Erasmus Mundus Action 2 - Partnerships

EXPERT ASSESSMENT MANUAL
Selection September/October 2010

For the assessment of proposals submitted under the

Call for proposals EACEA 22/10
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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 third 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 Third Country institutions and a mobility scheme addressing student and academic exchanges.

EMA2-Strand1 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 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. It includes partnerships between European and third-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, 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 third countries, specially 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 third countries through increased mobility streams between the EU and third countries in accordance with the principles of equal opportunities and non-discrimination.

The EMA2-Strand 2 – partnerships with countries/territories covered by the ICI instrument, are not concerned by this Call for Proposals. 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 students, doctoral and post-doctoral candidates between the European Union and the third countries/territories 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 present Call for Proposals EACEA/22/10 concerns only EM A2 –Strand 2. The overall indicative amount available under the Call is EUR 15,2 million. 6 partnerships are expected to be funded aiming at a minimum number of mobility of 653 individuals. The geographical windows/lots concerned under this lot are lot 2 Egypt, lot 3-A Israel, lot 3-B occupied Palestinian Territory, lot 9 Central Asia and lot 10 Western Balkans.

### 2. Overview of the Selection Procedure

#### 2.1 Introduction

The 2010 Erasmus Mundus Call for Proposals EACEA/22/10 was officially published on 22 July 2010:


The call refers to the procedures and requirements described in the relevant sections of the Erasmus Mundus Programme Guide. The deadline to submit proposals under the Call for Proposals EACEA/22/10) was 15 October 2010.

The selection decision is expected to be taken in November 2010, following which all applicants will be informed about the results. Selected partnerships may start their activities as of 30 November 2010, 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 a seven-step selection procedure:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1.</th>
<th>Registration and acknowledgement of receipt by the Agency.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 2.</td>
<td>Eligibility check performed by the Agency and EU Delegations with the objective to ensure that the eligibility requirements mentioned under section, section 6.1.2a (for Action 2-Strand1) of the Programme Guide are respected. EU Delegations are also consulted also on the relevance of the project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3.</td>
<td>Assessment against relevant Award Criteria by independent experts including individual assessments, consolidated assessments and academic debriefing. The academic debriefing is attended by all experts and chaired by the Agency. Minutes of the debriefing have to be signed and approved by the lead experts and the Agency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 4.</td>
<td>Verification of the applicants and partners compliance with the Selection Criteria. 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. This also applies to any partner of the partnership.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 5.</td>
<td>The Evaluation Committee composed of representatives of various General Directorates of the Commission (External Relations, Enlargement, EuropeAid) and the Agency, will establish a list of partnerships to be proposed for funding as well as a reserve list per lot. All elements of step 2-4 are taken into account and 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 together with the established main and reserve list for decision on grant awards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 6.</td>
<td>The selection decision is based on: the relative high quality of the proposal in comparison with the other proposals received and the budget available. The selection decision is taken by the Authorising Officer (the Director of the Agency).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 7.</td>
<td>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.</td>
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</table>
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 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 EM Action 2 and presented in detail under 6.1.3 for Action 2 Strand 1 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

One expert with a longstanding experience in assessing European co-operation projects will be appointed as “lead expert”.


Although the lead expert may be asked to assess a limited number of proposals, his/her main role is 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, the lead expert works in close coordination with the experts, as well as with the contact person(s) of the Agency. During the consolidation phase in particular, the lead expert collaborates 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.

If necessary, the lead expert carries out third assessments (if no consensus has been reached). The lead expert co-chairs the Academic Debriefing, and finally assists 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. No documents or electronic data may be taken off the assessment premises. Any notes taken as a result of the experts’ work must be deposited with the Agency at the end of the assessment process. Phone calls during the working day are not allowed in the reading and meeting room in Brussels. 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).

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.

Finally, 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.

### 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.

**Key dates of the assessment procedure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Induction phase</th>
<th>25 October, a.m.</th>
<th>Briefing of experts and preparation of the assessment exercise</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual assessment phase</td>
<td>25 to 27 October</td>
<td>Individual assessment by external experts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consensus discussion and</td>
<td>27 October, p.m.</td>
<td>Consensus discussions and consolidated assessments by experts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consolidation phase</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 and 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic de-briefing</td>
<td>28 October, a.m.</td>
<td>General panel discussions and de-briefing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 4.2 Induction phase

All experts selected to assess 2010 EM Action 2 proposals under the call EACEA/22/10 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 and the EM Action 2 application documents in advance of the assessment exercise.

On 25 October, the Agency will organise a briefing session 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.
4.3 Individual Assessments phase

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.

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 (see Chapter 5).

- Analyse the proposal against EM award criteria;
- 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);
- Endorse their individual assessments.

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 lines**.

4.4 Consensus discussion and consolidated assessment

Once the two individual assessments have been finalised the two experts will meet to discuss the proposal. The consensus discussion serves the purpose of assuring that the experts have a common understanding of all aspects of the proposal, 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.

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.

Once the consensus discussion is finalised, the "expert one" will have to submit and endorse the consolidated assessment. The two 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 consolidated assessment form. 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 have to submit and endorse the consolidated assessment. 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, the lead expert or another expert will be asked to assess the proposal. When the third assessment is finalised, the expert who has given the middle final score will act as "expert one" and he/she will have to submit and endorse the consolidated assessment (on the on-line consolidation form the 3 experts' comments will appear). 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 score for each award criterion; this score should generally lie between the respective original scores (included);
- A common set of comments under each award criterion;
- A common 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.
4.5 Academic Debriefing

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 5 main debriefings for EM Action 2 – Strand1, 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-aquo 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.

4.6 Guidance on scores

When attributing a score to the various criteria, the experts should apply the following guidelines:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Guidance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 – the proposal fails to address the issue under examination or cannot be judged against the criterion due to missing or incomplete information</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 – poor</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – fair</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 – good</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 – very good</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – excellent</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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. Assessment of the proposals

General remarks

The 2010 selection success rate vary varies from one Lot to another one depending on the number of proposals received by Lot and their quality.

A number of proposals may be submitted by running partnerships. These proposals have to be assessed on exactly the same grounds as new proposals and there should be no positive or negative discrimination in favour or against them. During the consensus discussions, experts may ask their contact person(s) in the Agency to provide them with additional information on the recommendations of previous selection rounds in order to verify / confirm information presented in the new application.

Finally, some of the applications presented under the 2010 Call for proposals may be resubmissions of proposals rejected during previous selection rounds. Before and during the assessment phase, the Agency will try to identify these proposals and, if applicable, provide the experts during the consensus discussion and consolidated assessment with the assessment comments and recommendations provided by the experts involved in the assessment of the previous submission(s). If, during the assessment of a proposal, experts believe that it may be a resubmission of a previously rejected proposal, they should immediately inform their contact person(s) in the Agency who will do the necessary check and, if applicable, provide with the assessments of the previous submission(s).

5.1 Application form

As mentioned under chapter 3, experts will 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 they will analyse the specific answers provided to the award criteria, but also all the other information included in the application for and its mandatory annexes. The following section underlines the specific aspects experts should look at when reading the application form

5.1.1 Section A. Partnership composition

Sections A have to be filled in by all the partnerships members (i.e. the applicant and its partners).

Experts should note that it is not mandatory to fill in Section A for associated partners. However, applicants have been advised to do so if the associated partner plays an important (formal /structural /longstanding) role in the project. Section A should be read in detail by the experts when assessing 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 are crucial elements when assessing the solidity, reliability and sustainability potential of the partnership.
The elements of information provided under this section have to be compared (crosschecked) with the answers provided by the applicant to the specific issues addressed under the relevant award criteria.

Information to be used in the assessment of points 2.1 - Partnership composition and cooperation mechanisms of the award criteria

5.1.2 Section B – Description of the project

Section B contains some quantitative elements linked to proposed project proposals, as well as a summary of it. Under this section the experts have to pay attention to:

- **Coverage in third countries zone**: in this part 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. The coverage in the third countries zone is linked with the impact that the project have in terms of development. **Regional coverage third countries**: proposals should demonstrate to which extent their partnership will foster regional cooperation among the third country/territory institutions. The EU Delegations in the respective third countries are also requested to provide their feedback on the relevance in this respect.

Information to be used in the assessment of point 1. Relevance of the award criteria and point 2.1 Partnership composition and cooperation mechanisms

- **Thematic fields covered by individual mobility**: in this part 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 third countries. The applicants are not required to address all the thematic fields defined for the lot.

Information to be used in the assessment of point 1. Relevance of the award criteria

- **Duration of the mobility scheme**: the duration of mobility is an important element that is defined for each type of mobility. It is interesting to see how the applicants have combined "degree-seeking mobility" with non-degree 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).

Information to be used in the assessment of points 2.2 Organisation and implementation of the mobility of the award criteria

- **Number of individual mobility activities foreseen and distribution of mobility per type**: under this part 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 into consideration in order to see how the mobility is allocated among the partner countries/institutions

  **Important aspects to bear in mind when analysing the mobility component:**

  The distribution 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.
In accordance with the Programme Guide at least 50% of the mobility flows must correspond to Target group I.

**Information to be used in the assessment of points 2.2 Organisation and implementation of the mobility of the award criteria**

### 5.1.3 Section C - Technical capacity

Under this section experts will have to pay attention to the relevant expertise of the key staff involved in the implementation of the project proposal, from an academic and/or administrative point of view. There should be a list of projects/activities implemented by the partnership organisations in relation with the proposal (title, duration, funding programme, partners involved).

Applicants are required to provide CVs as annexes to their proposals. Experts may consult these additional sources of information.

**Information to be used in the assessment of point 2.1 Partnership composition and cooperation mechanisms of the award criteria**

### 5.1.4 Section E - Timetable for the implementation of the project activities

Under this section the experts have to pay attention to the main requirements of the call such as:

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

The start of mobility for all mobility types except staff mobility is 31 December 2011. Staff mobility may start later but must be finalized before the end of the eligibility period.

In addition, the type and frequency of partnership meetings / working groups should be considered.

**Information to be used in the assessment of point 2.1 Partnership composition and cooperation mechanisms and 2.2 Organisation and implementation of the mobility of the award criteria.**

### 5.2 Award criteria

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.
5.2.1 Erasmus Mundus Action 2 - Strand 1

1. Relevance (25%)

How relevant is the proposal to the **objectives of the call**? How do the **expected results** contribute to the objective of the call?

- The potential to foster institutional cooperation, to develop higher education teaching and learning capacity and to build the management capacity of HEIs in the third-countries;
- The particular needs and constraints of the target groups and country/countries;
- The thematic needs and how they fit into the development strategies of the third-countries involved and have an impact on the participating institutions in these countries;
- Cross cutting issues like equal opportunities, gender balance, social equity and the programme possible brain drain effects.

2. Quality (65%)

Which measures are undertaken to ensure a qualitative **organisation and implementation of the mobility**?

**Does the partnership have the expertise 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%)

- The 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 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 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);

2.2 Organisation and implementation of the mobility (25%)

- 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;
- Measures taken to attract the appropriate number and profile of individual students and staff in order to ensure mobility flows proposed as well as relation between them and the thematic expertise of the partner institutions, 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;

- Integration of the mobility scheme among the partner institutions (i.e. the proposal fulfil 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 credits recognition and transfer ( use of ECTS or other equivalent mechanism , use of a Diploma Supplement);
- The anticipated quality assurance and evaluation strategy envisaged by the partnership in order to ensure an efficient monitoring of the project course (from both academic and administrative points of view);
- Concrete measures taken by the partnership to meet the cross- cutting requirements of equal opportunities, gender balance participation of disabled and economically disadvantaged people, brain drain prevention.

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

- Student agreement clearly defining the mutual rights, obligations and responsibilities of the student and the partnership concerning academic, financial and administrative aspects of the student's participation in 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.

### 3. Sustainability (10%)

Which measures are taken by the partnership to 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 its target groups and at institutional level including recognition of studies among partners, creation of international cooperation cells in third- countries;
- Tangible impact, multiplier effects and plan for capitalisation of the project results and dissemination activities in Europe and third-countries.

**Maximum total 100%**
6. The online Assessment Tool

General remarks

Specific instructions on the way to complete the on-line assessment form tool will be provided to the experts in the context of the briefing meeting 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".
– 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 (see sections 5.2 to 5.7 below).

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>75-100</td>
<td>Highly recommended / Good quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-75</td>
<td>Recommended / Adequate quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;50</td>
<td>Not recommended / Weak quality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

1 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.