participant: ▪ is aware of and has the chance to discuss questions about visas, residence permits, her/his legal status as a participant, insurance, the agreement under European Solidarity Corps, and the documents in the Info-Kit; ▪ has received information about adapting to a foreign working environment, rights and obligations, useful contacts to help with his/her settlement, etc.; ▪ knows the insurance and claims management systems (insurance documentation and procedures), and is fully aware that using the European Health Insurance Card when possible is mandatory; ▪ knows what support is available from the National Agency and SALTO; ▪ has received information on the host country's history, political and social situation, on key aspects of the host culture and on how to get involved in the local community; ▪ is aware of how to deal with cultural differences and with conflicts; ▪ is familiar with the role of each participating organisation in the activity and knows her/his own rights and responsibilities; ▪ is informed about the environmentally sustainable behaviour that the Programme promotes; ▪ has the chance to meet and network with other participants; ▪ receives basic information about the European Union and its policies and programmes in the field of youth; ▪ learns about the objectives and principles of the European Solidarity Corps; ▪ knows the meaning of being a European Solidarity Corps participant; ▪ understands the importance and usefulness of getting recognition for the individual learning outcomes, in particular through EU level tools such as Youthpass and Europass; ▪ has identified clear learning goals and ideas for his/her activity. When needed, support should be offered to participants following the Online Linguistic Support for taking language assessments and courses.

Mid-term evaluation	Mid-term evaluations will vary according to national conditions, realities and training practices. Nevertheless, by the end of the evaluation, each participant should have: ▪ personally assessed the activity so far and reflected on the scope of his/her activities; ▪ shared personal experiences (learning new skills and competences, being part of community life, living within a different culture, using the language); ▪ identified problems, difficulties, conflicts faced or about to be faced and consequently received satisfying support and clues on the 'next steps' to solve these problems; ▪ worked on developing/improving the activities he/she is involved in; ▪ received information and guidance on opportunities he/she could be involved in after the period of activity; ▪ understood how to use EU level recognition tools, such as Youthpass and Europass, to identify and document individual learning outcomes; ▪ received information about the Participant Report to be filled-in.
Annual event	Events will vary according to national conditions, realities and practices. Nevertheless, by the end of the event, each participant who has finished their activity during the past year should have evaluated their experience in terms of: ▪ the cooperation between the participant and the participating organisations, and the personal support and supervision received; ▪ their personal contribution to the activity; ▪ the overall pedagogical approach and their own learning achievements (personal, professional, social), including being aware of their personal capacities and skills and (if relevant) having finalised their Youthpass and Europass; ▪ their increased knowledge about Europe, changes in their attitude towards Europe and their greater understanding of diversity; ▪ having shared their experience with peers. Moreover, the event may be: ▪ a chance for potential participants and participating organisations to meet experienced participants, including participants having implemented Solidarity Projects; ▪ an opportunity to promote the European Solidarity Corps and its impact through contacts with stakeholders, decision-makers and the media; ▪ a networking event to explore and develop new projects and other ways of using their experiences; ▪ a showcase for successful projects; ▪ a celebration of solidarity and a step towards the reinforcement of the European Solidarity Corps community.

TRAINING AND EVALUATION CYCLE FOR ORGANISATIONS – HOW DOES IT WORK?

The Training and Evaluation Cycle for organisations consists of the following:

- training for organisations having been awarded recently the Quality Label;
- an annual event for organisations holding the Quality Label.

National Agencies are responsible for organising such trainings for all organisations holding a Quality Label in their country. For organisations in partner countries , the relevant SALTOs are the ones in charge. NAs/SALTOs may decide not to organise such trainings if other instruments are in place to ensure monitoring and quality implementation.

National Agencies / SALTOs can opt to delegate all or some of the sessions to subcontractors. However, the NAs/SALTOs should remain involved in the sessions as much as possible and keep regular contact with the trainers.

Organisations holding a Quality Label are recommended to attend these sessions.

TRAINING FOR ORGANISATIONS HOLDING THE EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS QUALITY LABEL

In order for the project to be successful and the experiences to be positive and enriching for all actors involved, organisations participating in the European Solidarity Corps which have been awarded a Quality Label need to have a thorough understanding of the core values and features of the Corps. During the training, these organisations will focus on the elements needed for a successful experience and reflections on how their project should be thought through and developed.

The training should:

- ensure understanding of each organisation's roles and responsibilities;

- give appropriate practical and technical information on the project management;
- raise awareness on the important features of the programme such as specific support for young people with fewer opportunities, EU level recognition tools such as Youthpass and Europass, Online Language Support, role of the mentor, etc.;
- provide necessary support and tools to develop and carry out qualitative mentorship;
- support organisations in developing qualitative projects (selection of partners and participants, development of the tasks of the participants, crisis management, dissemination, etc.) ;
- provide networking and partner-building opportunities for organisations.

ANNUAL EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS EVENT

This yearly event should gather representatives of all European Solidarity Corps organisations holding a Quality Label with the aim of sharing experiences, ideas and practices, showcasing success stories, and developing and reinforcing networks / partner building. The event is also the opportunity to remind the core values and features of the programme. It will, additionally, allow assessing the difficulties encountered by organisations and the reasons of inactivity of some Quality Labelled organisations. This event can be combined with the Annual European Solidarity Corps event for participants.

MENTORING

MENTORING IN VOLUNTEERING ACTIVITIES

Personal support through mentoring should be provided to all participants in volunteering activities. Mentoring consists of regular meetings between the mentor appointed by the host or support organisation and the participant, within as well as outside the place where the activity takes place. The meetings should focus on the personal wellbeing of the participants and should also guide and provide support to the volunteers in identifying the learning acquired during their experience. Mentoring is targeted towards the individual participant and thus the content and frequency of the meetings will vary according to the individual needs. Possible topics of mentoring meetings: personal wellbeing, wellbeing in the team, satisfaction with the tasks, practicalities, etc.

REINFORCED MENTORSHIP

'Reinforced Mentorship' is an intensified mentoring process that might be necessary to support young people with fewer opportunities, if they are not able to implement an activity independently or with normal mentoring or tutoring support. This type of mentoring is applicable to volunteering activities. Reinforced Mentorship involves closer contact, more frequent meetings and more time allocated to the implementation of tasks. This guarantees a step-by-step support of the participants during project activities as well as outside working hours. Reinforced Mentorship enables the participants to gain as much autonomy as possible, thus contributing to the successful implementation of the project.

RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

WHAT IS RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES?

To support the impact of European Solidarity Corps activities on the personal, educational, social, civic and professional development of the participants, the competences (combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes) that are the non-formal and informal learning outcomes gained in the solidarity activities shall be identified and documented, in particular through EU level recognition tools such as Youthpass and Europass.

FOR WHOM?

The identification and documentation of non-formal and informal learning outcomes is offered to participants (on a voluntary basis) and participating organisations (mandatory, insofar as the participant requests it). This means that every young person taking part in any European Solidarity Corps activity can benefit from a process and certificate that identifies and documents individual learning outcomes.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Every young person taking part in European Solidarity Corps activities is entitled to go through the Youthpass process and receive a Youthpass certificate at the end of the process. Youthpass identifies and documents the competences developed during the project. It is recommended to embed the educational approach of Youthpass from the start of the project and use it during the project activities as a tool to help participants to become more aware of, reflect on and assess their learning process and outcomes. Depending on the nature of the recognition needs and the individual solidarity activities, other tools can also be used such as e.g. Europass.

For more information and support on Youthpass: www.youthpass.eu

For more information on Europass: www.europass.eu

INSURANCE

WHAT SHOULD YOU KNOW ABOUT INSURANCE?

One key aspect of the activities carried out under the European Solidarity Corps is that the participant must at all time be under a safe environment. To guarantee that the participant in Volunteering activities is covered for unforeseen circumstances, the following areas must be covered:

- wherever relevant, travel insurance (including damage or loss of luggage);
- third party liability (including, wherever appropriate, professional/corporate liability of participating organisations);
- accident and illness (including permanent or temporary incapacity), pregnancy and childbirth;
- death (including repatriation in case of projects carried out abroad).

The European Solidarity Corps supports insurance coverage, when needed:

- either through the insurance provided by the European Commission (for cross-border activities);
- either through reimbursement of the costs linked to insurance (for in-country activities).

FOR CROSS-BORDER ACTIVITIES

Participants in cross-border activities must be in the possession of a European Health Insurance Card before arriving to the host country. This card gives access to medically necessary, state-provided healthcare during a temporary stay in any of the EU Member States, as well as in Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, under the same conditions and at the same cost (free in some countries) as people insured in these respective countries[49].

In particular, the European Solidarity Corps provides insurance coverage, from the moment participants leave their residence to the host country until the end of the second month after the end or termination of the activity, as following:

- Those participants who are not eligible for the European Health Insurance Card free of charge (ie, at no cost for the participant), or those not entitled for reason of the national regulatory framework regarding the activities they perform or their individual situation, shall be entitled to receive a primary coverage through the insurance provided by the European Commission.
- Those that are eligible to a European Health Insurance Card free of charge or are registered in the host country's national health system will obtain complementary coverage from the insurance. Information about the coverage and support available through the insurance for participants, as well as instructions for enrolment, is available on the website of the insurance company.

FOR IN-COUNTRY ACTIVITIES

If the participant is in need of private personal insurance given the national regulatory framework, the participating organisations must provide the participant with personal insurance, which must offer the same coverage as the coverage for cross-border activities, in particular coverage not related to the activity for its entire duration. Should this private insurance be needed, the organisation may use exceptional costs to fund it.

For in-country activities, the European Commission does not define a unique format of third party liability insurance, nor does it recommend specific insurance companies. It is it up to project organisers to seek the most suitable insurance policy according to the type of project carried out and to the insurance formats available at national level. It is not necessary to subscribe to a project-specific insurance, if the participants are already covered by existing insurance policies of the project organisers.

[49] More information on the card and on how to obtain it is available at: https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=559

INSURANCE PROVIDED BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

FOR WHOM?

Every participant in a cross-border activity must be enrolled in the insurance scheme of the European Solidarity Corps or in the host country's national health system. The insurance complements the coverage of the mandatory European Health Insurance Card and/or national social security systems.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

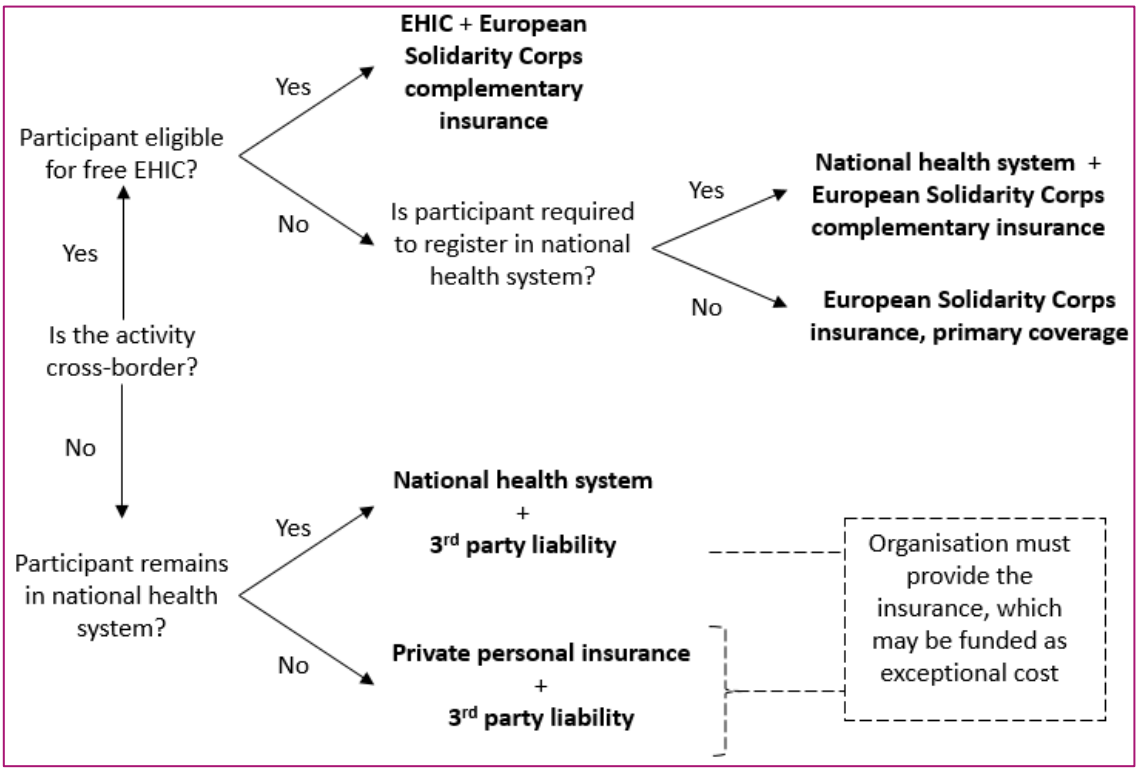
For activities supported under Volunteering Projects, the beneficiary organisation is responsible for the management of its project in the IT tool provided by the European Commission for the management of projects (Beneficiary Module). The beneficiary must encode all information about the activity the participants are involved in. The enrolment of the participants to the insurance scheme is done automatically through the system and based on the information input there. The enrolment to the insurance must be done before the departure of the participant(s), the beneficiary must therefore input the information in the system prior to the start of the activity. The enrolment covers the duration of the activity, including travel days. In addition, the beneficiary is responsible for keeping the information in the beneficiary module updated in particular regarding the start and end dates of the activity, venue etc. as this information is linked to the insurance coverage. For activities supported under Volunteering Teams in High Priority Areas, the beneficiary organisation is responsible for enrolling the participants directly on the insurance dedicated website[50].

The insurance provides only complementary coverage to the European Health Insurance Card or to any other insurance participants may have. Participants must be in possession of their European Health Insurance Card before the departure. In certain cases, when national rules deprive volunteers from coverage under the European Health Insurance Card for the duration of the activity, the insurance company will provide full coverage (see above). The insurance coverage has its own exclusions and ceilings and it is meant to cope with urgent and necessary care which cannot wait until the end of the activity period and the return home of the participant.

Finally, participants and organisations should take into account that it is a private insurance scheme. As such, it is highly recommended to contact the insurer before incurring a medical expense, as they will be able to provide the participant with information on whether the claim will be reimbursed, and how.

The following flow process chart explains each possible insurance coverage. It must be noted that, regardless of the activity and type of insurance coverage, the organisation is ultimately responsible to ensure the participant is appropriately insured.

[50] Further information on the procedure to follow will be provided once the project is granted.


Participant eligible for free EHIC?
Yes
EHIC + European Solidarity Corps complementary insurance
No
Is participant required to register in national health system?
Yes
National health system + European Solidarity Corps complementary insurance
No
European Solidarity Corps insurance, primary coverage
Yes
Is the activity cross-border?
No
Participant remains in national health system?
Yes
National health system + 3rd party liability
No
Private personal insurance + 3rd party liability
Organisation must provide the insurance, which may be funded as exceptional cost

EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS PORTAL

The European Solidarity Corps Portal offers European and national information and opportunities that are of interest to young people wishing to engage in the solidarity sector. It provides a one-stop shop for both interested young people and organisations wishing to join and to be part of the Corps. The Portal also allows young people to follow online trainings, get access to other services and, importantly, to build a community of like-minded young people. To access the European Solidarity Corps Portal, go to: http://europa.eu/youth/solidarity.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

BRINGING TOGETHER YOUNG PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONS

Young people - at least 17 years old - wishing to engage in solidarity activities register in the European Solidarity Corps Portal. The European Solidarity Corps Portal offers a place for those young people and organisations holding a Quality Label and willing to implement solidarity activities to find each other. In the Portal, organisations holding a Quality Label can advertise opportunities for volunteering activities, search for registered candidates and contact them. Registered candidates can also look for opportunities and express their interest in them. Once the organisation and the registered candidate found each other, the organisation sends an offer to the registered candidate.

BUILDING COMMUNITY AND PROVIDING SERVICES

The European Solidarity Corps Portal offers additional services to registered candidates. In addition to the Online Training made available through the Portal, registered candidates can benefit from community building activities, updated information through newsletters and other useful functionalities that are gradually being developed. Young people registered can also make use of the mobile app, enabling them to exchange and share experiences with the other young people registered in the Corps. They can also make a meaningful contribution to society through their engagement in the European Solidarity Network (EuSN) or the EuroPeers network, among other networks.

OTHER IMPORTANT FEATURES

CERTIFICATE OF PARTICIPATION

The certificate of participation is a certificate to support the visibility of the participation in European Solidarity Corps activities. At the end of their solidarity activity, participants are entitled to receive a certificate of participation, issued in the European Solidarity Corps portal provided that the activity is finalised and that participants have submitted their participant report.

AGREEMENTS

AGREEMENTS BETWEEN PROJECT PARTNERS

All participating organisations involved in a European Solidarity Corps project are strongly recommended to sign an internal agreement between them. Such an agreement has the purpose of clearly defining responsibilities, tasks and financial contribution for all parties involved in the activities. It is up to the participating organisations to jointly decide on how the EU grant will be distributed and which costs it will cover.

An internal agreement constitutes a key instrument for ensuring a solid and smooth cooperation among partners in a solidarity activity as well as to avoid or manage potential conflicts. Indicatively, it should contain at least the following information:

- reference of the grant agreement between the applicant participating organisation and the granting Agency;
- names and contacts of all the participating organisations involved in the activities;
- role and responsibilities of each participating organisation; division of the EU grant;
- modalities of payments and budget transfers among participating organisations.

Although this practice is strongly recommended to safeguard the interests of each partner, such an agreement remains an internal document among partners; it will not be requested by the granting National Agency.

AGREEMENTS WITH PARTICIPANTS

Prior to their departure, each young person participating in an individual volunteering activity supported by the European Solidarity Corps must sign a participant agreement using the template provided by the European Commission that defines at least the following aspects of the solidarity activity:

- rights and responsibilities with regards to insurance and financial contribution from the Corps;
- tasks to be carried out during the activity;
- intended learning outcomes.

VISA AND RESIDENCE PERMITS

Participants in European Solidarity Corps projects may need to obtain a visa for staying abroad in or coming from a Partner Country hosting the activity. It is a responsibility of all the participating organisations to ensure that the authorisations required (short or long-term stay visas or residence permits) are in order before the planned activity takes place. It is strongly recommended that the authorisations are requested from the competent authorities well in advance, since the process may take several weeks. National Agencies and the Executive Agency may give further advice and support concerning visas, residence permits, social security, etc. The EU Immigration Portal contains general information on visa and residence permits, for both short-term and long-term stays: https://ec.europa.eu/immigration/node_en.

PART E - INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

All potential applicants (including groups of young people in the case of solidarity projects assimilated here below to 'organisations') that intend to submit a project proposal in order to receive financial support from the EU or a Quality Label under the European Solidarity Corps are invited to read carefully this section which is drafted in accordance with the applicable provisionsof the Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 applicable to the general budget of the European Union[51] (hereinafter "EU Financial Regulation").

All the contractual and financial provisions that apply to the grants awarded are presented in the model grant agreements, which are made available on the websites of the European Commission or the National Agencies, and for the Executive Agency in the Funding and Tender Opportunities Portal[52]. In case of discrepancies with the information presented in this Guide, provisions of the Model Grant Agreements prevail on those of Part E. Many of the steps described and information provided are also relevant for organisations wishing to apply for Quality Label.

Individuals are not entitled to submit project proposals in the framework of the European Solidarity Corps, except for individuals applying on behalf of a group of (at least five) young people wishing to carry out a Solidarity Project (hereafter defined as "Groups of young people").

WHAT TO DO IN ORDER TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION?

To submit a European Solidarity Corps project, applicants must follow the four steps described below:

- Organisations/groups of young people involved in the application must register and receive an identification code. Organisations/groups of young people that have already obtained such an identification code do not need to register again;
- Check the compliance with the criteria for the relevant Action;
- Check the financial conditions (only applicable to requests for funding, not relevant for Quality Label);
- Fill in and submit the application form.

STEP 1: REGISTER THE ORGANISATION

Organisations/groups of young people involved in any application must be registered and provide their basic legal and financial data in either the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps platform for projects submitted to National Agencies or in the Participant Register Portal for projects submitted at the Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA).

Once the registration is completed, the organisation/group will obtain an organisation ID (if applications are submitted to the NA) and a participant identification code (PIC) (if applications are submitted to EACEA). This code, which is an identifier and is necessary for the submission of applications, enables the organisation/group to fill-in the online application forms in a simpler manner (i.e. by inserting the code in the form, all the information provided by the organisation/group at registration stage will be automatically displayed in the form).

Please note that organisations/groups of young people that have already participated in an Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps actions and holding a PIC do not need to register again to apply at decentralised level. An organisation ID was automatically assigned and can be found by using the search on the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps platform.

WHERE TO REGISTER?

For actions managed by the National Agencies, to register in the Organisation Registration system of Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps, the person representing an organisation (or a group of young people) must carry out the following steps:

- Create an EU Login account (unless the person representing the organisation/ entities which do not have legal personality already has an account). New EU Login accounts can be created via the following website: https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/cas/eim/external/register.cgi;
- Access the Organisation Registration system for Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-esc and register on behalf of the organisation/group.

The organisation or group of young people need to register only once. Once the registration is completed, the organisation/group of young people will obtain an Organisation ID.

For Actions managed by the Executive Agency, to register in the Funding & tender opportunities portal, the person representing an organisation must carry out the following steps:

[51] The EU Financial Regulation can be found at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32018R1046
[52] https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home

- Create an EU Login account (unless the person representing the organisation already has an account). New EU Login accounts can be created via the following website: https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/cas/
- Access the Register Portal https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home and register on behalf of the organisation. Guidance and Frequently Asked Questions are available on the portal.

The organisation needs to register only once. Once the registration is completed, the organisation will obtain a PIC.

PROOF OF LEGAL STATUS AND FINANCIAL CAPACITY

As part of the registration, applicants must also upload the following documents:

- The Legal Entity form. This form can be downloaded from the European Commission's website at: http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/legal_entities/legal_entities_en.cfm;

- The Financial Identification form. Please fill in the form relating to the country in which the bank is located, even if the applicant organisation is officially registered in another country. This form can be downloaded at: http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/financial_id/financial_id_en.cfm. The Financial Identification form should be provided only for the applicant organisation, but is not required for the partner organisations

For grant applications concerning amounts in excess of EUR 60 000, applicants may need to upload specific documents to give proof of their financial capacity. For more details, see the section "Selection Criteria" below.

STEP 2: CHECK THE COMPLIANCE WITH THE CRITERIA

When developing their project and before applying for EU support, participating organisations / groups of young people must verify that the project respects the following criteria: admissibility, eligibility, exclusion, selection and award.

ADMISSIBILITY CRITERIA

Applications must be sent no later than the deadline for submitting applications as indicated in the call.

For actions managed by the National Agencies, applications must be submitted electronically via the forms available on the website of the European Commission and the websites of the National Agencies.

For actions managed by the Executive Agency, applications must be submitted electronically via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System. Applications (including annexes and supporting documents) must be submitted using the forms provided in the Submission System. Applications are limited to 40 pages for calls for low value grants (EUR 60 000 or below); 70 for all other calls. Number of pages for Quality Label for Humanitarian Aid application is limited to 40 pages. Evaluators will not consider any additional pages.

Applications must be readable and accessible. Applications must be complete containing all parts and mandatory annexes. Only clerical errors can be corrected after the submission deadline upon request of the managing agency

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The eligibility criteria are used to determine whether the applicant is allowed to participate in a call for proposals and to submit a proposal for an action. They apply to the applicants and to the activities for which the grant is requested: (e.g. type of project or/and activities, implementation period, profile and/or the number of participants involved).

To be eligible, the activities and projects must meet all the eligibility criteria relating to the Action and activities under which the proposal is submitted. If the application does not meet these criteria at application stage, it will be rejected without being further evaluated. If it appears at implementation or final report stage that these criteria have not been fulfilled, the activities may be considered ineligible with a consequent recovery of the EU grant initially awarded to the project.

The specific eligibility criteria applying to each of the Actions are described in Part B and C of the Guide.

EXCLUSION CRITERIA

An applicant will be excluded from participating in calls for proposals under the European Solidarity Corps if it is found in one of the situations described below, in accordance with articles 136 - 140 and/or 141 of the EU Financial Regulation.[53]

[53] Regulation (EU, EURATOM) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union.

a) the applicant is bankrupt, subject to insolvency or winding-up procedures, its assets are being administered by a liquidator or by a court, it is in an arrangement with creditors, its business activities are suspended, or it is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for under Union or national law;

b) a final judgement or a final administrative decision has established that the applicant is in breach of its obligations relating to the payment of taxes or social security contributions in accordance with the applicable law;

c) a final judgement or a final administrative decision has established that the applicant is guilty of grave professional misconduct by having violated applicable laws or regulations or ethical standards of the profession to which the applicant belongs, or by having engaged in any wrongful conduct which has an impact on its professional credibility where such conduct denotes wrongful intent or gross negligence, including, in particular, any of the following:

   (i) fraudulently or negligently misrepresenting information required for the verification of the absence of grounds for exclusion or the fulfilment of eligibility or selection criteria or in the performance of the legal commitment;

   (ii) entering into agreement with other persons or entities with the aim of distorting competition;

   (iii) violating intellectual property rights;

   (iv) attempting to influence the decision-making of the authorising officer responsible during the award procedure;

   (v) attempting to obtain confidential information that may confer upon it undue advantages in the award procedure;

d) a final judgement has established that the applicant is guilty of any of the following:

   (i) fraud, within the meaning of Article 3 of Directive (EU) 2017/1371 of the European Parliament and of the Council[54] and Article 1 of the Convention on the protection of the European Communities' financial interests, drawn up by the Council Act of 26 July 1995[55];

   (ii) corruption, as defined in Article 4(2) of Directive (EU) 2017/1371 or active corruption within the meaning of Article 3 of the Convention on the fight against corruption involving officials of the European Communities or officials of Member States of the European Union, drawn up by the Council Act of 26 May 199756, or conduct referred to in Article 2(1) of Council Framework Decision 2003/568/JHA57, or corruption as defined in other applicable laws;

   (iii) conduct related to a criminal organisation as referred to in Article 2 of Council Framework Decision 2008/841/JHA[58];

   (iv) money laundering or terrorist financing within the meaning of Article 1(3), (4) and (5) of Directive (EU) 2015/849 of the European Parliament and of the Council[59];

   (v) terrorist offences or offences linked to terrorist activities, as defined in Articles 1 and 3 of Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA[60], respectively, or inciting, aiding, abetting or attempting to commit such offences, as referred to in Article 4 of that Decision;

   (vi) child labour or other offences concerning trafficking in human beings as referred to in Article 2 of Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council[61];

e) the applicant has shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations in the performance of a legal commitment financed by the budget which has:

   (i) led to the early termination of a legal commitment*;*

   (ii) led to the application of liquidated damages or other contractual penalties; or*;*

   (iii) been discovered by an authorising officer, OLAF or the Court of Auditors following checks, audits or investigations*;*

f) a final judgment or final administrative decision has established that the applicant has committed an irregularity within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2988/95[62];

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[54] Directive (EU) 2017/1371 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2017 on the fight against fraud to the Union's financial interests by means of criminal law (OJ L 198, 28.7.2017, p. 29).

[55] OJ C 316, 27.11.1995, p. 48.

[56] OJ C 195, 25.6.1997, p. 1.

[57] Council Framework Decision 2003/568/JHA of 22 July 2003 on combating corruption in the private sector (OJ L 192, 31.7.2003, p. 54).

[58] Council Framework Decision 2008/841/JHA of 24 October 2008 on the fight against organised crime (OJ L 300, 11.11.2008, p. 42).

[59] Directive (EU) 2015/849 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2015 on the prevention of the use of the financial system for the purposes of money laundering or terrorist financing, amending Regulation (EU) No 648/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council, and repealing Directive 2005/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Commission Directive 2006/70/EC (OJ L 141, 5.6.2015, p. 73).

[60] Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA of 13 June 2002 on combating terrorism (OJ L 164, 22.6.2002, p.3).

[61] Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2011 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/629/JHA (OJ L 101, 15.4.2011, p. 1).

[62] Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2988/95 of 18 December 1995 on the protection of the European Communities financial interests (OJ L 312, 23.12.1995, p. 1).

g) a final judgment or final administrative decision has establishedthat the applicant has created an entity in a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or any other legal obligations in the jurisdiction of its registered office, central administration or principal place of business;

h) a final judgment or final administrative decision has established that an entity has been created with the intent referred to in point (g);

i) in the absence of a final judgement or where applicable a final administrative decision, the applicant is in one of the cases provided in (c), (d), (f), (g) and (h) above based in particular on :

   (i) facts established in the context of audits or investigations carried out by EPPO, for those Member States participating in enhanced cooperation pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2017/1939, the Court of Auditors, OLAF or the internal auditor, or any other check, audit or control performed under the responsibility of the authorising officer;

   (ii) non-final administrative decisions which may include disciplinary measures taken by the competent supervisory body responsible for the verification of the application of standards of professional ethics;

   (iii) facts referred to in decisions of persons and entities implementing Union funds pursuant to point (c) of the first subparagraph of Article 62(1);

   (iv) information transmitted in accordance with point (d) of Article 142(2) of EU Financial Regulation by entities implementing Union funds pursuant to point (b) of the first subparagraph of Article 62(1) of EU Financial Regulation.

   (v) decisions of the Commission relating to the infringement of Union competition law or of a national competent authority relating to the infringement of Union or national competition law.

   (vi) decisions of exclusion by an authorising officer of an EU institution, of a European office or of an EU agency or body.

j) a applicant referred to in Article 135(2) where:

   (i) a natural or legal person who is a member of the administrative, management or supervisory body of the applicant referred to in Article 135(2), or who has powers of representation, decision or control with regard to that applicant, is in one or more of the situations referred to in points (c) to (h) above;

   (ii) a natural or legal person that assumes unlimited liability for the debts of the applicant referred to in Article 135(*2*) is in one or more of the situations referred to in point (a) or (b) above;

   (iii) a natural person who is essential for the award or for the implementation of the legal commitment is in one or more of the situations referred to in points (c) to (*h*) above;

If an applicant is in one of the situations of exclusion listed above, it must indicate the measures it has taken to remedy the exclusion situation, thus demonstrating its reliability. They may include e.g. technical, organisational and personnel measures to prevent further occurrence, compensation of damage or payment of fines. This does not apply for the situations referred in point (d) of this section.

In the cases provided in (c) to (h) above, in the absence of a final judgement or where applicable a final administrative decision, the National or Executive Agency may exclude an applicant provisionally from participating in a call for proposals where their participation would constitute a serious and imminent threat to the Union's financial interests.

If the action for which the applicant has submitted its proposal foresees the participation of affiliated entities, the same exclusion criteria apply to affiliated entities.

Applicants or affiliated entities where applicable, may be rejected from the award procedure if any of the declarations or information provided as a condition for participating in this procedure prove to be false.

The National or Executive Agency may publish on its internet site the following information related to the exclusion and, where applicable, the financial penalty in the cases referred to in points (c) to (h) above:

(a) the name of the applicant concerned;

(b) the exclusion situation;

(c) the duration of the exclusion and/or the amount of the financial penalty.

These exclusion criteria apply to applicants under all Actions of the European Solidarity Corps Programme. To certify that they are not in one of the situations mentioned above, applicants for an EU grant must provide a declaration on their honour certifying that they are not in any of the situations referred above. This declaration of honour constitutes a specific section or an annex of the application form.

In accordance with Articles 136(1)(e) and 138(1) of the Financial Regulation, financial penalties may be imposed on a recipient of EU funds with whom a legal commitment has been entered into and who has shown significant deficiencies in complying with the main obligations in the implementation of a legal commitment financed by the EU.

Furthermore, the Commission considers that for the implementation of Actions covered by this Guide, the following organisations are or could be in a situation of conflict of interest and therefore are or could be not eligible to participate:

- National Authorities in charge of supervising National Agencies and the implementation of the European Solidarity Corps Programme in their country cannot apply or participate in any Action managed by National Agencies in any country, but may apply for participation (as applicants or partners) in Actions managed by the Executive Agency or by DG EAC unless that is explicitly excluded for the Action concerned (as indicated in Part B of the Guide);
- National Agencies (sole activity of their legal entity) or National Agencies departments of legal entities dealing with activities outside the remit of National Agencies cannot apply or participate in any Action implemented through this Guide;
- Structures and networks identified or designated in the European Solidarity Corps Regulation or in any Annual Commission Work programme adopted for the implementation of the European Solidarity Corps for specifically receiving a financial contribution from the Commission under the implementation of the European Solidarity Corps, which are hosted by the legal entity that also hosts the National Agency, cannot apply or participate in any Action managed by National Agencies in any country, but may apply for participation (as applicants or partners) in Actions managed by the Executive Agency or by DG EAC unless that is explicitly excluded for the Action concerned (as indicated in Part B of the Guide); they should be able to demonstrate, before being awarded a grant or a contract, that they are not in a conflict of interest either because precautionary measures are taken by them or because their internal organisation is such that there is a clear separation of interests. Furthermore, costs and revenues of each action or activity for which the EU funds are awarded must be identified. The decision for admitting there is sufficient assurance they are not in an actual conflict of interest is taken by the Executive Agency or by DG EAC, under their own responsibility and accountability, to which they apply;
- Legal entities hosting the National Agencies but dealing with other activities inside or outside the remit of the European Solidarity Corps, as well as entities affiliated to these legal entities, cannot apply or participate in any Action managed by National Agencies in any country, but may in principle apply for participation in Actions managed by the Executive Agency or DG EAC unless that is explicitly excluded for the Action concerned (as indicated in Part B of the Guide). However, they have to demonstrate, before being awarded a grant or a contract, they are not in a conflict of interest either because precautionary measures are taken by them or because their internal organisation is such that there is a clear separation of interests.(e.g. a minimum separation of accounts, separation of reporting and decision making lines, measures to prevent access to privileged information). Furthermore, costs and revenues of each action or activity for which the EU funds are awarded must be identified. The decision for admitting there is sufficient assurance they are not in an actual conflict of interest is taken by the Institution, under their own responsibility and accountability, to which they apply.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Through the selection criteria, the National or Executive Agency assesses the applicant's financial and operational capacity to complete the proposed project.

FINANCIAL CAPACITY

Financial capacity means that the applicant has stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain its activity throughout the period during which the project is being carried out or the year for which the grant is awarded and to participate in its funding.

The verification of the financial capacity does not apply to:

- public bodies, including Member States organisations;
- international organisations;
- if the individual grant requested grant amount is not more than EUR 60.000.

In case of EU grant requests submitted by other types of organisations than those mentioned above and not exceeding EUR 60 000, applicants must provide a declaration on their honour certifying that they have the financial capacity to implement the project. This declaration of honour constitutes a specific section of the application form.

In case of EU grant requests submitted by other types of organisations than those mentioned above and exceeding EUR 60 000, the applicant must submit, in addition to the declaration of honour, the following documents through the Funding & tender opportunities portal / Organisation Registration System :

- the applicant’s profit and loss account and;
- the balance sheet for the last financial year for which accounts were closed;
- other documents, if requested.
- Where the application concerns grants for a project for which the amount exceeds 750 000 EUR, in addition to the above, an audit report produced by an approved external auditor may be requested. That report shall certify the accounts for the last financial year available.
  For entities which cannot provide the above documents because they are newly created, a financial declaration or an insurance declaration stating the applicant's financial risks may replace the above documents.

For Actions managed by the Executive Agency: Please also refer to the "Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment"[63]. In case of a proposal submitted on behalf of a consortium of partners, should the Executive Agency have doubts on the financial capacity of the consortium, it should carry out a risk-assessmentbased on which the same documents as indicated above may be requested from the participating organisations. This is applicable regardless the granted amount.

Organisations must upload these documents in the the Funding & tender opportunities portal / Organisation Registration System either at the time of their registration (see section "Step1: Register the organisation" above), by the deadline stipulated by the specific Action or when contacted by the EU validation services requesting the applicant to provide the necessary supporting documents. In case of centralised actions, this request will be sent via the messaging system embedded in the respective system.

If, following the analysis of the documents indicated above, the National or Executive Agency concludes that the required financial capacity is weak, then they may:

- ask for further information;
- decide to give a pre-financing covered by (one or more) a bank guarantee;
- decide not to give pre-financing or give a reduced pre-financing;
- decide to give a pre-financing paid in several instalments;
- require an enhanced financial responsibility regime, i.e. joint and several responsibility for all beneficiaries or joint and several liability of affiliated entities

If the financial capacity is insufficient, the National or Executive Agency shall reject the application.

OPERATIONAL CAPACITY

Operational capacity means that the applicant has the necessary professional competencies and qualifications to carry out the proposed project. Applicants must have the know-how, qualifications and resources to successfully implement the projects and contribute their share (including sufficient experience in projects of comparable size and nature).

Public bodies, Member State organisations and international organisations are exempted from the operational capacity check.

For Actions managed by the National Agencies, applicants must provide a declaration on their honour certifying that they have the operational capacity to implement the project. In the case of the Quality Label, the operational capacity will be assessed according to the relevant questions of the form. In addition, if required in the application form and if the grant exceeds EUR 60 000, applicants may be asked to submit the curriculum vitae (CVs) of the key persons involved in the project to demonstrate their relevant professional experience or other supporting documents such as:

- A list of relevant publications of the main team;
- An exhaustive list of previous projects and activities performed and connected to the policy field or to this specific Action.

In addition, applicants under the Strand "Participation of young people in solidarity activities" for Quality Label for lead organsiation must have at least one year of experience implementing activities making them eligible as applicants. Experience preceding mergers or similar structural changes of public entities will be taken into account as relevant experience in the meaning of this clause.

The above condition will be verified based on the application (including information about the applicant's past participation in the 2014-2020 Erasmus+ and/or European Solidarity Corps programme) and the documents submitted in the Organisation Registration System. Applicants that do not complete the information requested in the application form may be disqualified on this basis. The National Agency may ask for additional supporting documents to verify the information included in the application.

For Actions managed by the Executive Agency, the operational capacity will be assessed in parallel with the 'Quality' award criterion on the basis of the competence and experience of the applicants and their project teams, including operational resources (human, technical and other) or, exceptionally, the measures proposed to obtain it by the time the task implementation starts.

The applicants are considered to have sufficient operational capacity . when the requirements referring to the operational capacity set in the call for proposals are met.

Applicants will have to show their capacity via the following information in the Application Form:

- general profiles (qualifications and experiences) of the staff responsible for managing and implementing the project;

[63] https://ec.europa.eu/info/fundingtenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/rules-lev-lear-fca_en.pdf

- description of the consortium participants;
- list of EU-funded projects for the last 4 years.

The National Agency or the Executive Agency may ask for additional supporting documents to verify the information included in the application.

AWARD CRITERIA

The award criteria allow the National or Executive Agency to evaluate the quality of the proposals submitted in the framework of the European Solidarity Corps.

For Solidarity Projects and Volunteering Teams in High Priority Areas, proposals that pass the individual quality thresholds and the overall quality threshold will be considered for funding, within the limits of the available budget. The rest of the proposals will be rejected.

The full set of award criteria applying to each of the Actions implemented through this Guide are described in Part B and C of this Guide.

STEP 3: CHECK THE FINANCIAL CONDITIONS

FORMS OF GRANT

The grant may take the following form[64]:

- reimbursement of a specified proportion of the eligible costs actually incurred: e.g. the amount awarded to cover additional costs linked to visa related costs;
- reimbursement on the basis of contribution to unit costs: e.g. the amount awarded for organisational support for volunteering projects;
- a combination of the above.

The financing mechanism applied under the European Solidarity Corps in most cases provides grants based on the reimbursement on the basis of contribution to unit costs. These types of grant help applicants to easily calculate the requested grant amount and facilitate a realistic financial planning of the project. To know which type of grant is applied to each funding item under each European Solidarity Corps activity covered by this Guide, please see the column "financing mechanism" in the "funding rules" tables.

PRINCIPLES APPLYING TO EU GRANTS

NON RETROACTIVITY

No EU grant may be awarded retroactively for projects already completed.

An EU grant may be awarded for a project which has already begun only where the applicant can demonstrate the need to start the project before the grant agreement has been signed. In such cases, the costs eligible for financing must not have been incurred prior to the date of submission of the grant application[65]

If the applicant starts implementing the project before the grant agreement is signed, this is done at the risk of the applicant.

MULTIPLE SUBMISSIONS

In case of multiple submissions of the same application in the same selection round to the same National Agency or the Executive Agency, the National or Executive Agency will always consider valid the last version submitted before the deadline has expired.

For actions managed by the National Agencies, in case of multiple submissions of the same application by the same applicant organisation to different Agencies, all applications will be rejected. Should almost identical or similar applications be submitted by the same or different applicant organisations to the same or different Agencies, they will all be subject to a specific assessment and may all be rejected.

All applications must contain original content authored by the applicant organisation. No other organisations or external individuals can be paid for drafting the application.

NON-CUMULATIVE AWARD

Each project/activity financed by the EU is entitled to receive only one grant from the EU budget to any one beneficiary. In no circumstances shall the same costs be financed twice by the Union budget.

[64] Decision authorising the use of lump sums, unit costs and flat-rate financing for volunteering and solidarity projects actions under the European Solidarity Corps: https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity/organisations/reference-documents-resources_en

[65] Exceptionally and in accordance with the legal basis, costs may be eligible for financing if the have been incurred prior to the date of submission of the grant application, if so indicated in the Financing Decision.

To avoid the risk of double-funding, the applicant must indicate in the relevant section of the application form, the sources and the amounts of any other funding received or applied for, whether for the same project or for any other project, including operating grants.

NO-PROFIT

A grant financed from the Union budget must not have the purpose or effect of producing a profit within the framework of the project carried out by the beneficiary. Profit is defined as surplus calculated at the payment of the balance, of receipts over the eligible costs of the action or work programme, where receipts are limited to the Union grant and the revenue generated by that action or work programme[66]. The no-profit principle does not apply to grants provided in the form of a unit cost, a lump sum or a flat-rate financing, to actions implemented by non-profit organisations, neither to grant requests that do not exceed EUR 60 000.

Where a profit is made, the Commission shall be entitled to recover the percentage of the profit corresponding to the Union contribution to the eligible costs actually incurred by the beneficiary in carrying out the action or work programme.

For the purpose of calculating the profit generated by the grant, co-financing in the form of contributions in kind will not be taken into account.

CO-FINANCING

An EU grant is an incentive to carry out a project which would not be feasible without the EU financial support, and is based on the principle of co-financing. Co-financing implies that the EU grant may not finance the entire costs of the project; the project must be funded by sources of co-financing other than the EU grant (e.g. beneficiary's own resources, income generated by the action, financial contributions from third parties).

When the EU grant is provided in the form of a unit cost, a lump sum or a flat-rate financing - this is the case for most of the Actions covered by this Guide - the principles of no-profit and co-funding are ensured by the Commission for the Action as a whole in advance when it defines the rates or percentages of such units, lump sums and flat-rates. The respect of the no-profit and co-financing principles is generally assumed and therefore, applicants do not have to provide information about sources of funding other than the EU grant, nor they have to justify the costs incurred by the project.

However, the payment of the grant based on the reimbursement on the basis of contribution to unit costs, lump sums, or flat-rate financing is without prejudice to the right of access to the beneficiaries' statutory records. Where a check or audit reveals that the generating event has not occurred (e.g. project activities not realised as approved at application stage, participants not taking part in the activities, etc.) and an undue payment has been made to the beneficiary on a grant based on the reimbursement on the basis of contribution to unit costs, lump sums, or flat-rate financing, the National Agency shall be entitled to recover up to the amount of the grant. Similarly, if the activities undertaken or the outputs produced are of insufficient quality, the grant may be reduced partly or in full even if the activities have taken place and are eligible.

In addition, for statistical and monitoring purposes the European Commission may carry out surveys on samples of beneficiaries aimed at quantifying the actual costs incurred in projects funded based on the reimbursement on the basis of contribution to unit costs, lump sums, or flat-rate financing.

SPECIFIC PROVISIONS APPLYING TO GRANTS PAID ON THE BASIS OF REIMBURSEMENT OF A SPECIFIED PORTION OF ELIGIBLE COSTS

When the EU grant is provided as a reimbursement of a specified portion of eligible costs, the following provisions apply[67]:

ELIGIBLE COSTS

An EU grant must not exceed an overall amount which is established by the National or Executive Agency at the time of the project selection on the basis of the estimated eligible costs indicated in the application form. Eligible costs are costs actually incurred by the beneficiary of a grant which meet all of the following criteria:

- they are incurred during the duration of the project, with the exception of costs relating to final reports and audit certificates;
- they are indicated in the estimated overall budget of the project;
- they are necessary for the implementation of the project which is the subject of the grant;
- they are identifiable and verifiable, in particular being recorded in the accounting records of the beneficiary and determined according to the applicable accounting standards of the country where the beneficiary is established and according to the usual cost accounting practices of the beneficiary;
- they comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation;

[66] To this aim, the receipts are limited to income generated by the project. The profit (or the loss) as defined above is then the difference between:
the provisionally accepted amount of the grant and the income generated by the action, and the eligible costs incurred by the beneficiary.
In addition, whenever a profit is made, it will be recovered. The National Agency or Executive Agency are entitled to recover the percentage of the profit corresponding to the Union contribution to the eligible costs actually incurred by the beneficiary to carry out the action. Further clarifications on the calculation of the profit will be provided for actions for which grants take the form of reimbursement of a specified proportion of eligible costs.

[67] For actions managed by the Executive Agency, the detailed applicable financial provisions are presented in the Model Grant Agreement published in the Funding and Tender Opportunity Portal.

- they are reasonable, justified, and comply with the principle of sound financial management, in particular regarding economy and efficiency;
- they are not covered through EU grants in the form of contribution to unit costs, lump sums or flat-rate financing.

The following categories of costs are also considered eligible:

- costs relating to a pre-financing guarantee lodged by the beneficiary of the grant, where that guarantee is required by the National or Executive Agency;
- costs relating to certificates on the financial statements and operational verification reports where such certificates or reports are required in support of the requests for payments by the National Agency;
- depreciation costs, provided they are actually incurred by the beneficiary.

The beneficiary's internal accounting and auditing procedures must permit direct reconciliation of the costs and revenue declared in respect of the project with the corresponding accounting statements and supporting documents.

Value Added Tax (VAT)

Value added tax will be considered as an eligible cost only if it is not recoverable under the applicable national VAT legislation[68]. The only exception relates to activities or transactions in which states, regional and local government authorities and other public bodies engage as public authorities[69]. In addition:

- deductible VAT not actually deducted (due to national conditions or to the carelessness of beneficiaries) is not eligible;
- the VAT Directive does not apply to nonEU- countries. Organisations from partner countries can be exempted from taxes (including VAT), duties and charges, if an agreement has been signed between the European Commission and the partner country where the organisation is established.

Eligible indirect costs

For certain types of activities (for details of the funding rules for Actions, please consult Part B and C of this Guide), a flat-rate amount not exceeding 7 % of the eligible direct costs of the project (except volunteer costs, if any) is eligible under indirect costs, representing the beneficiary's general administrative costs which are not already covered by the eligible direct costs (e.g. electricity or Internet bills, cost for premises, etc.) but which can be regarded as chargeable to the project.

Indirect costs may not include costs entered under another budget category. Indirect costs are not eligible where the beneficiary already receives an operating grant from the Union budget.

INELIGIBLE COSTS

The following costs shall not be considered eligible:

- return on capital and dividends paid by a beneficiary;
- debt and debt service charges;
- provisions for losses or debts;
- interest owed;
- doubtful debts;
- exchange losses;
- VAT, when it is considered as recoverable under the applicable national VAT legislation (see above paragraph on Value Added Tax);
- costs declared by the beneficiary and covered by another project or work programme receiving an EU grant (see also above paragraph on eligible indirect costs);
- excessive or reckless expenditure;
- contributions in kind from third parties;
- in the case of renting or leasing of equipment, the cost of any buy-out option at the end of the lease or rental period;
- costs of opening and operating bank accounts (including costs of transfers from/to the National or Executive Agency charged by the bank of the beneficiary).

SOURCES OF FINANCING

The applicant must indicate in the application form the contribution from sources other than the EU grant. External co-financing may take the form of the beneficiary's own resources, financial contributions from third parties or income generated by the project. If, at the time of the final report and request of payment of the balance, there is evidence that there is a surplus of the income (see section on No-profit and Co-financing) over the eligible costs incurred by the project, the National Agency or Executive Agency is entitled to recover the percentage of the profit corresponding to the Union contribution to the eligible costs actually incurred by the beneficiary to carry out the project. This provision does not apply to projects requesting a grant that does not exceed EUR 60 000.

Contributions in kind are not considered as a possible source of co-financing.

[68] In the Member States the VAT national legislation translates the VAT Directive 2006/112/EC.
[69] See article 13(1) of the Directive.

STEP 4: FILL IN AND SUBMIT THE APPLICATION FORM

To request an EU grant under the European Solidarity Corps, applicants must use the forms specific for each Action and available on the websites of the European Commission, of the National Agencies or of the Executive Agency (please consult the following link: https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity/contacts_en).

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

APPLICATION FORMS

Applicants are required to submit their application online to the appropriate National or Executive Agency using the correct electronic form and including all requested annexes. Applications sent by post, courier service, fax or email will not be accepted.

For actions managed by the National Agencies - The electronic forms can be accessed through https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-esc and must be completed in one of the official languages used in programme countries. For more information, consult the guidelines on how to fill in and submit an electronic form. These guidelines also provide information on what to do in case of technical problems; a link to these guidelines is available in the electronic forms. They are also available through the websites of the National Agencies.

For actions managed by the Executive Agency - Applications must be submitted electronically via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home. For more information about the submission process (including IT aspects), consult the Online Manual available at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/om_en.pdf

In case of projects submitted in consortium, the coordinator submits a single application for the whole project on behalf of all the members of the consortium.

The application must be submitted to the appropriate National or Executive Agency. In cases where the applicant has submitted an application to other National Agency than the one in charge for the corresponding call for proposals, ths National Agency shall re-direct the application to the correctNational Agency.

RESPECT THE DEADLINE

The application must be submitted by the deadline set for each Action. The deadlines for the submission of projects are specified for each Action in Parts B and C "Eligibility Criteria" of this Guide.

N.B.:
For actions managed by National Agencies, irrespective of the day of the deadline, the deadline for submission of electronic forms is always set at 12:00:00 (midday Brussels time).

For actions managed by the Executive Agency and covered in this Guide, in line with the requirements of the Commission's Funding and Tender Opportunities Portal (FTOP), irrespective of the day of the deadline, the deadline for submission of proposals to the EACEA is 17:00:00 (Brussels time).

Applicants established in countries that have a different time zone should carefully consider the time differences to avoid rejections**.**

WHAT HAPPENS ONCE THE APPLICATION IS SUBMITTED?

All applications received by the National Agencies or by the Executive Agency undergo an evaluation procedure.

EVALUATION PROCEDURE

Project proposals are assessed exclusively on the basis of the criteria described in this Guide.

The National or the Executive Agency will:

- perform a check to verify that the admissibility, eligibility, exclusion and selection criteria are respected;
- evaluate the extent to which the participating organisations meet the award criteria (except in the case of grant request under Volunteering Projects). Such quality assessment is in most cases carried out with the support of independent experts. In their assessment, experts could be supported by guidelines developed by the European Commission; where available, these guidelines will be made available on the websites of the European Commission and of the Agencies responsible for the management of projects;
- verify that the proposal does not present risks of double funding. If necessary, such verification is carried out in cooperation with other Agencies or other stakeholders.

The National or Executive Agency will appoint an evaluation committee to manage the whole selection process. On the basis of the assessment carried out by the evaluation committee – if needed with the support of experts - will select and establish a list of projects proposed for the grant award.

For all actions covered by this Guide, during the evaluation process, applicants may be asked to provide additional information or to clarify the supporting documents submitted in connection with the application, provided that such information or clarification does not substantially change the proposal. Additional information and clarifications are particularly justified in case of obvious clerical errors made by the applicant, or in those cases where – for projects funded through multi-beneficiary agreements – one or more mandates of the partners are missing (for multi-beneficiary agreements, see section "grant agreement below") .

FINAL DECISION

At the end of the evaluation procedure, the National or Executive Agency decides on the projects/amounts to be granted on the basis of:

- the ranking list proposed by the evaluation committee (for Solidarity Projects and Volunteering Teams in High Priority Areas);
- the budget available for any given Action.

After the completion of the selection procedure, the application files and accompanying material are not sent back to the applicant, irrespective of the outcome of the procedure.

NOTIFICATION OF GRANT AWARD DECISIONS

The indicative calendar for the notification of selection results under each Action is indicated in the section "Project life-cycle deadlines and payment modalities" below. All applicants will be informed about the evaluation result in the notification letter on the outcome of the evaluation .

For Actions managed by the Executive Agency - Successful applications will be invited for grant preparation; other ones will be put on the reserve list or rejected. Invitation to grant preparation does not constitute a formal commitment for funding. Various legal checks before grant award will need to be performed: legal entity validation, financial capacity, exclusion check, etc. At this time, applicants will be requested to submit their organisation's financial data and appoint a LEAR. If an

applicant believes that the evaluation procedure was flawed, he/she can submit a complaint (following the deadlines and procedures set out in the notification letter on the outcome of the evaluation). Complaints submitted electronically may be subject to character limitations. Notifications which have not been opened within 10 days after sending are considered to have been accessed and that deadlines will be counted from opening/access (see also Funding & Tenders Portal Terms and Conditions).

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE APPLICATION IS APPROVED?

GRANT AGREEMENT

If the project is selected for an EU grant under the European Solidarity Corps, a grant agreement is signed between the National or Executive Agency and the applicant. The applicant will receive the grant agreement, to be signed and returned to the National or Executive Agency; the National or Executive Agency is the last party to sign. When the grant is signed by both parties, the applicant becomes beneficiary of an EU grant and can start the project[70]. Depending on the type of Action, grant agreements may take the form of mono-beneficiary agreements, with the applicant being the single beneficiary, or multi-beneficiary agreements, where all partner organisations become beneficiaries of the agreement. The multi-beneficiary agreement is signed by the coordinator which is the only contact point for the National or Executive Agency. However, all other organisations participating in a project (co-beneficiaries) sign a mandate to confer to the coordinator the responsibility of acting as main beneficiary. As a general rule, the mandates of each partner to the applicant should be provided at application stage. If these mandates are provided at a later stage, they must be made available at the latest by the time of the grant agreement signature.

Models of grant agreements used under the European Solidarity Corps will be made available in the course of the year on the websites of the European Commission or National Agencies and for the Executive Agency through the Funding and Tender Portal.

The indicative calendar for the receipt of grant agreements under each Action is indicated in the section "Project life-cycle deadlines and payment modalities" below.

GRANT AMOUNT

The acceptance of an application does not constitute a commitment to award funding equal to the amount requested by the applicant. The funding requested may be reduced on the basis of the specific financial rules applying to a given Action.

The award of a grant in a given round of selection does not establish an entitlement for subsequent rounds.

It should be noted that the grant amount foreseen by the agreement is a maximum which cannot be increased, even if the beneficiary requests a higher amount.

Funds transferred by the National Agency or the Executive Agency must be identified within the account or sub-account indicated by the beneficiary for the payment of the grant.

For Actions managed by the Executive Agency - Reporting and Payments arrangements presented in the Model Grant Agreement published in the Funding and Tender Opportunity Portal apply.

PAYMENT PROCEDURES

Depending on the type of Action, duration of the grant agreement and the assessment of financial risk, projects/grant requests supported under the European Solidarity Corps are subject to different payment procedures.

Except for the first pre-financing payment, other payments or recoveries will be made on the basis of the analysis of reports or payment requests submitted by the beneficiary (the templates of these documents will be made available in the course of the year on the websites of National Agencies or the Executive Agency).

The payment procedures applied under the European Solidarity Corps are described below.

PRE-FINANCING PAYMENT

A pre-financing payment will be transferred to the beneficiary within 30 days of the date when the last of the two parties signs the grant agreement, and where relevant, any appropriate guarantees are received (see section "financial guarantee"

[70] See footnote above

below). Pre-financing is intended to provide the beneficiary with a float. National Agencies or the Executive Agency may decide to split the first pre-financing payment into more instalments. They may also decide to reduce the pre-financing or not pay any pre-financing at all, if the financial capacity of the beneficiary is weak.

FURTHER PRE-FINANCING PAYMENTS

Under some Actions, a second – and in some cases a third - pre-financing payment will be transferred to the beneficiary within 30 calendar days of the receipt, by the National Agency or the Executive Agency, of the further pre-financing payment requests advanced by the beneficiary or within 60 calendar days if the further pre-financing payment request is accompanied by a progress report. These further pre-financing payments may be requested when at least 70 % of the previous pre-financing payment has been used up. Where the statement on the use of the previous pre-financing payment(s) shows that less than 70 % of the previous pre-financing payment(s) has been used to cover costs of the action, the amount of the new pre-financing to be paid shall be reduced by the unused amounts of the previous pre-financing.

INTERIM (OR PROGRESS/TECHNICAL) REPORT

Under some Actions, beneficiaries will be asked to submit an interim as well as a progress/technical report informing on the state of implementation of the activities and - in some cases - accompanying the request for a further pre-financing payment. The interim and the progress/technical reports must be submitted by the deadline indicated in the grant agreement.

NB: Organisations holding a Quality Label for lead organisations, at least once during the validity of the Quality Label, will be required to:

- report on how they are progressing towards reaching their objectives;
- report on how they are ensuring the European Solidarity Corps principles and quality requirements;
- update their activity plan.

The National Agency may decide to request a progress report on the different elements listed above at the same time, or separately. The National Agency may decide to replace the reporting requirements on objectives and quality standards with a monitoring visit. Based on the organisation's performance resulting from reporting, monitoring and quality assurance checks, or as result of significant changes in the organisation, the National Agency may change the number and schedule of progress reports. Organisations may voluntarily request to update their Quality Label. Based on the organisation's reasoning, the National Agency will decide whether an update is justified and acceptable.

PAYMENT OR RECOVERY OF THE BALANCE

The amount of the final payment to be made to the beneficiary will be established on the basis of a final report to be submitted by the deadline indicated in the grant agreement. If a) the events generating the grant are not implemented or are implemented in a different way than planned; or b) the eligible costs actually incurred by the beneficiary are lower than those planned at application stage, or c) the quality of the realised activities/outputs is of insufficient quality, the funding may be reduced proportionally or, where applicable, the beneficiary will be required to repay any excess amounts already received as pre-financing payment.

Under some Actions, in justified cases the National Agency or the Executive Agency may transfer 100 % of the grant awarded through the pre-financing instalments. In such cases a payment of the balance is not due. However, if - on the basis of a final report to be submitted by the beneficiary by the deadline indicated in the grant agreement - a) the events generating the grant are not implemented or are implemented in a different way than planned; or b) the eligible costs actually incurred by the beneficiary are lower than those planned at application stage, or c) the quality of the realised activities/outputs is of insufficient quality, the beneficiary will be required to repay any excess amounts already received as pre-financing payment.

As a general rule, the final payment or request for recovery of the balance will be issued within 60 calendar days of the receipt of the final report.

For more information, the detailed modalities of payment applying to each Action can be found in the section "Project life-cycle deadlines and payment modalities" below.

PROJECT LIFE-CYCLE DEADLINES AND PAYMENT MODALITIES

Please note that the indicative dates provided in the table below are given for general information only and do not constitute a legal obligation for the National Agencies or the Executive Agency. Similarly as regards the payment modalities presented below, it should be noted that they will be applied in general, but depending on the individual situation of the applicant organisation (e.g. depending on the financial capacity), different arrangements may be provided for in the grant agreement. In case of a shortage of EU appropriations for a given budget year, the first pre-financing payment levels may be further reduced.

	Project life-cycle deadlines			**Payment modalities**		
	Indicative date of notification of award decision	**Indicative date for signing grant agreement**	**Date of final payment / request for reimbursement of the balance**	**N. of pre-financings**	**Interim (technical) report**	**% of grant provided at different stages**
Participation of young people in solidarity activities						
Quality Label	2 months from the submission deadline	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Volunteering grant request	3 months from the submission deadline	3 months from the submission deadline	Within 60 calendar days from the receipt of the final report by NA	1	Yes	Prefin.: 80 % Balance: 20 %
Volunteering Teams in High Priority Areas	6 months from the submission deadline	9 months from the submission deadline	Within 60 calendar days from the receipt of the final report by EACEA	1	Depends on the length of the project	Prefin.: 80 % Balance: 20 %
Solidarity projects	3 months from the submission deadline	4 months from the submission deadline	Within 60 calendar days from the receipt of the final report by NA	1	No	Prefin.: 80 % Balance: 20 %
Participation of young people in humanitarian aid related activities						
Quality Label	6 months from the submission deadline	Not applicable	Not applicable	Nota applicable	Not applicable	Not Applicable

OTHER IMPORTANT CONTRACTUAL PROVISIONS

FINANCIAL GUARANTEE

If the financial capacity is considered weak, the National Agency or the Executive Agency may require any beneficiary which has been awarded a grant exceeding EUR 60 000 to lodge a guarantee in advance in order to limit the financial risks connected with the pre-financing payment. This guarantee can be requested for up to the same amount of the pre-financing payment(s).

The purpose of such guarantee is to make a bank or financial institution stand as irrevocable collateral security or first-call guarantor of the beneficiary's obligations deriving from the grant agreement.

This financial guarantee, in euro, shall be provided by an approved bank or financial institution established in an EU Member State. When the beneficiary is established in a non-EU country, the National or Executive Agency may agree that a bank or financial institution established in such country provides the guarantee, if it considers that the bank or financial institution offers equivalent financial security and characteristics as those offered in an EU Member State.

The guarantee may be replaced by a joint third-party guarantee, or from several third-party guarantees from the participating organisations who are parties to the same grant agreement.

The guarantee will be released after the pre-financing is gradually cleared against an interim payment or payment of the balance to the beneficiary, in accordance with the conditions laid down in the grant agreement. In case the payment of the balance takes the form of a recovery, either the guarantee will be released after the beneficiary is notified or will remain explicitly in force until the final payment and, if the final payment takes the form of a recovery, until three months after the debit note is notified to a beneficiary.

SUB-CONTRACTING AND AWARD OF A PROCUREMENT CONTRACT

The beneficiary may resort to subcontracting for specific technical services requiring specialised skills (relating to the legal, accounting, tax, human resources fields, IT, etc.) or implementation contracts. The costs incurred by the beneficiary for this type of services may therefore be considered as eligible costs provided they meet all the other criteria described in the grant agreement.

Where implementation of the project requires the procurement of goods, works or services (implementation contract), beneficiaries must award the contract to the economically most advantageous offer, i.e. the bid offering the best value for money, or, as appropriate to the tender offering the lowest price, ensuring that there is no conflict of interests and that documentation is retained in case of audit.

In the event of implementation contract exceeding a value of 60 000 EUR, the National or Executive agency may impose special rules on the beneficiary, in addition to those referred to in the previous paragraph. Those special rules would be published on the websites of the National Agencies or the Executive Agency.

INFORMATION ON THE GRANTS AWARDED

In line with the principle of transparency and the requirement for ex-post publicity, information on the recipients of the Union funds must be published on the website of the Commission, the Executive Agency and/or the National Agencies during the first half of the year following the closure of the financial year for which they were awarded.

The information may also be published in any other appropriate medium, including the Official Journal of the European Union.

The National Agencies and the Executive Agency will publish the following information:

- name and locality of the beneficiary;
- amount of grant awarded;
- nature and purpose of the award.

Upon a reasoned and duly substantiated request by the beneficiary, the publication shall be waived if such disclosure risks threatening the rights and freedoms of individuals concerned as protected by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union or harm the commercial interests of the beneficiaries.

As far as personal data referring to natural persons are concerned, the information published shall be removed two years after the end of the financial year in which the funds were awarded. The same shall apply to personal data indicated in the official titles of legal persons (e.g. an association or company having as title the names of their founders).

Beneficiary organisations are not authorised to publish this type of information in relation to young people participating in European Solidarity Corps activities.

PUBLICITY

Apart from the requirements regarding the visibility of the project/activities and for the dissemination and exploitation of its results (which are award criteria), there is an obligation of minimal publicity for each granted project.

Beneficiaries must clearly acknowledge the European Union's support in all communications or publications, in whatever form or whatever medium, including the Internet, or on the occasion of activities for which the grant is used.

This must be done according to the provisions included in the grant agreement. If these provisions are not fully complied with, the beneficiary's grant may be reduced.

CHECKS AND AUDITS

The National or Executive Agency and/or the European Commission may carry out technical and financial checks and audits in relation to the use of the grant. They may also check the statutory records of the beneficiary for the purpose of periodic assessments of lump sum, unit cost or flat-rate financing. The beneficiary will undertake, with the signature of its legal representative, to provide proof that the grant has been used correctly. The European Commission, the Executive Agency, the National Agencies and/or the European Court of Auditors, or a body mandated by them, may check the use made of the grant at any time up to five years, or for up to three years for grants not exceeding EUR 60 000, starting from the date of payment of the balance or execution of the recovery by the National or Executive Agency. Therefore, beneficiaries shall keep records, original supporting documents, statistical records and other documents connected with the grant during this period.

The detailed provisions concerning checks and audits are described in the grant agreement.

DATA PROTECTION

Any personal data included in the application form or in the grant agreement/decision shall be processed by the National or Executive Agency, or by the European Commission in accordance with:

- Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the European Union institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data.
- In secondary order and only in so far as Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 does not apply – the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR or EU Regulation 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council) or the national data protection legislation in case the GDPR does not apply (non-EU countries).

Unless marked as optional, the applicant's replies to the questions in the application form are necessary to evaluate and further process the grant application in accordance with the European Solidarity Corps Guide. Personal data will be processed solely for that purpose by the department or Unit responsible for the Union grant programme concerned (entity acting as data controller). Personal data may be transferred on a need to know basis to third parties involved in the evaluation of applications or in the grant management procedure, without prejudice of transfer to the bodies in charge of monitoring and inspection tasks in accordance with European Union law or to bodies mandated to undertake evaluations of the Programme or any of its Actions. In particular, for the purposes of safeguarding the financial interests of the Union, personal data may be transferred to internal audit services, to the European Court of Auditors, to the Financial Irregularities Panel or to the European Anti-Fraud Office and between authorising officers of the Commission and the executive agencies. The applicant shall have the right of access to his/her personal data and the right to rectify any such data. Should the applicant have any queries concerning the processing of his/her personal data, he/she shall address them to the Agency that has selected the project. In case of conflicts; the applicant also has the right of recourse at any time to the European Data Protection Supervisor. More information regarding the processing of personal data is included in the grant agreement.

Concerning the processing of personal data under the European Solidarity Corps, a detailed privacy statement, including contact information, is available on the website of the Commission.

Within the framework of centralised actions managed by the Executive Agency, applicants - and, if they are legal entities, persons who are members of the administrative, management or supervisory body of that applicant or who have powers of representation, decision or control with regard to that applicant, or natural or legal persons that assume unlimited liability for the debts of that applicant - are informed that, their personal data (name, given name if natural person, address, legal form and name and given name of the persons with powers of representation, decision-making or control, if legal person) may be registered in the Early Detection and Exclusion System (EDES) by the Authorising Officer of the Agency, should they be in one of the situations mentioned in the Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union.

OPEN LICENCE AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

An open licence is a way by which the owner of a work grants permission to everyone to use the resource. There are different open licences according to the extent of the permissions granted or the limitations imposed and the beneficiaries are free to choose the specific license to apply to their work. An open licence must be associated to each resource produced.

An open licence is not a transfer of copyrights or Intellectual Property Rights (IPR). Beneficiaries will remain the copyright holders of the materials they produce and are allowed to use them as they wish. The only requirement for grant beneficiaries is to make educational resources (or other documents and media produced by the project) freely accessible through open licences. To fulfil this requirement, licenses need at least to grant use and, ideally, sharing and, adaptation rights. Beneficiaries can also commercialise their project outcomes and experience shows that open access brings visibility and may encourage interested users to buy the printed version or physical material, document or media.

ANNEX I - GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Accompanying person	A person who accompanies participants with fewer opportunities (particularly participants with disabilities) in an activity, in order to ensure protection, provide support and extra assistance as well as assist in their effective learning during the experience.
Action	Strand or measure of the European Solidarity Corps.
Activity	Set of tasks carried out as part of a project. An activity is defined by the same location, the same time frame and the same scope.
Applicant	Participating organisation or group of young people that submits an application.
(Application) deadline	Final date by when the application form must be submitted to the National or Executive Agency to be considered eligible.
Associated partner	A participating organisation involved in the implementation of a European Solidarity Corps project without being a co-beneficiary.
Beneficiary	If the project is selected, the applicant becomes beneficiary of a European Solidarity Corps grant. The beneficiary signs a grant agreement with the National or Executive Agency that has selected the project.
Call for proposals	Invitation published by or on behalf of the Commission to present, within a given deadline, a proposal for Action that corresponds to the objectives pursued and fulfils the required conditions. Calls for proposals are published in the Official Journal of the European Union (C series) and/or at relevant websites/portals of the Commission, National or Executive Agency.
Certificate of participation	In the context of the European Solidarity Corps, a document issued to a person having completed a European Solidarity Corps activity. Such document certifies the attendance of the participant in the activity.
Clerical Error	A minor mistake or inadvertence unintentionally made in a document that changes its meaning, such as a typographical error or the unintentional addition or omission of a word, phrase, or figure.
Coach	A resource person – not member of the group - who supports young people in the preparation, implementation and evaluation of a Solidarity Project.
Co-financing	The co-financing principle implies that part of the costs of a project supported by the EU must be borne by the beneficiary, or covered through external contributions other than the EU grant.
Consortium	Two or more participating organisations teaming up to prepare, implement and follow up a project or an activity within a project. A consortium may be national (i.e. involving organisations established in the same country) or international (involving participating organisations from different countries). Relevant for actions managed by the Executive Agency.

Coordinator	A participating organisation applying for a grant on behalf of a consortium of partner organisations. The coordinator has special obligations foreseen in the grant agreement. Relevant for actions managed by the Executive Agency.
Cross-border activity	Activity taking place in another country than the country where the participant is legally resident.
Established	Relates to an organisation or body fulfilling certain national conditions (registration, statement, publication, etc.) that allow such an organisation or body to be formally recognised by its national authority. In case of a group of young people, the legal residence of its legal representative is considered as having the equivalent effects for the purposes of eligibility to a European Solidarity Corps grant.
Europass	Europass is a portfolio of different documents and an electronic folder aiming to contain descriptions of the entire holder's learning achievements, official qualifications, work experience, skills and competences, acquired over time. These documents are: the Europass CV (curriculum vitae), the Diploma Supplement, the Certificate Supplement,. Europass also includes the European Skills Passport, a user-friendly electronic folder that helps the holder to build up a personal, modular inventory of his/her skills and qualifications. The aim of Europass is to facilitate mobility and improve job and lifelong learning prospects in Europe.
European Solidarity Network (EuSN)	The European Solidarity Network (EuSN) is a young community dating back to spring 2019. They are united through a shared interest and vision to create a European network in which everybody works together to improve the experience of young Corps participants.
EuroPeers	EuroPeers are young people who have gained European experience under the EU's youth programmes and want to share them with their peers. They are ambassadors for the Erasmus+ Youth programme, the European Solidarity Corps and other national schemes that help young people move around Europe to work and learn. EuroPeers either organise their own events or are invited to speak by schools, youth welfare offices or cultural centres. All on a voluntary basis.
Force majeure	An unforeseeable exceptional situation or event beyond the participant's control and not attributable to error or negligence on his/her part.
General Online Training	A set of training modules for the registered candidates and participants selected for an activity provided via the European Solidarity Corps' portal
Green travel	Green travel is defined as the travel that uses low-emissions means of transport for the main part of the travel, such us as bus, train or car-sharing.

Groups of young people	Group of at least five young people who do not have their own legal personality under the applicable national law; however one of their representatives will be given the capacity to undertake legal obligations on their behalf. These groups of young people can be applicants for Solidarity Projects. For the purpose of simplification, they are assimilated to legal persons (organisations, institutions, etc.) in this Guide and fit within the notion of participating organisations for the Action in which they can take part. The group must be composed of at least five young people and their age should be according with the overall eligible age of the young people in the Corps (18-30).
In-country activity	Activity taking place in the same country than the one where the participant is legally resident.
Informal learning	Learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure which is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support; it may be unintentional from the learner's perspective.
International organisation	Organisations set up by international agreements and agencies set up by such organisations as specified in article 156 of Financial Regulation. The following organisations shall be assimilated to international organisations: the International Committee of the Red Cross; the International Federation of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.
Key competences	The basic set of knowledge, skills and attitudes which all individuals need for personal fulfilment and development, employability, social inclusion, sustainable lifestyle, successful life in peaceful societies, health-conscious life management and active citizenship, as described in Recommendation 2018/C 189/01 of the European Parliament and of the Council.
Learning outcomes	Statements of what a participant knows, understands and is able to do as a result of a learning process.
Location	Place in which the volunteers are hosted. By default, the main address of the host organisation is considered as a first location but organisations could declare and host volunteers in more than one location.
Non-formal learning	Voluntary learning which takes place through learning activities where some form of learning support is present, but which is not part of the formal education and training system.
Participant	Young person registered in the European Solidarity Corps and involved in a project. Under Solidarity Projects, young people implementing the project are considered as participants.
Participants with fewer opportunities	Individuals who need additional support due to the fact that they are at a disadvantage compared to their peers because of various obstacles. A more detailed definition of people with fewer opportunities can be found in Part A of this Guide - section "Inclusion and Diversity".
Participating organisation	Any organisation or group of young people involved in the implementation of a European Solidarity Corps project. Depending on their role in the project, participating organisations can be applicants, partners or associated partners. If the project is granted, applicants become beneficiaries.

Partner countries	Countries which do not participate fully in the Corps, but which may take part as partners (or applicants in the case of the Quality Label) in certain Actions. The list of partner countries is set out in Part A of this Guide, in the section "Who can participate in the European Solidarity Corps?".
Partner organisation	A partner organisation is a participating organisation formally involved in the project (co-beneficiary) but not taking the role of applicant. Relevant for actions managed by the Executive Agency.
Preparatory Visit	Planning visit to the host country ahead of a volunteering, traineeship or job activity. The purpose of the visit is to build trust, understanding and a solid partnership between organisations and people involved. Young participants with fewer opportunities can be involved in the visit to integrate them fully in the project design.
Programme countries	EU and non-EU countries that have established a National Agency which participate fully in the Corps. The list of Programme Countries is provided in Part A of this Guide, in section "Who can participate in the European Solidarity Corps?".
Project	A coherent set of activities which are organised in order to achieve defined objectives and results.
Qualification	A formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual achieved learning outcomes to given standards.
Quality Label	Process that ensures that the organisations wishing to receive funding under an Action of the European Solidarity Corps respect a set of qualitative standards or pre-requisites defined by the European Commission for that given Action. Depending on the type of organisation and/or the country where the requesting organisation is located, the Quality Label is carried out by the Executive Agency, a National Agency or a SALTO Resource Centre.
Registered Candidate	An individual aged between 17 and 35 years who has registered in the European Solidarity Corps Portal for the purposes of expressing interest in engaging in a solidarity activity but who is not yet participating in a solidarity activity.
Solidarity activity	A high-quality, inclusive activity that addresses important societal that takes the form of volunteering, a solidarity project or a networking activity in various fields, including in the field of humanitarian aid carried out in the frame of the European Solidarity Corps.
Union transparency and recognition tools	Instruments that help stakeholders to understand, appreciate and, as appropriate, recognise learning outcomes and qualifications throughout the Union.
Validation of non-formal and informal learning	Process of confirmation by an authorised body that an individual has acquired learning outcomes measured against a relevant standard and consists of the following four distinct phases: ▪ Identification through dialogue of particular experiences of an individual; ▪ Documentation to make visible the individual's experiences; ▪ Formal assessment of these experiences; ▪ Certification of the results of the assessment which may lead to a partial or full qualification.

Youthpass	The European tool to improve the recognition of the learning outcomes of participants of projects supported by the European Solidarity Corps. Youthpass consists of: a) certificates that can be obtained by participants and b) a defined process which supports young people and organisations to reflect about the learning outcomes from a project. Youthpass is also part of a broader European Commission strategy which aims to enhance the recognition of non-formal and informal learning and of youth work in Europe and beyond.

ANNEX II – PARTICIPATIONS

The table below provides an overview of the possible combination of activities for participants.

Activity carried out	Short term - individual volunteering	Volunteering teams	Long term – individual volunteering	Solidarity Project
EVS/E+ short term volunteering	✓ (duly justified, cross border only)	✓	✓ (duly justified, ≤14 months, cross border only)	✓
EVS/E+ long term volunteering	X	✓	X	✓
Short term - individual volunteering	✓ (duly justified, cross border only)	✓	✓ (duly justified, ≤14 months, cross border only)	✓
Short term - volunteering teams	✓	✓	✓	✓
Long term volunteering	X	✓	X	✓
Solidarity Project	✓	✓	✓	✓

ANNEX III - CONTACT DETAILS

European Commission - Directorate General Education & Culture (DG EAC)
https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity_en

European Commission - Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)
https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/european-solidarity-corps_en

National Agencies
https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity/organisations/contact-national-agencies_en