



Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency

Erasmus Mundus and External Cooperation

Erasmus Mundus Action 2 - Partnerships

EXPERT ASSESSMENT MANUAL

Selection 2013

For the assessment of proposals submitted under the

Call for proposals EACEA/38/12

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All annexes can be downloaded from the following link:

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/funding/2013/call_eacea_38_12_en.php

Introduction

The European Union recognises the importance of higher education for economic and social development. Higher education plays a crucial role in producing high quality human resources, in disseminating scientific discovery and advanced knowledge through teaching and educating future generations of citizens, high level professionals and political leaders, who in turn can contribute to better governance.

In this context, the Erasmus Mundus Action 2 partnerships offer a unique higher education institutional cooperation frame and training opportunities relevant to the skilled manpower needs of the targeted regions and the EU. Thus, EM Action 2 students and staff benefit from the opportunity to study in Europe and abroad while the participating universities raise their capacities, build pole of expertise and gain international visibility.

This manual describes the assessment process in detail and the tasks experts are invited to perform. It is prepared on the basis of the EM Call for Proposals, the Programme Guide, the Guidelines applicable to the Call, the application form and the Agency's Grant Management Manual.

1. Description of the Action

The Erasmus Mundus Action 2 partnerships' objective is to achieve better understanding and mutual enrichment between the European Union and non-EU countries in the field of higher education through promoting the exchange of persons, knowledge and skills at higher education level. This will be achieved through the promotion of partnerships and institutional co-operation exchanges between European Higher Education Institutions and non-EU Country institutions and a mobility scheme addressing student and academic exchanges.

EMA2-Strand 1 aims to promote European higher education, to help to improve and enhance the career prospects of students and to promote intercultural understanding through cooperation with non-EU countries, in accordance with EU external policy objectives in order to contribute to the sustainable development of non-EU countries in the field of higher education. It includes partnerships between European and non-EU country higher education institutions, exchange and mobility at all levels of higher education, including a scholarship scheme. This means support for mobility for students (undergraduate, master, doctoral and post-doctoral) and for staff (academic and administrative).

The EMA2-Strand 1 - partnerships with countries covered by the ENPI, DCI, EDF and IPA instruments aim:

1. To contribute to the mutual enrichment of societies by developing the qualifications of men and women so that they possess appropriate skills, particularly as regards the labour market, and are open-minded and internationally experienced;
2. To promote mobility both for students, researchers and academics from non-EU countries, especially from vulnerable groups, selected on the basis of academic excellence, to obtain qualifications and/or experience in the European Union;

3. To contribute towards the development of human resources and the international co-operation capacity of higher education institutions in non-EU countries through increased mobility streams between the EU and non-EU countries in accordance with the principles of equal opportunities and non-discrimination.

The overall indicative amount available under the Call for EMA2-Strand 1 is approximately EUR 187,000,000. 57 partnerships are expected to be funded aiming at a minimum number of mobility of 6,852 individuals.

The EMA2-Strand 2 - partnerships with countries covered by the ICI instrument should foster mobility in the following categories: doctoral and postdoctoral candidates, and higher education academic and administrative staff. The partnerships will contribute to improving the quality of the education. The projects should be in line with the growing role of the European Union in the economic and political sphere and reflect the key themes of the EU's relationship with its industrialised partners.

The specific objectives of EMA2-Strand 2 activities are:

1. To support cooperation between higher education institutions with a view to promoting study programmes and mobility;
2. To foster the mobility of doctoral and post-doctoral candidates between the European Union and the non-EU countries by promoting transparency, mutual recognition of qualifications and periods of study, research and training, and, where appropriate, portability of credits;
3. To support the mobility of professionals (academic and administrative staff) with a view to improving mutual understanding and expertise, of issues relevant to relations between the European Union and the partner countries;
4. To develop a distinctive value for the promotion of region to region cooperation.

The overall indicative amount available EMA2-Strand 2 under the Call is EUR 6,750,000. Five partnership are expected to be funded aiming at a minimum number of mobility of 142 individuals.

2. Overview of the Selection Procedure

2.1 Background

The Erasmus Mundus Call for proposals (EACEA/38/12) was officially published on 28 December 2012.

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2012:400:0018:0022:en:PDF>

The Call refers to the procedures and requirements described in the relevant sections of the Erasmus Mundus Programme Guide and the Guidelines to the Call for Proposals EACEA/38/12.

The deadline to submit proposals under the Call for Proposals EACEA/38/12 was 15 April 2013, 12:00 midday (Brussels time).

The selection decision is expected to be taken in the beginning of July 2013, following which all applicants will be informed about the results. Selected partnerships may begin their activities as of 15 July 2013, the expected starting date of the eligibility period.

2.2 Selection Procedure

Proposals are selected through a competitive system based on their academic quality, and all candidates are subject to the same rules. The evaluation of the proposals submitted under this call will undergo the following selection procedure:

Step 1	Online registration and acknowledgement of receipt by the Agency.
Step 2	Eligibility check performed by the Agency and EU Delegations with the objective to ensure that the eligibility requirements mentioned under section, section 6.1.2 (for Action 2-Strand 1) and 6.2.2 (for Action 2-Strand 2) of the Programme Guide are respected. EU Delegations are consulted also on the relevance of the project (facultative).
Step 3	Briefing of all selected experts on remote to familiars with the selection procedure and expected outcomes of the assessment. Beforehand experts are requested to assess a case study, the results of which are analysed by the lead experts and discussed during the briefing. Assessment against the relevant Award Criteria by independent experts including individual assessments, consolidated assessments and academic debriefing following an introduction to Action 2 and the assessment tool. The academic debriefing is attended by all experts and chaired by the Agency. Minutes of the debriefing have to be approved and signed by the lead experts and the Agency.
Step 4	Verification of the applicants and partners compliance with the Selection Criteria by the Agency and the experts. The selection criteria are intended to evaluate the applicants' technical and financial capacity in order to ensure that they have the management capacity, professional competencies and qualifications required to successfully complete the proposed action.
Step 5	The Evaluation Committee composed of representatives of various General Directorates of the Commission (Foreign Policy Instrument Services, EuropeAid Development and Cooperation, Enlargement) and the Agency, will establish a list of projects to be proposed for funding as well as a reserve list per lot. All elements of step 2-4 and also other elements proposed by the Evaluation Committee are taken into account. Adjustments are based on consensus. Minutes of the meeting have to be approved and signed by each Committee member and are submitted to the Authorising Officer (the Director of the Agency) together with the established main and reserve list as well as a list of proposals not proposed for funding for decision on grant awards. Representatives of the General Directorate Education and Culture and the External Action Service may attend as observers.
Step 6	The selection decision is based on the relative high quality of the proposal in comparison with the other proposals received as well all outcomes of the Evaluation Committee and the budget available. The selection decision is taken by the Authorising Officer.
Step 7	Applicants are notified by the Agency about the selection decision. The consolidated version of the experts' assessments is provided to all applicants as part of this notification.

3. Experts' role and obligations

3.1 Role of independent experts

Independent academic experts have been appointed to assist the Agency in the assessment of EM Action 2 proposals. The selection of independent experts takes place on an annual basis, taking into account the list of experts who have applied to the Agency's Experts Call for Expressions of Interest (http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/about/call_experts/call_experts_2007_en.php)

Experts must have a perfect understanding of the relevant reference documents – among which the Programme Guide, Action 2 guidelines to the Call, the application form and the present manual – in order to perform efficiently their assessment work.

The role of the independent experts is twofold:

- To provide the Evaluation Committee with an objective academic assessment quantified in a score on the quality of the proposals which have been submitted under the Call.
- To give recommendations to the applicants. Experts should note that their comments and recommendations on the quality will be sent to the applicants as feedback (*the experts' identity will, however, remain confidential*). Experts are therefore requested to draft them with accuracy.

Each proposal will be assessed by 2 independent experts. These two experts - identified as "expert 1" and "expert 2" - will operate with the same level of responsibility although "expert 1" will be responsible for drafting and submitting the consolidated assessment on behalf of both experts.

They will have to judge each of the proposals against the set of award criteria defined for Action 2 - and presented in detail under 6.1.3 for Action 2 Strand 1 and 6.2.3 for Action 2 Strand 2 of the Programme Guide and as repeated in this manual. This judgment will take the form of comments, recommendations and individual scores, provided for each of the issues addressed under the relevant award criterion.

Experts should make sure that all their comments and recommendations are explicit, transparent, detailed, instructive, complete and in accordance with the scoring proposed. Comments should consist of judgements and not of simple summaries of the proposal. They should be tailored to the assessment of each proposal and therefore not be based on a copy-paste approach from one assessment to another. All aspects of the proposal, relative to the award criteria, should be commented on.

3.2 Role of lead experts

Four experts with a longstanding experience in assessing European co-operation projects will be appointed as "lead experts".

Lead experts may be asked to assess a limited number of proposals at the beginning of the assessment process or to carry out non-EU assessments. Their main role, however, will be to provide quality assurance, guarantee coherence and monitor the progress of individual and consolidated assessments performed by independent experts within their group.

In order to achieve these objectives, lead experts will have to work in close cooperation with the experts of their group, as well as with the contact person(s) of the Agency. During the consolidation phase in particular, lead experts will collaborate closely with the two individual experts in order to facilitate consensus discussions and ensure the quality, coherence and completeness of the consolidated assessment comments and scores. Generally, lead experts are expected to provide feedback to the individual experts within short delay.

If no consensus is reached, the lead experts will organise or carry out third assessments. They will co-chair the Academic Debriefing, and finally will assist the Evaluation Committee as resource person whenever the Evaluation Committee needs clarification as to the expert's assessment outcomes.

3.3 Experts' obligations

Experts perform assessments on a personal basis, not as representatives of their employer, their country or any other entity. They are expected to be **independent, impartial and objective**, and to behave throughout the assessment process in a professional manner.

All the information made available to experts is to be treated as **strictly confidential**. No information on the proposals submitted or on the provisional results of the assessment or selection may be disclosed to third parties. Experts may not photocopy anything without specific permission from the Agency. Under no circumstances may experts contact an applicant on their own account.

Experts should also declare that there is no **potential conflict of interest** in any of the proposals they are invited to assess. Examples of conflict of interest are: the expert is employed by the applicant or works in collaboration with the applicant; the expert is employed by the same institution as the applicant; the expert is involved in a contract or collaboration with the applicant; the expert was involved in the preparation of the proposal; the expert is related to the applicant (family/friend relations) or have professional relations with the applicant; the expert would benefit directly from the proposal being funded or not funded. If experts have a conflict of interest, or in case of doubt, they have to inform one of the officials from the Agency without any delay, so that the proposals concerned can be allocated to another expert. **To this end, experts will be requested to sign a declaration to certify any absence of conflict of interest.**

If, at any time, prior or during the assessment process, experts believe they may have a conflict of interest with one of the proposals that have been allocated to them, they have to inform one of the Agency's staff members without delay, so that, if necessary, the proposal(s) concerned can be allocated to (an)other expert(s).

Given that the 2013 EM Action 2 selection is organised as a paperless exercise, the application form and its annexes, as well as the individual and consolidated assessments will be provided on electronic version only. As a result, it is the expert's responsibility to print hard copies of some or all of these documents if needed. If necessary and for the purpose of crosschecking or confirming information, paper versions of documentation and the proposals will be provided during the final consolidation and panel that will take place in Brussels.

Since the experts' comments and recommendations will be communicated to the applicant at the end of the selection process, experts have the obligation to provide complete, meaningful and useful comments. Although it may be important to describe the most relevant aspects of the proposal, the comments must constitute concrete and substantiated qualitative judgements/assessments and not be a mere description of the factual elements contained in the proposal.

The assessment process must be completed within the period which has been communicated to the experts. The timing has been carefully planned and the timetable must be adhered to by all persons concerned.

For questions related to their assessments, experts communicate with the lead expert assigned to them and copy the responsible contact persons at the Agency in their messages.

4. Assessment procedure

4.1 Assessment Procedure

All proposals will be assessed by two experts. Each expert will be allocated a number of proposals to assess. Proposals will be allocated in a way to match as much as possible the geographical and academic expertise of each of the experts.

The proposals will be assessed against a set of award criteria listed in the Programme Guide and the Guidelines to the Call for proposals. No other assessment criteria may be applied.

Experts are not obliged to visit web site references contained within proposals. The necessary information must be present in the proposal if it is to be taken into account. Experts may, of course, visit web sites in order to verify the legitimacy of claims within the proposal, but they should not base their assessments on additional technical information found on a web site and not contained within the proposal.

Key dates of the assessment procedure

Induction	April/May 13 May a.m. or p.m.	Experts consult the reference materials and contribute to the assessment of a case study. Lead experts make a quality check of the case studies and provide recommendations before the briefing. Remote briefing of experts and lead experts and preparation of the assessment exercise. For technical reasons, division in two groups, one in the morning and one in the afternoon.
Individual assessment	13 May – 4 June	Individual assessment by experts

		on remote.
Mid-term de-briefing	23 and 30 May (max. 2 hours each)	Lead experts on remote.
Consensus discussion and consolidation	23 May – 4 June	In parallel to the assessment, consensus discussions between expert 1 and 2, and drafting of consolidated assessments by expert 1.
Consensus discussion and consolidation	Brussels, 5 June – 6 June	Finalisation of consensus discussions and submission of consolidated assessments with all experts.
Academic de-briefing	Brussels, 7 June	General panel discussions and de-briefing with all experts in Brussels.

4.2 Induction

All experts selected to assess EM Action 2 proposals under the call EACEA/38/12 are required to have read and assimilated the content of the present manual as well as the relevant sections of the Programme Guide, Action 2 Guidelines to the Call including the published corrigendum and the modification and the EM Action 2 application documents in advance of the assessment exercise.

In the induction phase all experts are requested to assess a proposal as case study with the aim to ensure that they have correctly understood the Action 2 requirements. The lead experts and the Agency review the assessments and will perform a quality check. The scoring levels of the experts will be compared as well as the comprehensiveness and the quality of the comments will be verified. The results will be discussed during the briefing session with the aim to have a common understanding on the assessment exercise and to achieve a coherent result.

On the 13 May, the Agency will organise a briefing session on remote during which all experts will be introduced to their respective roles and to the assessment procedures and tools designed to assist them in their assessment work. The outcomes of the quality check will be discussed.

4.3 Assessment on remote

The assessment of proposals submitted under the Erasmus Mundus Action 2 Call for Proposals (EACEA/38/12) takes place on remote.

In order to guarantee the efficient implementation of the assessment exercise from a qualitative, quantitative and timing perspective, the remote assessment requires the use of electronic assessment and communication tools and close collaboration between all parties involved (i.e. the independent experts, the lead experts and the Agency).

For their remote assessment work, experts will be provided with:

- an access to the Agency online assessment tool (see Section 7 below for further instructions). They will be able to access the applications allocated to them together with all its annexes, as well as the relevant electronic assessment grid;

- an assessment sheet model in word format;
- the name and contacts (email and telephone number) of their lead expert, their designated contact person(s) in the Agency, and, as from the beginning of the consensus discussion, of the second experts involved in the assessment of their proposals;
- a detailed timetable for completing their individual and draft consolidated assessments.

In order to facilitate the communication with the lead and second expert, experts are advised to use “**voice over IP**” (VOIP) applications – such as SKYPE¹ - that provide an efficient and free of charge communication tool through computers via a simple internet connection.

Because most experts may have to fulfil their normal professional/private activities during the assessment exercise, it is important that they provide their lead expert (during the whole assessment process) and second experts (during the consolidation phase) with **a clear indication of the periods during which they will be available for contacts and exchanges** in relation with the assessment exercise.

During their individual and consolidated assessments, **experts will be expected to follow precisely the detailed procedure and timetable provided to them.**

It is of crucial importance that the time schedule is adhered to by all persons concerned in order for the overall selection process to be completed by the beginning of July 2013 and the applicants informed of its results immediately after. Please note that unjustified delays in the delivery of the individual assessment may lead to a termination of the contractual relation between the Agency and the expert.

4.4 Individual Assessments

Experts are acting individually and independently. They do not discuss the proposals with their fellow experts when filling in the assessment forms. The experts record their individual opinions by using the on-line assessment tool. However, for security reasons, each expert is expected to start the assessment in a word document.

Experts will be asked to assess to what extent the elements covered by the award criteria have been addressed by the applicant partnership.

Experts should verify the coherence between the answers given to the award criteria and all the relevant sections of the application and its mandatory annexes.

Experts are not obliged to consult other sources of information than the application form and its mandatory annexes. They can consult other documents or sources of information provided by the applicant in order to crosscheck, verify or **confirm information provided in the application form but not to find new elements that failed to be addressed in it.**

The amount of text to be written per award criteria should be about 15-20 lines.

During this first phase, experts are expected to carry out the following activities for each of the proposals attributed to them using the online assessment tool.

- Check if there is no potential conflict of interest with any of their proposals. If this was the case, immediately inform the contact person(s) in the Agency who will allocate the corresponding proposal(s) to (an)other expert(s);
- Analyse the proposal against EM award criteria;

¹ You can login to Skype via the following link: <https://login.skype.com/account/login-form>

- Draft comments and recommendations on each criterion as well as on the application as a whole;
- Provide individual scores - from 0 to 5 – for each issue addressed under the relevant award criteria (the online tool will automatically provide the global score - from 0 to 100 - resulting from the sum of individual scores, weighted in accordance with the importance of the relevant award criteria);
- Send the individual assessment as word document to the lead expert and the contact persons at the Agency and await the lead expert's final approval for the immediate transfer and submission in the online assessment tool.
- Print, sign and provide to the Agency contact person(s), the signed assessment form during the consolidation discussion in Brussels.

4.5 Consensus discussion and consolidated assessment

Once the two individual assessments have been finalised and submitted with the on-line assessment tool, experts will be provided with the name of the second expert for each of the proposals assessed and can start their discussion. This process will start already during the assessment phase, however the formal consolidation will take place in the Agency during the meeting on 5 and 6 June. The Agency will arrange that the pair experts work on the same proposal in parallel. It is recommended that the experts communicate (via email, phone or VOIP) in order to exchange their individual assessment and discuss the application concerned. Before opening the consensus discussion on each individual proposal, the Agency, together with the lead experts will assess the coherency between the scores proposed by each of the experts.

The consensus discussion serves the purpose of assuring that the experts have a common understanding of all aspects of the proposals, and should serve the purpose of assuring that:

- The two experts have a common understanding of all aspects of the proposal;
- Their comments and scores are coherent, for each award criteria and globally.

The consensus discussion must aim at clarifying possible discrepancies and agree on a common score on each award criterion.

At the end of the consensus discussion two different situations can occur:

- If there is **not significant divergence** between the individual assessments the "expert one" will be able to access a consolidated form with the two individual assessments on the on-line tool. The two experts together are invited to revise the consolidated assessment by modifying and harmonising their comments and recommendations and confirm or amend the average scores. Although experts may use the arithmetical average of their scores for their consolidated assessment, they can also modify individual assessment scores in accordance with the agreement reached during the consensus discussion.

Expert 1 prepares the consolidated version in word, and sends it to the lead expert and the contact persons at the Agency. Once approved, expert 1 transfers the consolidated version to the assessment tool and keeps it as a draft. The validation of the assessment by expert one should only take place during the consolidation meeting in Brussels on 6 and 7 June.

Both experts will have, then, to sign the consolidated assessment form print-out and return it to the Agency.

- If there is a **significant divergence of more than 20 points** between the final score of the two individual assessments, the consensus discussion will serve to the purpose of consolidating the assessments in order to reach a consensus.
 - ✓ If both experts agreed on reducing the existing divergence, they must readjust the scoring and comments in the draft consolidated assessment form in agreement with the lead expert. Once the individual assessments have been submitted and validated, "expert one" (only) will be able to access a merged version of the two individual assessments on the on-line tool. The two experts together are invited to revise the merged assessment and modifying, if necessary, their comments, recommendations and scores.

Once the consensus discussion is finalised, the "expert one" will draft the consolidated assessment in word which will be verified by the lead expert and then be copied to the assessment tool by "expert one". The validation and submission will take place during the consolidation meeting in Brussels. The two experts will have, then, to sign the consolidated assessment form print-out and return it to the Agency.

- ✓ If **no common agreement** on reducing the scoring divergence can be reached, a third expert will be asked to assess the proposal. This will be indicated to the lead expert in due time and before the meeting in Brussels a third assessment will have to be done. When the third assessment is finalised, the expert who has given the middle final score will be act as "expert one" and he/she will have to submit once agreed with the lead expert and endorse the consolidated assessment (on the on-line consolidation form the 3 experts' comments will appear) in Brussels. The three experts will be asked to sign the on-line consolidated assessment print-out and return it to the Agency.

For reasons of availability of experts, resources and time, third assessments should represent the rare exception to the rule.

After this stage, the comments, recommendations and scores can no longer be changed.

The consolidated assessment must contain:

- A common agreed score for each award criterion; this score should generally lie between the respective original scores (included);
- An agreed set of comments under each award criterion;
- An agreed overall final score, calculated as the sum of the scores given to the single award criteria.

Comments and recommendations in the consolidated assessment form must be in line and not contradictory. Experts should make sure that all their comments and recommendations are **clear, objective, transparent, detailed, instructive, complete and in accordance with the scoring**. When assessing the proposals, the experts' must assure the quality, accuracy and coherence of their comments and recommendations which will be sent to the applicants.

4.6 Academic De-briefing

After the completion of the proposals' assessments by the experts, an academic debriefing will be held. The academic debriefing will be set per lot of countries. There will be then 18 main debriefings for EM Action 2 – Strand 1 and 4 main debriefing for EM Action 2 – Strand 2, each covering their relevant lots.

The aim of this meeting is:

- Provide an overview of the assessment outcomes to the Agency;
- Ensure coherence and consistency across the expert assessments;
- Elaborating arguments in favour or against ex-aequo proposals;
- Identify a provisional list of proposals ranked on the consolidated final ratings per lot.

As a result of these discussions, minor adjustment to the scorings may be agreed (up to maximum +/- 5 scores). Decisions to alter the score of proposals have to be documented in the minutes of the panel discussion. They are taken by a simple majority vote of experts present in each panel.

At the end of the debriefing, the Agency will establish the final ranking list of proposals for each lot taking into account possible score changes following the panel discussions. The shortlist of proposals and the corresponding background information (consolidated assessment, relevant statistics, proposals summary, etc.) will be sent to the Evaluation Committee in preparation of their meeting.

4.7 Guidance on scores

For each issue addressed under the individual award criteria, experts will be requested to provide a score that reflects their qualitative assessment of the issue concerned. When attributing a score to the various criteria, the experts should apply the following guidelines:

Score	Guidance
0 – the proposal fails to address the issue under examination or cannot be judged against the criterion due to missing or incomplete information	A score of 0 should be given for a criterion if the information detailed in the Call for Proposals would reasonably have been expected by the expert and is not present in the proposal. The specific information missing should be entered in the comments' section. It is not anticipated that the score of 0.5 will be given.
1 – poor	A score of 1.0 or 1.5 should be awarded if the proposal is of poor quality for the criterion in question. This may be because information is incomplete in the view of the expert, not clear or not convincing. Assessment comments for proposals in this category should indicate the areas where the proposal is lacking or is of poor quality and could be improved if subsequently re-submitted.
2 – fair	A score of 2.0 or 2.5 should be awarded where the content of the criterion in question is considered fair. There may be

	some strong and relevant points within the proposal, but there may also be weaknesses and in particular there may be no specific details brought out which singles out the proposal from others. Assessment comments for proposals awarded scores in this range should indicate the areas where the proposal could be improved if subsequently re-submitted.
3 – good	Scores of 3.0 or 3.5 should reflect that the proposal demonstrates overall good features with regard to the award criterion in question (even though it may contain some notable weaknesses) or does not contain features that set it apart from many other good proposals being assessed.
4 – very good	Scores of 4.0 or 4.5 should reflect that the proposal has identifiable features which demonstrate that the proposal is of a high quality with regard to the award criterion in question. There should be features that set the proposal apart from other good quality proposals within the assessment.
5 – excellent	In general, experts should not use the score of 5 unless they feel that the content of the proposal could not be improved. In cases where a score of 5 is awarded, the expert should feel confident that there would be a high level of consensus from all experts.

Each criterion has a relative weight. The score of each of the five award criteria will be calculated on the basis of the relative weight of the criterion. The total score will be a figure between 0 and 100. It will be automatically calculated on the basis of the individual scores provided by the expert.

5. The online application form (e-form)

The application form consists of the following components:

5.1 Application form

The application form has three parts as follows:

Part A: Identification of the applicant and other organisation(s) participating in the project

This part contains the name and address of the organisation and the contact details of the legal representative and contact person.

Part B: Organisation and activities

This part contains information on the status and type of organisation and short presentations on the key activities as well as the role of each organisation in the project.

Parts A and B must be completed separately for each organisation participating in the project.

Part C: Description of the project / activities

This part contains the project summary and a summary budget table.

5.2 Attachments

Project information (word document)

In part 1.A applicants must provide a description of their project in line with the requirements of the relevant Strand and lot as specified in the Call for Proposals. Applicants are also requested to refer to any previous experience in applying for or managing EM Action 2 partnerships. In part 1.B the applicant has to demonstrate the technical capacity of the partnership by presenting the expertise of the organisations involved in relation to the activities covered by the proposal. The key staff should be identified and their role in the management of the activities described. In part 2 the award criteria have to be addressed.

Declaration on Honour, Legal Entity, Bank Account Form (pdf, tiff, jpeg)

The legal representative of the applicant organisation should provide these three documents properly signed and stamped and in the correct format.

Budget (Excel document)

Applicants must provide a detailed estimation of the total eligible costs and the estimated income for the project.

Partnership statements (pdf, tiff, jpeg)

Each partner organisation must provide Letters of Endorsement and Declaration on Honour. Partnership statements are not requested for the applicant and associate members.

All parts of the eForm are mandatory.

6. Assessment of proposals

General remarks

The selection of projects is a competitive process based on the assessment of the quality of the proposals from the content and organisational point of view against the background of eligible activities and the priorities specified in the Call for Proposals.

Experts have to assess to what extent all the elements covered by the award criteria have been addressed by the applicant consortium. In order to perform this task experts analyse the specific answers provided to the award criteria, but also all the other information included in the application form and its mandatory annexes.

The following section underlines the specific aspects experts should consider when reading the application form and its annexes. The information provided should be coherent through all parts of the application.

Experts should look at the expertise of the participating organisation in carrying out the project proposal. Aspects such as presentation of the organisation in relation with the activities covered by the project; the role of the organisation in the project; skills and expertise of the key staff involved in the project management as well as previous experience are crucial elements when assessing the solidity, reliability and sustainability potential of the partnership.

There should be a list of projects/activities implemented by the partnership organisations in relation with the proposal (title, duration, funding programme, partners involved).

The project information contains some quantitative elements linked to proposed project proposals, as well as a summary of it. The experts have to pay attention to:

- **Coverage in non-EU countries:** the applicants are required to provide information on the geographical areas where the home and host institution are located. It is very important especially to know whether the home institutions are in less developed areas, considering that for some lots it is an eligibility requirement (for example for Latin America, Russia and India). The coverage in non-EU countries is linked with the impact that the projects have in terms of development.
- **Regional coverage in non-EU countries:** proposals should demonstrate to which extent their partnership will foster regional cooperation among the non-EU country institutions and beyond that the promotion to Target group 2 and Target group 3 applicants (in case of EMA2-Strand 1). The EU Delegations in the respective non-EU countries are also requested to provide their feedback on the relevance in this respect.
- **Indicative distribution of individual mobility in the respective annual mobility cohort:** the applicants have to indicate the number of the different type of mobility per cohort. The maximum project duration is 48 months. Depending on the length and organization of mobility, mobility can be organised in three different cohorts. It should be assessed how the distribution is organized among the three cohorts. Also it needs to be verified that the mobility is implemented within the eligibility period.

- **Thematic fields covered by individual mobility:** the applicants are required to provide information on the thematic fields that each institution has expertise and is interested to send /host mobility. Please bear in mind that the thematic fields are defined for each lot and reflect the needs of non-EU countries. The applicants are not required to address all the thematic fields defined for the lot.
- **Number of individual mobility activities foreseen and distribution of mobility per type:** the applicants are required to provide information by country. For some of the lots it is an eligibility requirement to fulfil certain quota of mobility per country. It is a very important element to take this into consideration in order to see how the mobility is allocated among the partner countries/institutions. The distribution of type of mobility must be in compliance with the percentage indicated in the Guidelines to the Call for proposals and the Programme Guide in each individual window or lot.

With regard to the technical capacity experts will have to pay attention to the relevant expertise of the partnership to implement the activities and to consider their experience in managing cooperation projects of this size. There should be a list of projects/activities implemented by the partnership organisations in relation with the proposal (title, duration, funding programme, partners involved). Comments should be provided whether past experience is taken into account and how the know-how is shared with less experienced partners.

6.1. Award criteria and timetable for the implementation of the project activities

The award criteria allow evaluating the quality of the proposals submitted in relation to the objectives and priorities set so that grants are awarded to actions which maximise the overall effectiveness of the Call for proposals. They allow the selection of proposals which comply with the objectives and priorities of this Call for proposals and which guarantee the visibility of the Community funding.

According to the Call for proposals there are a number of conditions with regard to the timetable which needs to be respected like the maximum project duration, the duration per type of mobility, the start of mobility etc. Experts have to pay attention that all formal requirements are fulfilled in the planning.

The mobility needs to fall within the maximum project duration.

If indicated, the call for applicants to participate in an individual mobility needs to remain open minimum 45 days after publication.

The organization of students' mobility can be organized in three cohorts:

- First cohort – the mobility starts as of September 2013. The latest mobility start date for the first cohort is 31 December 2014.
- Second cohort – the mobility starts as of September 2014. The latest mobility start date for the first cohort is 31 December 2015.
- Third cohort – the mobility starts as of September 2015. The latest mobility start date for the first cohort is 31 December 2016.

Staff mobility may start later any time during the eligibility period and must be finalized before the end of the eligibility period, as all other mobility.

The duration per mobility type needs to be respected. The duration of mobility is an important element that is defined for each type of mobility. It is important to see how the applicants have combined "degree-seeking mobility" with "credit-seeking" or short-term mobility. The duration of the mobility has an impact as well on the process of recognition (recognition of period of study, diploma etc).

In addition, the type and frequency of partnership meetings / working groups should be considered. The timing and type of meetings should allow a smooth organisation of the mobility.

6.1.2 Erasmus Mundus Action 2 - Strand 1

1. Relevance (25%)
<p>Under this criterion applicants need to state the relevance of their proposal in relation with the EMA2-STRAND1 objectives (section 6.1), and how the expected results contribute to fulfil the requirements defined in the respective Guidelines to the Call for proposals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The potential of the proposal to foster institutional cooperation, to develop higher education teaching and learning capacity and to build the management capacity of HEIs in the non-EU countries, particularly in those with limited or no experience in Action 2;</i> • <i>The particular needs and constraints of the targeted groups and country/countries;</i> • <i>The thematic needs and how they fit into the development strategies of the non-EU countries involved;</i> • <i>Expected impact on the non-EU countries participating institutions;</i> • <i>Cross cutting issues such as: equal opportunities, gender balance, social equity and brain-drain prevention, etc.</i> • <i>The added value of the new proposal in comparison to on-going projects in the region whether it is and Action 2 or similar programme (if applicable)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The answers to these questions should provide clear, concrete, exemplified justifications of the proposal from both the academic and structure points of view. Based on a needs' analysis of different target groups (students and staff) and needs of countries, the applicant should clearly explain how the project fits into the development strategies for the countries involved, how it will contribute to build management capacity for the non-EU country institutions (i.e. for the HEIs which do not have international mobility experience etc.). - The project can focus in one or more thematic fields identified for the lot concerned. The experts should assess how the choice to focus the project in one or more thematic fields is justified from the academic point of view and whether it is coherent with the description in other parts of the application in particular the needs' analysis. - Regarding the cross cutting issues, experts should assess the strategy and the concrete measures that the applicant will put in place in order to comply with the requirements of the Call. - In case of a proposal which is based on past experience, the applicant has to describe lessons learnt, experiences made and should demonstrate the added value of the new proposal. Earlier achievements and developments should be described to evaluate the evolution of a proposal.

2. Quality (65 %)

Under this criterion applicant needs to explain the measures undertaken to ensure a high quality organisation and implementation of the mobility. It will focus on the expertise of the partnership proposed to achieve the project's objectives, strategies/procedures and activities in order to organise and implement the mobility, the services and facilities offered to enrolled students as well as to the way the partnership intend to ensure an efficient participation of these students in the mobility scheme.

2.1 Partnership composition and cooperation mechanisms (20%)

Under this criterion applicants needs to explain their cooperation mechanisms, the involvement of partners in the project, their operational capacity and expertise in order to achieve the project's objective.

- *The partnership's impact in terms of diversity (partners and associates members, geographical coverage, or inclusion of peripheral as well as higher education institutions in larger cities), applicant and partners' experience in the management of international cooperation projects, their technical and operational expertise and complementarities;*
 - *The inclusion of European and non-EU countries HEIs with limited or no experience in Action 2 in order to enlarge the cooperation scope and enrich future impact in the targeted countries and in the region.*
 - *The partners' level of involvement and participation in the project (visibility strategy, selection procedure for students and staff mobility, balanced distribution of tasks and the mobility activities among the partners);*
 - *The role and contribution of the non-EU country HEI in joint coordination and management tasks of the partnership relating to academic, administrative and financial aspects. The supporting role of this institution for the other non-EU country partners in the region, to enhance international cooperation.*
 - *The quality and reliability of the cooperation mechanisms defined between the participating organisations, and the joint anticipated quality assurance measures in place to monitor to project development (indicators and benchmark);*
 - *The quality of the plans for communication and cooperation mechanisms (Memorandum of Understanding);*
- The experts should assess the degree of the involvement and commitment of the partner institutions during the complete project duration as well as the quality and solidity of the management and monitoring measures envisaged to ensure a good functioning of the project.
 - The experts should assess if the applicant has ensured a diversity of partners (partners and associates members, geographical coverage, or inclusion of peripheral as well as higher education institutions in larger cities), as well as the degree of operational expertise of the partnership as a whole to run such a partnership. The role of associates and other actors should be assessed as well, if applicable.
 - The completion (detailed description) of the future memorandum of understanding must be taken into account in the assessment of this criterion.
 - It is not required to attach an example of the Memorandum of Understanding. The proposal should rather describe that all relevant mobility management aspects are covered.
 - The experts should comment if reference is made to previous experience in managing EM Action 2 (former EM ECW) partnerships or other EU funded programmes (lessons learnt).

2.2 Organisation and implementation of the mobility (25%)

Under this criterion the applicants need to focus on the way the partnership intends to manage the mobility in order to ensure its efficient and effective implementation. The applicants have to provide concrete measures to attract the appropriate number of students and staff, methodology to ensure impartial and transparent selection process, agreed mechanisms for ensuring recognition of the period of study abroad, evaluation strategy etc. The proposed mobility activities will be implemented, and the proposed results and objectives will be achieved throughout a cost/effectiveness balance.

- *Efficient use of mobility periods – making best use of time abroad for maximum benefit. Appropriateness of project outcomes and related activities;*
 - *Strategy and concrete measures proposed to ensure visibility, awareness raising, project promotion, etc.;*
 - *Measures taken to attract the appropriate number and the correct profile of students/staff;*
 - *Adequate matching between the thematic expertise of the partner institutions and the profile of the students/staff;*
 - *Methodology and the criteria set to guarantee an impartial and transparent selection process based on merit and equal opportunities as well as standards agreed by the partnership for joint application, selection, admission and exams procedures;*
 - *Proper implementation of the mobility scheme amongst the partner institutions (i.e. the proposal fulfils requirements in terms of numbers and types of mobility activities, balance of the mobility flows proposed among the partners);*
 - *The agreed mechanisms for students' examination and study recognition and/or transfer of credits (use of ECTS or other equivalent mechanism, use of a Diploma Supplement, etc.);*
 - *The anticipated quality assurance and evaluation strategy envisaged by the partnership in order to ensure an efficient monitoring of the project course (from both an academic and an administrative point of view);*
 - *Concrete measures proposed by the partnership to address cross-cutting issues such as equal opportunities, gender balance, participation of economically disadvantaged people, disabled persons, brain-drain prevention, etc.*
-
- Experts should base their assessment on the variety and detailed description of the information and promotion channels proposed (institutional, national, websites, conference, fairs etc). The experts should assess the promotion strategy in order to ensure participation in the mobility of students from TG 2 and TG 3.
 - The involvement of students from TG 2 should be commented in particular in view of a wider participation of the countries involved in the programme.
 - The experts should assess the strategy and mechanisms put in place in order to ensure the recognition of study periods of short term and full seeking degree mobility.
 - The experts should assess if the distribution of mobilities foreseen among the partners is done according to the capacity to host students and academic offers.
 - The experts should assess the mechanisms put in place in order to ensure a transparent, impartial and objective selection process based on merit and equal opportunities. The experts should comment if other actors like Ministries or other governmental bodies etc. are consulted or involved.

2.3 Student's / staff facilities and follow-up (20%)

Particular attention will be paid under this criterion to the services and facilities offered to enrolled students and staff as well as to the way the partnership intends to ensure efficient participation of these students and staff in the partnership's activities.

- *Student agreement clearly defining the mutual rights, obligations and responsibilities of the participant and the partnership concerning academic, financial and administrative aspects of the mobility scheme;*
 - *Learning agreement describing the programme of study abroad and how its existence facilitates academic recognition;*
 - *Practical arrangements for the reception of incoming students and scholars in the host institution in particular the assistance for obtaining visa, administrative support, housing facilities, languages courses, support for visa/ residence permit, etc.;*
 - *Integration of academic staff in the study programme and relevance of training plans for administrative staff.*
- The hosting institutions must guarantee a high level of support and assistance to the participants (preparation, implementation and follow-up of mobility).
 - The experts have to assess the level of information and assistance that the partnership will provide to candidates and selected students and staff in order to address all issues.
 - For students and staff the partnerships are obliged to design agreements that cover precisely the rights and obligations from both parties (the partnership and the individual students/staff) during the involvement in the course. Experts should assess the level of development and coverage of these agreements.
 - The learning agreement is the main document for facilitating recognition. The learning agreement must be signed by the home/host institutions and the student. The experts should assess the level of development of this document and comment whether the document is considered to be signed by the responsible actors.

3. Sustainability (10%)

Under this criterion the applicant needs to demonstrate how the partnership will ensure the appropriate dissemination and exploitation of project's results, as well as the impact and sustainability of these results in the long term (financially, institutionally) beyond the funding period.

- Relevant activities to be pursued and outputs to be maintained or developed after the end of the European Commission funding;
- Impact on targeted groups at institutional level including recognition of studies among partners, creation of international cooperation cells in non-EU countries;
- Tangible impact, multiplier-effects and plan for capitalisation of the project results and dissemination activities in Europe and non-EU countries.

Maximum total 100%

6.1.3

Erasmus Mundus Action 2 - Strand 2

1. Relevance (25%)
<p>Under this criterion applicants need to state the relevance of their proposal in relation with the EMA2-STRAND2 objectives (section 6.2), and how the expected results contribute to fulfil the requirements defined in the respective Guidelines to the Call for proposals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>The geographical coverage of the partnership;</i>• <i>The potential of the proposal to contribute in strengthening the exchange of good practice and innovation in the relevant fields of study, especially in HEIs with limited or no experience in Action 2</i>• <i>The significance of the project for the relationship between European Union and the non-EU countries/territories (see thematic fields of the respective Guidelines to the Call for proposals).</i>
2. Contribution to excellence (25%)
<p>Under this criterion applicants should demonstrate from an academic and institutional point of view that they have the potential to contribute to the excellence, innovation by transfer of knowledge and know how.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>The project contribution to educational quality, excellence and transfer of knowledge;</i>• <i>The potential to foster institutional cooperation;</i>• <i>The potential to develop higher education teaching and learning capacity of students and researchers;</i>• <i>A sound strategy for covering different thematic fields and the impact on the non-EU country participating institutions.</i>
3. Quality (50%)
<p>Under this criterion the applicant needs to explain the measures undertaken to ensure a qualitative organisation and implementation of the mobility. It will focus on the expertise of the partnership proposed to achieve the project's objectives, strategies/procedures and activities in order to organise and implement the mobility, the services and facilities offered to accepted students and staff as well as the way the partnership intends to ensure efficient participation of these students and staff in the mobility scheme.</p>
3.1 Partnership composition and cooperation mechanisms (15%)
<p>Under this criterion applicants needs to explain their cooperation mechanisms, the involvement of partners in the project, their operational capacity and expertise in order to achieve the project's objective.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>The partnership in terms of diversity (partners and associates members), applicant and partners' operational capacity and their experience in the management of international projects;</i>• <i>The inclusion of European and non-EU countries HEIs with limited or no experience in Action</i>

2 in order to enlarge the cooperation, exchange of experience and enrich future impact in the fields chosen and countries/regions involved;

- *The partners' level of involvement and participation in the project (visibility strategy, selection procedure for students and staff, mobility distribution of tasks among the partners and the distribution of the mobility activities among the partners);*
 - *The quality and reliability of the cooperation mechanisms defined between the participating organisations and the joint anticipated quality assurance measures in place to monitor to project development (indicators and benchmark);*
 - *The quality of the plans for communication and cooperation mechanisms (Memorandum of Understanding).*
- The experts should assess the degree of the involvement and commitment of the partner institutions during the complete project duration as well as the quality and solidity of the management and monitoring measures envisaged to ensure a good functioning of the project.
 - The experts should assess if the applicant has ensured a diversity of partners (partners and associates members, geographical coverage). The role of associates and other actors should be assessed as well, if applicable.
 - The completion (detailed description) of the future memorandum of understanding must be taken into account in the assessment of this criterion. It is not required that a memorandum of understanding is attached but it should be well described.
 - The experts should comment if reference is made to previous experience in managing EM Action 2 partnerships or other EU funded programmes (lessons learnt).

3.2 Organisation and implementation of the mobility (20%)

Under this criterion the applicants need to focus on the way the partnership intends to manage the mobility in order to ensure its efficient and effective implementation. The applicants have to provide concrete measures to attract the appropriate number of students and staff, methodology to ensure impartial and transparent selection process, agreed mechanisms for ensuring recognition of the period of study abroad, evaluation strategy etc.

- *Adequate implementation of the mobility scheme among the partner institutions (i.e. the proposal fulfil requirements in terms of numbers, types of mobility activities, balance of the mobility flows proposed among the partners);*
- *Strategy and concrete measures proposed to ensure visibility, awareness, promotion of the mobility scheme;*
- *Measures to attract the appropriate number and adequate profile of individual students and staff*
- *Measures to ensure a balanced distribution of mobility amongst the project's partners and also the respects the profile and competencies*
- *Methodology and criteria set to guarantee an impartial and transparent selection process based on merit and equal opportunities as well as standards agreed by the partnership for joint application, selection, admission and exams procedures;*
- *Mechanisms for students examination and study credits recognition and transfer (use of ECTS or other equivalent mechanism, use of a Diploma Supplement, etc.);*
- *The anticipated quality assurance and evaluation strategy envisaged by the partnership in order to ensure an efficient monitoring of the project (both from an academic and an administrative points of view);*
- *Issues of project's sustainability beyond the contractual period;*
- *The impact on the targeted groups at an institutional level including the recognition of studies among partners;*

- *Tangible impact, multiplier-effects and plan for capitalisation of the project results and dissemination activities in Europe and partner countries.*

- Experts should base their assessment on the variety and detailed description of the information and promotion channels proposed (institutional, national, websites, conference, fairs etc).
- The experts should assess the strategy and mechanisms put in place in order to ensure the recognition of study periods.
- The experts should assess if the distribution of mobilities foreseen among the partners is done according to the capacity to host students and academic offers.
- The experts should assess the mechanisms put in place in order to ensure a transparent, impartial and objective selection process based on merit and equal opportunities.

3.3 Student / staff facilities and follow-up (15%)

Particular attention will be paid under this criterion to the services and facilities offered to enrolled students and staff as well as to the way the partnership intends to ensure efficient participation of these students and staff in the partnership's activities.

- *Student agreement clearly defining the mutual rights, obligations and responsibilities of the student and the partnership. This agreement should deal with academic, financial and administrative aspects of the student's participation in the mobility scheme;*
 - *Learning agreement describing the programme of study abroad and how this facilitates full academic recognition;*
 - *The practical arrangements such as assistance for obtaining visa, administrative support, housing facilities, languages courses, support for visa/ residence permit, etc.;*
 - *Integration of academic staff in the study programme and appropriateness of training plans for administrative staff.*
-
- The hosting institutions must guarantee a high level of support and assistance to the participants (preparation, implementation and follow-up of mobility).
 - The experts have to assess the level of information and assistance that the partnership will provide to candidates and selected students and staff in order to address all issues.
 - For students and staff the partnerships are obliged to design agreements that cover precisely the rights and obligations from both parties (the partnership and the individual students/staff) during the involvement in the course. Experts should assess the level of development and coverage of these agreements.
 - The learning agreement is the main document for facilitating recognition. The learning agreement must be signed by the home/host institutions and the student. The experts should assess the level of development of this document and comment whether the document is considered to be signed by the responsible actors.

Maximum total 100%

7. The online Assessment Tool

General remarks

Specific instructions on the way to complete the on-line assessment tool will be provided to the experts in the context of the briefing organised at the beginning of the assessment period. At the end of the assessment exercise, experts must print, sign and date the final version of their assessment forms. The signed forms must be handed over to the Agency representatives for audit purposes.

6.1 Accessing individual proposals

After logging in to the tool, experts will find the list of proposals that have been allocated to them. For each of the proposals the list identifies:

- The "type of assessment", i.e. "Expert 1", "Expert 2" or "consolidation"²
- The proposals' reference number
- The decision proposed by the expert
- The assessment submission date
- A hyperlink named "**assess**" that opens the individual assessment screens for the proposals concerned.

6.2 General screen

The "**General**" screen includes

- Some key features of the proposals such as the project title, project legal representative and project coordinator, the expert's name, expert decision, the global scoring, the technical capacity decision and comments.
- A menu displayed on the left hand side of the screen that gives access to the other sections of the assessment tool.

The **Expert decision** provides the experts with 3 different options, "Highly Recommended / Good quality", "Recommended / Adequate quality" and "Not Recommended / Weak quality". In principle each of these options should correspond to a range in the experts score, i.e.

75-100	Highly recommended / Good quality
50-74,9	Recommended / Adequate quality
< 50	Not recommended / Weak quality

Usually a proposal that has received less than 50 scores should not be recommended for selection.

² The "consolidation" assessment will only be displayed to the experts playing the role of "expert 1" and after the submission of the individual assessment by both experts concerned

Comments and recommendations should relate to the experts' assessment of the strengths, weaknesses and potential of the proposal, relative to the award criteria. All aspects of the proposal, relative to the award criteria, should be commented on.

The *Technical Capacity* decision and, if applicable, comment, refers to the capacity of the applicant partnership to implement the proposal with the expected levels of excellence. In principle, this decision will almost always be "Accepted". However, if the expert has doubts about the technical capacity of the applicant consortium, he/she should select the option "Rejected" or "Clarification" and provide a comment in the comment box just below.

6.3 Typology screen

Only if the proposal addresses directly and concretely one or more of the issues identified under the "Typology" screen -, experts will have to tick the relevant box(es). On the basis of this information, the Agency will be able to draw up statistics on the identified number of projects covering the specific listed themes.

6.4 Scoring screen

The "**Scoring**" screen is the screen in which applicants will have to record their comments and recommendations for each of the five award criteria. They will also have to provide a score for each of the issues addressed under each award criterion.

6.5 Global comments screen

In order for the experts' comments to be as instructive and complete as possible, **it is recommended that the text to be written in the global comments screen is about 15 lines**. Global comments and recommendations should relate to the experts' assessment of the application as a whole and focus on strengths, weaknesses and potential of the proposal. They should provide the applicant with a summary of the global evaluation of the proposal.

6.6 Agency Comments screen

In addition to the comments and recommendations that will be communicated to the applicant, the online assessment tool contains also a specific screen where experts can bring **to the attention of the Agency, Experts panels and/or Evaluation Committee** issues or aspects of the application that are not necessarily linked to the individual award criteria but may prove useful during the selection process or the monitoring of the project, once approved.

These comments will not be included in the selection notification letter sent to all applicants.

6.7 Attached documents screen

Through this screen, experts will be able to download the electronic version of the application form together with its mandatory annexes.

6.8 Project List

This hyperlink will bring the expert back to the list of proposals allocated to him/her.