

**Selection May – June 2013**

# **EXPERT ASSESSMENT MANUAL**

**for the assessment of proposals EACEA 38/12 for**

**Erasmus Mundus  
Promotion of European Higher  
Education  
(Action 3)**

**submitted under the**

**Erasmus Mundus programme 2009-2013**

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## **Introduction**

The aim of the Erasmus Mundus 2009-2013 programme is to promote European higher education, to help improve and enhance the career prospects of students and to promote intercultural understanding through cooperation with third countries, in accordance with EU external policy objectives in order to contribute to the sustainable development of third countries in the field of higher education.

In this context, the Erasmus Mundus Promotion of European Higher Education Projects (Action 3) relate to the international dimension of all aspects of higher education such as promotion, accessibility, quality assurance, credit recognition and contribute to the promotion and awareness raising of the European higher education sector as well as the relevant cooperation programmes and funding schemes at institutional and individual level.

This manual describes the assessment process in detail and the tasks the experts are invited to perform. It is prepared on the basis of the Erasmus Mundus 2009-2013 Programme Guide, the Erasmus Mundus Call for Proposals EACEA/38/12, the Action 3 application form and Administrative & Financial Handbook.

## **1. Overview of the Selection Procedure**

### **1.1. 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 2009-2013 Programme Guide.

The deadline to submit proposals electronically (eForm) under the Call for Proposals EACEA/38/12 was 15 April 2013.

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 projects must start their activities in Autumn 2013 and will have a duration of minimum 12 and maximum 36 months.

### **1.2. Selection Procedure**

Proposals are selected through a competitive system based on their quality from the content and organisational points of view and are all subject to the same application rules. The evaluation of the applications submitted under this call will undergo a six-step selection procedure:

<b>Step 1. →</b>	Following the online application submission an acknowledgement of receipt will be sent by the Education Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (hereafter referred to as "the Agency").
<b>Step 2. →</b>	Eligibility check and Selection Criteria assessment (financial capacity) performed by the Agency with the objective to ensure that the eligibility requirements mentioned under section 3.1 and section 7.2, as well as the Selection Criteria under section 7.3 of the Programme Guide are respected.
<b>Step 3. →</b>	Selection Criteria assessment (technical capacity) and Quality assessment against relevant Award Criteria by independent experts including individual assessments, consolidated assessments and panel discussions.
<b>Step 4. →</b>	On the basis of the outcomes of the experts' assessments and panel discussions, the Evaluation Committee chaired by the Agency and composed of staff members from the Agency and the European Commission Directorate-General for Education and Culture will prepare a draft decision on the proposals to be selected.
<b>Step 5. →</b>	Selection decision by the Agency's Authorising Officer (Agency's Director) based on the recommendations of the Evaluation Committee.
<b>Step 6. →</b>	Applicants are notified by the Agency about the selection decision. Experts' assessments are provided to all applicants as part of this notification.

## 2. Experts' role and obligations

### 2.1. Role of the Independent Experts

Independent experts have been appointed to assist the Agency in the assessment of proposals for the Erasmus Mundus "Promotion of European Higher Education" projects (Action 3) submitted under the Call for Proposals EACEA/38/12. The assessment of the proposals will take place on remote.

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](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/about/call_experts/call_experts_2007_en.php)).

This Manual describes the assessment process in practical detail and the tasks experts are invited to perform. Experts must have a perfect understanding of the relevant reference documents – among them the Erasmus Mundus 2009-2013 Programme Guide, the Call for Proposals EACEA/38/12, the Action 3 online application form (eForm) and Administrative & Financial Handbook as well as the present manual in order to perform their assessment work efficiently.

The role of the independent experts is twofold:

- to provide the Agency with an opinion on the proposals which have been submitted;
- to give comments and recommendations to the applicants.

Experts are requested to sign a declaration to certify that they have had no conflict of interest when assessing the proposals assigned to them.

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. The comments will be communicated without revealing the experts' names.

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. For technical questions about the online assessment tool or content related questions about the Erasmus Mundus programme as well as for difficult cases, experts may communicate with the Agency.

## **2.2. Role of the Lead experts**

Two experts with a longstanding experience in assessing European cooperation projects will be appointed as "lead expert" and will monitor the quality and the progress of the assessments performed.

Although lead experts may be asked to assess a limited number of proposals themselves, their main role will be to provide quality assurance, guarantee coherence and monitor 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 coordination with the experts in their group, as well as with their contact person(s) in 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 necessary, the lead experts will organise or carry out third assessments (if no consensus has been reached).

## **2.3. Experts' obligations**

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

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 divulged 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. All the received applications must be deleted by each expert at the end of the assessment exercise.

Participants in the selection process are bound to the **objectivity and impartiality**, which

means that they should never be guided by personal or national interest or political pressure. Should that not be the case, the expert will be removed from the exercise.

Experts should check that they have no potential conflict of interest in any of the proposals they are invited to assess. Examples of conflicts 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 personally related to the applicant (family or friendship relation) or is related to the applicant's work (professional relation); 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 Agency's staff members without delay, so that the proposals concerned can be allocated to another expert.

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 another expert.

Given that the 2013 EM Action 3 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.

## **3. Assessment procedure**

### **3.1. 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 the content of the proposals with the experts' professional background, work experience and language knowledge.

The proposals will be assessed against a set of award criteria listed in the Programme Guide and the Call for Proposals (see Section 6). 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.

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 further responsible for drafting and submitting the consolidated assessment on behalf of both experts.

The table below shows the key dates of the assessment procedure:

	<b>WHEN</b>	<b>WHAT</b>
<b>Briefing of the experts</b>	On remote at the briefing session on 30 April	Participation to the briefing session on remote Preparation of the assessment exercise by reading the relevant material (EM Programme Guide, Call for Proposals, Expert Assessment Manual, etc)
<b>Individual assessment phase</b>	02/05 to 21/05 on remote	Individual assessments and draft consolidated versions by external experts
<b>Consensus discussion and draft consolidation phase</b>	22-28/05 on remote for all experts and lead experts	Consensus discussions and drafting of the consolidation assessment by experts 1 and 2
<b>Final Consolidation / Panel / Debriefing</b>	04/06-05/06 at the Agency for all experts and lead experts	Finalisation and submission of consolidated assessments Debriefing

### 3.2 Briefing of the experts

On 30 of April 2013, the Agency organises a briefing session using a web-based presentation with a chat. During this session all experts are introduced to their respective roles, the assessment procedures and the tools designed to assist them in their assessment work.

All experts selected to assess 2013 EM Action 3 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 Erasmus Mundus 2009-2013 Programme Guide and the EM Action 3 application documents in advance of the briefing session and the actual assessment phase (see relevant documentation in Section 4.3).

### 3.3. Assessment on remote

The assessment of proposals submitted under the Erasmus Mundus Call for Proposals EACEA/38/12 in the framework of Action 3 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, lead experts and the Agency).

For their remote assessment work experts will be provided with:

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

- an access to the Agency online assessment tool (see Section 8 below for further instructions) where they will be able to access the applications allocated to them together with all its annexes, as well as the relevant electronic assessment grid;

- 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 SKYPE<sup>1</sup> - 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 regular 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.

### **3.4. Individual Assessments**

During the assessment phase, experts are acting individually and independently. They do not discuss the proposals with their fellow experts. The experts record their individual assessments by using the online assessment tool (see Section 8). 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 in the proposal. They should verify the overall coherency between the answers given to the award criteria and all the relevant sections of the application and its attachments. Experts should be aware that all attachments of the eForm are mandatory.

As mentioned in section 3.1 experts are not obliged to consult other sources of information than the application form and its mandatory attachments. They can consult other documents or sources or information provided by the applicant in order to crosscheck or confirm information provided in the application form **but not to find new elements that failed to be addressed in it.**

Experts are expected to carry out the following activities for each of the proposals attributed to them using the online assessment tool:

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



- check that there is no potential conflict of interest with the proposal. If this is the case, immediately inform the contact person(s) in the Agency who will allocate the corresponding proposal to another expert;
- provide a judgment on the applicant's technical capacity against the correspondent selection criteria indicated in the Programme Guide;
- analyse the proposal against the Erasmus Mundus award criteria, as indicated in the Programme Guide;
- draft comments and recommendations on each criterion:
- provide individual scores per award criterion;
- draft comments and recommendations to the applicant on the proposal as a whole;
- draft comments and recommendations to the Agency, if applicable;

The global score (on a scale from 0 to 100) resulting from the sum of individual scores is calculated automatically by the online assessment tool.

### 3.5. Consensus Discussions

All proposals will be assessed by two experts. Once the two individual assessments of the same proposal have been finalised and endorsed in the online assessment tool, experts will be able to discuss the proposal. Thus, they will be provided with the name of the second expert for each of the proposals assessed and can start their discussion.

Generally speaking, this consensus discussion serves the purpose of assuring that the experts have a common understanding of all aspects of the proposal and that their comments and scores provided to each individual award criteria are coherent for each award criteria and globally. In this respect the consensus discussion must aim at clarifying possible discrepancies and agree on a common score on each award criterion.

The process of consensus discussions must start already during the assessment phase however the formal consolidation will take place in the Agency during the meeting on 4 and 5 June. For the consensus discussions taking place during the assessment phase, 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.

In order to prepare this consensus discussion both experts are expected to read carefully each other's assessment in comparison with their own assessment. The following two situations can occur during the consensus discussions:

- A. There is no significant divergence in scores and comments between the individual assessments. In this case both experts will endorse their individual assessment in the online assessment tool. "Expert 1" will be able to access a consolidated form with the two individual assessments on the online tool. The two experts will then work together in order to draft a consolidated assessment that includes the most relevant/appropriate elements of both individual assessments. They may for this purpose modify and harmonise 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 the individual assessment scores in accordance with the agreement reached during the consensus discussion.

Once the discussion is finalised, "Expert 1" prepares the consolidated version in a word document, transfers it to the assessment tool and keeps it as a draft. **The endorsement of the consolidated assessment by "expert 1" should only take place during the meeting in Brussels on 4 and 5 June, after the bilateral discussion with "Expert 2". Both experts will, then, sign the consolidated assessment form print-out and return it to the Agency.**

B. There is **a divergence of more than 20 points between the final scores** of the two individual assessments. In this case the consensus discussion will serve the purpose of clarifying the discrepancies/differences between the two assessments and reach a consensus. The following two situations can occur:

B.1: **If both experts agree on solving these differences and reducing the divergence accordingly** between their scores they will have to adapt their individual assessment and scoring in the draft consolidated assessment form on agreement with the lead expert. As from there the procedure described under A) above will apply.

B.2: **If no common agreement 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 act as "expert 1" and he/she should submit after consultation with the lead expert the draft consolidated version.** The comments of the two experts having the closest scores will appear on the draft online consolidated assessment form. The endorsement of the assessment form by the assigned "expert 1" should only take place during the consolidation meeting in Brussels on 4 and 5 June, after discussion with the two other experts. Only the two experts with the closest scores will, then, sign the consolidated assessment form 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.

When drafting a consolidated assessment for the proposals with a significant divergence in the scoring, the experts may verify whether specific aspects of the award criteria have been misunderstood or if a particular aspect of the proposal was overlooked during the individual assessment.

The consolidated assessment must contain:

- a common agreed score for each award criterion;
- 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;
- an agreed overall comment on the proposal as a whole;
- an agreed judgement on the applicant's technical capacity.

Experts should make sure that all their **comments are drafted with accuracy, care and courtesy to the applicant**. The comments must relate to the award criteria and should contain qualitative judgements. They should not be simple summaries of the proposal. **There must be coherence between the comments, the scoring and the selection recommendation**. Finally, the comments should be helpful and clear to all applicants. For successful proposals the comments should be useful for the project implementation and in the case of unsuccessful proposals, the comments should be useful to the applicant when preparing another proposal.

### **3.6. Panel Discussion**

All proposals scoring 70 points or above will be discussed by all experts in a panel discussion. The expert panel is chaired by an expert with longstanding experience in assessing European cooperation projects.

The purpose of the panel discussion is to ensure coherence and consistency across the expert assessments as well as to carry out an additional quality check on the proposals. As a result of the panel discussion, the panel can confirm the final score of the proposal or modify it by adding or deducting between 1 and 5 points. Decisions to alter the score of proposals have to be well justified and documented. They are taken by a simple majority vote of experts present in the panel.

The panel discussion will lead to a final score of each proposal discussed in the panel. The panel's proceedings will be laid down in the minutes which have to be signed by all present panel members.

### **3.7. Evaluation Committee**

On the basis of the experts' assessments the Evaluation Committee, chaired by the Agency and composed by Agency and Commission staff members, will present a recommendation to the Authorising Officer (the Agency Director) on the proposals to be selected.

The Evaluation Committee's recommendation will take into account the following criteria:

- the relative quality of a proposal in comparison with other proposals received (quality is the overriding factor for the selection recommendation) against the award criteria;
- the available budget.

### **3.8. Selection decision**

Following the recommendation of the Evaluation Committee the Authorising Officer adopts the selection decision.

## 4. Description of the Action and relevant documentation

*The description below consists of excerpts from the Call for Proposals EACEA/38/12 and the Erasmus Mundus 2009-2013 Programme Guide*

The Erasmus Mundus programme's overall aim is to promote European higher education, to help improve and enhance the career prospects of students and to promote intercultural understanding through cooperation with third countries, in accordance with EU external policy objectives in order to contribute to sustainable development of third countries in the field of higher education.

The Erasmus Mundus programme comprises three actions:

- **Action 1:** Implementation of Joint Programmes at Masters (Action 1A) and Doctorate (Action 1B) levels and award of individual scholarships/fellowships to participate in these programmes;
- **Action 2:** Erasmus Mundus Partnerships;
- **Action 3:** Promotion of European Higher Education.

### 4.1. Action 3 – Promotion of European Higher Education

Action 3 provides support to transnational initiatives, studies, projects, events and other activities that aim to enhance the attractiveness, profile, image and visibility of, and accessibility to, European higher education in the world. Action 3 activities relate to the international dimension of all aspects of higher education such as promotion, accessibility, quality assurance, credit recognition, recognition of European qualifications abroad and mutual recognition of qualifications with third countries, curriculum development, mobility, quality of services, etc.

Action 3 projects should contribute to the promotion and awareness raising of the European higher education sector as well as the relevant cooperation programmes and funding schemes, the dissemination of the programme's results and examples of good practice and the exploitation and mainstreaming of these results at institutional and individual level.

Action 3 activities can be implemented by mixed consortia of European and third-country organisations active in the field of higher education. Furthermore, they may take various forms (conferences, seminars, workshops, studies, analyses, pilot projects, prizes, international networks, production of material for publication, development of information, communication and technology tools) and may take place anywhere in the world.

**As specified in the call for proposals, projects must address one or more of the following priorities:**

- projects dealing with promotion of European higher education in certain geographical areas (notably eastern and southern neighbourhood countries including: Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, the

Republic of Moldavia, Morocco, The Palestinian Occupied Territory, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine).

- projects that aim to improve services for international students;
- projects addressing the international dimension of Quality Assurance;
- projects promoting the joint programmes towards students;
- projects promoting the joint programmes towards employers;
- projects aiming at creating better synergies between the EU policy dialogue with third countries and the cooperation projects supported by the European programmes in higher education.

#### **4.2. Other conditions**

As a general rule, Action 3 projects must have a clear European dimension and a wide geographical scope. In addition they must have a clear international (third-country dimension) and contribute to fostering intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding between cultures.

The applicants should ensure that the projects do not overlap with other European programmes in the field of higher education; projects falling primarily within the scope of other Community programmes (e.g. Lifelong Learning, Tempus, Youth in Action, Citizens for Europe, etc.) will not be funded.

Each proposal must have clear objectives responding to demonstrated needs, clearly defined outputs and expected outcomes and include a plan to ensure the sustainability of the project and its results beyond the period of funding. Projects may last between 12 and 36 months and begin their activities in Autumn 2013.

Grant applications must include a detailed estimated budget in which all prices are given in euro. Applicants from countries outside the euro zone must use the conversion rates published in the Official Journal of the European Union, series C, on the date of publication of the call for proposals EACEA/38/12.

The EU grant will not cover more than 75% of the eligible costs. The estimated budget for the action attached to the application must have revenue and expenditure in balance and show clearly the costs which are eligible for financing from the European budget. The applicant must indicate the sources and amounts of any other funding received or applied for in the same project.

#### **4.3 Relevant documentation**

The Erasmus Mundus 2009-2013 Programme Decision:

[http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus\\_mundus/programme/about\\_erasmus\\_mundus\\_en.php](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/programme/about_erasmus_mundus_en.php)

The Erasmus Mundus 2009-2013 Programme Guide which constitutes the basis for the submission and implementation of proposals. Chapters 1-3 are applicable to all programme actions, Chapter 7 is exclusively devoted to Action 3. The Programme Guide contains information on the award criteria. It is the experts' duty to master the relevant sections of this document and to refer to its specific elements when assessing proposals:

[http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus\\_mundus/programme/programme\\_guide\\_en.php](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/programme/programme_guide_en.php)

The Call for Proposals (EACEA/38/12) which contains a specific section on Action 3 (Section C) that describes the priorities that the proposals must address:

[http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus\\_mundus/funding/2013/call\\_eacea\\_38\\_12\\_en.php#action3](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/funding/2013/call_eacea_38_12_en.php#action3)

The Action 3 online application form (eForm) and its attachments:

[http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus\\_mundus/funding/2013/call\\_eacea\\_38\\_12\\_en.php#action3](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/funding/2013/call_eacea_38_12_en.php#action3)

The Administrative and Financial Handbook which contains further details on the financial and administrative management of projects (e.g. eligible costs):

[http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus\\_mundus/funding/2013/call\\_eacea\\_38\\_12\\_en.php#action3](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/funding/2013/call_eacea_38_12_en.php#action3)

The Frequently Asked Questions concerning Action 3:

[http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus\\_mundus/tools/faq\\_action\\_3\\_en.php](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/tools/faq_action_3_en.php)

## 5. Eligibility Criteria

Eligibility criteria are checked by the Agency during the assessment exercise. However, in case of doubts whether some of the following eligibility criteria are not fulfilled, experts are requested to inform the Agency (but should continue their assessment):

1. Applicants must use the official **online application form** (eForm) and submit it electronically by 15 April 2013);
2. The eForm as well as a paper copy of the application form sent to the Agency must be signed by the legal representative of the applying organisation;
3. All aspects of the eForm (including the four mandatory attachments) must be addressed;
4. The applicant/coordinating institution must be an organisation located in an eligible applicant country (i.e: a Member State of the European Union, an EEA-EFTA State).
5. The minimum consortium must consist of eligible participating organisations coming from at least 3 eligible applicant countries and from at least 1 third country.

## 6. Award Criteria

The selection of projects will be 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 (see section 2).

The project proposals will be assessed against the following award criteria:

- a) relevance of the project to the Erasmus Mundus Programme (25%);
- b) expected impact of the project to help enhance the attractiveness of European higher education worldwide (25%);
- c) arrangements for dissemination of project results and experiences, quality assurance and plans for sustainability and the long term exploitation of results (15%);
- d) consortium composition and co-operation mechanisms (15%);
- e) work plan and budget (20%).

## 7. Assessment of the award criteria Checklists & guidance on evaluating the proposals

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

### 7.1. Checklists

The following checklists are intended to assist experts arriving at a final score for each award criterion and to ensure that no element of an award criterion is overlooked. The scores for each award criterion must be registered in the online assessment tool together with the expert's comments.

Criterion 1 RELEVANCE OF THE PROJECT TO THE ERASMUS MUNDUS PROGRAMME						
<b>Check-list:</b>	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Weak	Poor
<u>Rationale</u> and <u>background</u> of the project including <u>needs analysis</u> from European and non-European point of view						
Value of the project and its importance to all partners involved						
Overall <u>aims</u> and specific <u>objectives</u>						
<u>Target group(s)</u> and categories of persons who will benefit directly or indirectly from the project						
<u>Main activities of the project and their relation to the objectives</u>						
<u>Project's European and international dimension</u>						
<b>Overall score out of 25:</b>						

Criterion 2 THE EXPECTED IMPACT OF THE PROJECT TO HELP ENHANCE THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION WORLDWIDE						
Check-list:	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Weak	Poor
Clear description of the methodology adopted to develop the project						
<u>Appropriateness and quality of outputs foreseen</u>						
<u>Impact</u> of the main activities and <u>outputs</u> on the <u>attractiveness</u> of European higher education and on the <u>target groups</u>						
<u>Impact of the main activities and outputs on the target groups</u>						
<b>Overall score out of 25:</b>						

Criterion 3 ARRANGEMENTS FOR DISSEMINATION OF PROJECT RESULTS AND EXPERIENCES, QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PLANS FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND THE LONG TERM EXPLOITATION OF RESULTS						
Check-list:	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Weak	Poor
<u>Means by which outputs will be tested and evaluated prior to dissemination</u>						
<u>Measures</u> proposed to ensure <u>visibility and worldwide promotion</u> of the project outputs and experiences						
Quality assurance mechanisms						
Measures proposed to reach the target groups						
<u>Details concerning the dates, venues, agenda and target groups of organised events</u>						
<u>Contribution of each participating organisation to the dissemination of project results</u>						
<u>Quality</u> of the <u>sustainability plan</u> for the long term exploitation of results (involving the participating organisations and other relevant organisations)						



**Overall score out of 15:**

Criterion 4 CONSORTIUM COMPOSITION AND COOPERATION MECHANISMS						
Check-list:	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Weak	Poor
<u>Consortium composition</u> in terms of <u>diversity</u> , demonstrated <u>expertise and complementarity</u>						
<u>Role and level of involvement of the coordinator and each partner to the project</u>						
<u>Quality and reliability of the cooperation mechanisms defined between the participating organisations</u>						
<u>Capacity, experience and expertise of the coordinator and the partners to carry out the tasks foreseen</u>						
<u>Purpose and specifications on subcontracting (if foreseen)</u>						
<b>Overall score out of 15:</b>						

Criterion 5 WORK PLAN AND BUDGET						
Check-list:	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Weak	Poor
<u>Relevance, feasibility and planning</u> of the activities in order to achieve the outputs / products foreseen as demonstrated in the detailed work plan						
Work plan contains details on the specific activities for each project stage, the outputs and results of each activity, the duration and resources each activity will require as well as which organisation will be responsible for each stage						
Coherence and <u>appropriateness of the budget</u> and <u>staffing</u> in relation to the <u>activities</u> planned and the expected <u>outputs</u>						
<b>Overall score out of 20:</b>						

## 7.2. Guidance on evaluating the proposals

Each award criterion has a relative weight as indicated earlier in this section. 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 experts.

For each issue addressed under the individual award criteria, experts are requested to provide a score that reflects their qualitative assessment. When evaluating the proposals and especially when attributing a score to the award criteria, the experts should apply the following guidelines:

Assessment	Guidance
Excellent	<p><b>'Excellent'</b> can be given to proposals that are outstanding on the criterion in question. In general, experts should not assess a criterion as <b>'excellent'</b> unless they feel that the content of the proposal could not be improved. In cases where <b>'excellent'</b> is awarded, the expert should feel confident that there would be a high level of consensus from all experts.</p> <p>According to the weight of the criterion the following scores are considered as 'excellent':</p> <p>15% → 14 – 15            20% → 19 – 20            25% → 23 – 25</p>
Very good	<p><b>'Very good'</b> should reflect that the criterion in question has identifiable features which demonstrate that it is of a high quality. There should be features that set the proposal apart from other good quality proposals within the assessment.</p> <p>According to the weight of the criterion the following scores are considered as 'very good':</p> <p>15% → 12 – 14            20% → 16 – 18            25% → 18 – 22</p>
Good	<p><b>'Good'</b> reflects 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 exceptional features that set it apart from many other good proposals being assessed.</p> <p>According to the weight of the criterion the following scores are considered as 'good':</p> <p>15% → 9 – 11            20% → 12 – 15            25% → 14 – 17</p>
Fair	<p>A criterion should be assessed as <b>'fair'</b> where the content of the criterion in question is at a level consistent with that routinely produced by the universities across Europe. There may be some strong and relevant points within the proposal,</p>

	<p>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.</p> <p>According to the weight of the criterion the following scores are considered as 'fair':</p> <p>15% → 6 – 8  20% → 8 – 11  25% → 10 – 13</p>
Weak	<p><b>'Weak'</b> should be awarded if the proposal is lacking 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 quality and could be improved if subsequently re-submitted.</p> <p>According to the weight of the criterion the following scores are considered as 'weak':</p> <p>15% → 3 – 5  20% → 4 – 7  25% → 6 – 9</p>
Poor	<p><b>'Poor'</b> 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.</p> <p>According to the weight of the criterion the following scores are considered as 'poor':</p> <p>15% → 0 – 2  20% → 0 – 3  25% → 0 – 5</p>

## 8. The online application form (eForm)

### 8.1 Contents of the application package

The Application Package consists of **the following components:**

#### **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 & 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

## **2. Attachments**

- Project information (word document)

Applicants must fill in the title and duration of the project and identify one or more of the 6 priorities of the Call for Proposals that are addressed in the project. Furthermore, applicants are requested to provide the full description of the project and address the award criteria as well as a short presentation of the organisations involved in the application, their expertise in relation to the activities covered by the proposal, the key staff involved in the project and their role in the management of the activities. No more CVs are attached to the eForm.

- 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.

➤ **All parts of the eForm are mandatory**

## 9. Using the online assessment tool

### General remarks

In order to perform their assessment work on the online assessment tool each expert will be given access via a personal login and a password. The link to the online assessment tool as well as specific instructions on how to use it will be provided to the experts in the context of the briefing meeting organised by the Agency at the beginning of the assessment period.

Through the assessment tool, experts will be able to:

- record, save and submit/endorse their individual and consolidated comments, recommendations and scores;
- print out their individual and consolidated assessment.

The sections below describe the most important features of the online assessment tool.

### 9.1. Structure of the online assessment tool

After accessing the online tool, experts will be able to view a list of projects allocated to them for assessment. A hyperlink named "Access" opens the individual screens for the proposals concerned.

### 9.2. General screen

In the first screen of the assessment form (General screen), experts will find some key features on the proposal such as its title and the contact details of the legal representative and project coordinator. In this screen experts should indicate their final decision on the proposal by clicking one of the appropriate boxes: "highly recommended"; "recommended", "not recommended".

In principle each of these options should correspond to a range in the experts score, i.e.

75-100	Highly recommended (very good quality)
60-75	Recommended (good quality)
< 60	Not recommended (weak quality)

The menu displayed on the left hand of the screen gives access to the other sections of the assessment form. This menu guides the experts through the necessary fields to be completed in order to finalise the assessment. There are "save" and "print" buttons at the bottom of each page. Experts are advised to save their work frequently in order to avoid any loss of data.

### 9.3. Assessment of the technical capacity of the applying consortium ("General" screen)

Experts should indicate their final decision on the technical capacity of the proposal by ticking the appropriate box that appears in the first screen of the assessment form (in the section "General"). There are the following possibilities:

- to accept;
- to reject (an explanation for rejection must be given);
- to request further clarifications (an explanation must be given).

In the case of "rejection" and "further clarification" the explanation must be provided in the box on "Technical Capacity Comment". There is also a possibility to insert an additional comment on the technical capacity in this box.

If the documents are missing in the online application (eForm) please contact the Agency.

#### **9.4. Assessment of the typology of the proposal ("Typology" screen)**

Experts are advised to start their assessment in the "Typology" screen. Under this section, experts must indicate whether the proposal addresses any of the priorities of the Call for Proposals. Experts can select more than one Priority according to the information provided in the proposal. They are further invited to indicate whether the topic of the proposal is related to a "European Year" or touches upon aspects of "equal opportunities". 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.

#### **9.5. Assessment of the proposal against the award criteria ("Scoring" screen)**

Under the section "scoring", experts should indicate their score for each of the award criteria and insert a relevant comment. Their scoring must be a full or half point from 0 to 15 or 20 or 25 depending on the relative weight of each award criterion. The scores must be justified and the comments should be consistent with the score given for each criterion. There need to be comments on each award criterion (see Section 7 for guidance).

#### **9.6. Global comments to the applicants ("Overall comments" screen)**

In this section, experts should write their overall comments about the proposal. Comments should relate to the experts' assessment of the strengths, weaknesses and potential of the proposal, relative to the award criteria.

#### **9.7. Additional comments to the Agency ("Comments to the Agency" screen)**

The online assessment tool contains a comments section in which the experts will be able to bring to the attention of the Agency and /or Evaluation Committee issues or aspects of the application that may be used during the selection process or the monitoring of the project, once approved. The comments introduced in this section will not be communicated to the applicant.

### 9.8. Assessment Conclusion ("General" screen)

Experts should indicate their recommendation decision on the proposal by ticking the appropriate box that appears on the first screen of the assessment form ("General" screen). There are the following options: "highly recommended", "recommended" and "not recommended".

The expert decision must be in accordance with the total score given to the proposal and the comments of the experts. It is therefore advisable that experts insert their decision upon completion of the assessment of the proposal.

### 9.9. Scoring Summary ("General" screen)

The total score of the assessment appears on the first screen of the assessment form ("General") and is calculated automatically by the online tool. It is the total of the scores for the five award criteria. The total score will be a figure between 0 and 100.

*Example of an assessment:*

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Weight</b>
1. Relevance of the project to the Erasmus Mundus Programme	20	25%
2. Expected impact of the project to help enhance the attractiveness of European higher education worldwide	19	25%
3. Arrangements for dissemination of project results and experiences, quality assurance and plans for sustainability and the long term exploitation of results	10	15%
4. Consortium composition and cooperation mechanisms	12	15%
5. Work plan and budget	10	20%
<b>Total score</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 9.10. Endorsement of the proposal

The button "endorsement" that appears at the top of the screen in the assessment form performs an electronic submission of the assessment of the proposal.

A distinction should be made between:

- the endorsement of the individual assessment;
- the endorsement of the consolidated assessment.

The individual assessment has to be endorsed after the bilateral discussion, taking into account the procedure described in Section 3.5.

Following the endorsements of the two individual assessments the consolidated assessment form is generated by the online tool. The consolidated assessment will only be displayed to "expert 1". The indications "expert 1 comment" "expert 2 comment" that appear in the consolidated assessment should be deleted when preparing the final version of the consolidated assessment.

After the endorsement of the consolidated assessment the scores, comments and selection recommendations of the experts can not longer be modified.

The comments appearing in the consolidated assessment will be sent to the applicants together with the notification of the selection results. As already indicated, the comments should be drafted with care (see Section 2.3 and 3.4-3.5 for more details).

The experts' comments will be taken into accounts by the Evaluation Committee for the selection decision to be proposed to the Authorising Officer.

At the end of the assessment exercise, during the final consolidation and panel meeting in Brussels, experts should not forget to print, sign and date the final version of all their individual and consolidated assessment forms. The signed assessments must be handed over to the Agency representatives.