

**Project Fiche – IPA centralised programmes –
Erasmus Mundus – Western Balkan Window**

1. Basic information

1.1 CRIS Number: 2007/19333

1.2 Title: Erasmus Mundus – Western Balkans Window

1.3 Sector: 02.26 Education and Culture

1.4 Location: Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia

Implementing arrangements:

1.5 Contracting Authority:

European Community represented by the Commission of the European Communities for and on behalf of the beneficiary countries

1.6 Implementing Agency:

The programme will be implemented by the Executive Agency for Education, Audiovisual and Culture.

1.7 Beneficiary:

Graduate students from Western Balkan countries

1.8 Overall cost: €4.0m

1.9 EU contribution: €4.0 m

1.10 Final date for contracting: two years following the end date of conclusion of the Financing Agreements

1.11 Final date for execution of contracts: two years following the end date for contracting

1.12 Final date for disbursements: three years following the end date for contracting

2. Overall Objective and Project Purpose

2.1 Overall Objective:

To enhance the quality of European higher education by fostering cooperation with third countries in order to improve the development of human resources and to promote dialogue and understanding between people and cultures.

The specific objectives of Erasmus Mundus Western Balkans window are:

- To strengthen European cooperation and links in higher education by enabling additional highly qualified graduates from the Western Balkans to engage in postgraduate study at

European universities and to obtain qualifications and/or experience in the European Union and EFTA-EEA states;

- To develop more structured cooperation between European Union/EFTA-EEA states and the Western Balkans institutions.

2.2 Project purpose:

The project purpose is the provision of approximately 100 scholarships to students from Western Balkans countries.

By supporting the mobility of students from the potential candidate countries of the Western Balkans, Erasmus Mundus intends to prepare its European participants for life in a global, knowledge-based society.

The Western Balkans window will be earmarked to fund exclusively students (Action 2 "Erasmus Mundus Scholarships") and allow up to 100 students from the region to undertake postgraduate studies in EU high profile master's courses. These Masters Courses are predefined, because they have been selected under Action 1 of the Erasmus Mundus Programme.

Access to the programme is reserved for students from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia having obtained a first degree awarded by a recognised higher education institution¹.

2.3 Link with AP/NPAA / EP/ SAA:

Higher Education is an issue which is mentioned in all the European / Accession Partnerships as a medium priority.

2.4 Link with MIPD:

The Erasmus Mundus Programme appears as a priority in the Multi-Beneficiary MIPD under Section 2.2.7 "Education, Youth and Research".

2.5 Link with National Development Plan: N/A

3. Description of project

3.1 Background and justification:

Erasmus Mundus addresses objectives set out in the Multi-Beneficiary MIPD 2007-2009 regarding the sector of higher education and especially the increased mobility of students.

In addition, the programme specifically addresses the recommendation of the Commission's Communication of 27 January 2006 "The Western Balkans on the Road to the EU: Consolidation Stability and Raising Prosperity" which indicates that "a special window will be made available in 2006 in Erasmus Mundus to allow up to 100 students from the region to undertake postgraduate studies in EU high profile master's courses."

This initiative confirms the Commission's desire to encourage the opening up of European higher education to the Western Balkans. It complements the EU existing regional

¹ As long as these countries are not entitled to participate under Action 1 of the Erasmus Mundus Programme concerning masters courses

programme in higher education with the Western Balkans (Tempus) as well as the new Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window.

In order to reinforce the added value of Community action, it is necessary to ensure coherence and complementarities between the actions implemented in the framework of the present initiative and other relevant Community policies, instruments and actions. Effective linkages in the area of higher education undertaken within the framework of the EU cooperation with the Western Balkans and the competent international organisations will be ensured.

3.2 Assessment of project impact, catalytic effect, sustainability and cross border impact:

The Erasmus Mundus programme has provided valuable support to the achievement of important results in the field of higher education at European level: elaboration of masters programmes compatible with the Bologna principles, increasing international student mobility, support to the quality assurance, fostering academic cooperation between EU and third-country institutions, enhancing profile, transparency and attractiveness of European higher education in third countries.

Furthermore the programme has had a catalytic effect on the implementation of the Bologna recommendations and has strongly contributed to the promotion of mutual understanding in a multicultural environment and training.

Performance is monitored through desk and field monitoring. The Erasmus Mundus National Structures act as information offices in EU Member States.

3.3 Results and measurable indicators:

Main performance indicators for Erasmus Mundus are the number of institutions, students and scholars participating in the programme.

The impact of the Western Balkans Window within Erasmus Mundus will be measured against performance indicators such as the number of students participating in the scheme as well as the impact of their study in the EU on employability and career opportunities. This will be made the object of a thorough assessment and analytical study by Commission services.

3.4 Activities:

Here are the different steps of the action:

- 1) The Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency publishes the newly- selected Masters Courses on the Europa website. If we consider that students start their courses in year "N" the publication of this information normally takes place at the end of summer of year "N-1";
- 2) Erasmus Mundus consortia publicise their selected Masters Courses worldwide and especially in the targeted countries (and the Commission publicises the Erasmus Mundus programme as a whole). The period of maximum publicity is normally between autumn of year N-1 and January of year "N";
- 3) Students apply directly to consortia. Deadlines for applications vary according to the Masters Courses but they normally fall between mid-January and mid-February of year "N";

- 4) The consortia select students and propose a list of grantees, including a reserve list, to the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency by the established deadline of 28 February of year "N".
- 5) The list of students is then validated by a Commission internal inter-service selection committee. Eventually it needs to receive the positive opinion of the programme committee and go through the EP's right of scrutiny. The whole procedure takes two–three months.
- 6) The Commission normally takes the selection decision at the end of May of year "N".
- 7) Grantees are informed that they have been selected in June of year "N". At this point they can start procedures to obtain visas to come study in an Erasmus Mundus Masters Course in August-October of year "N".

3.5 Conditionality:

This Programme will be implemented on the assumption that performing consortia will be selected and that numerous students will be interested in mobility activities.

3.6 Linked activities

- **Tempus** aiming at up-grading higher education institutions and promoting regional and multilateral networking between higher education institutions in the EU and the Western Balkans. Tempus projects relate to curriculum development and institutional development.
- **Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window.** This Programme will be extended to the Western Balkans countries in 2007 in order to enable academic cooperation as well as mobility of academic staff and students at all levels.

3.7 Lessons learned

In the first three years of implementation of Erasmus Mundus, students from the Western Balkans already had the opportunity to participate in the programme that is open to individuals from all countries in the world.

More specifically Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo and Albania can participate in 3 of the 4 actions of the general Erasmus Mundus programme. Considering that the bulk of funds is for mobility actions, students and scholars from these countries are the main beneficiaries of Erasmus Mundus.

Through the "partnerships" action, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Albania universities can establish or reinforce cooperation projects with Erasmus Mundus Masters courses. This can allow them, inter alia, to exchange good practices and receive students/scholars from Europe.

Institutions from these countries are also eligible to participate in projects aiming to enhance the attractiveness of European Higher Education in the world.

The participation and success rate of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia & Montenegro (Serbia-Montenegro was considered as one entity so far), Kosovo, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Albania under Erasmus Mundus has been the following:

- o 36 out of total 1689 funded students (12 for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 10 for Serbia & Montenegro, 10 for Albania, 3 for Kosovo, 1 for Bosnia and Herzegovina);

- 5 out of 324 funded scholars (2 for Serbia and Montenegro, 1 for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 1 for Albania, 1 for Kosovo);
- University of Sarajevo (Bosnia) and Faculty of Political Sciences of the Belgrade University (Serbia-Montenegro) participated in a “partnership” project on Cooperation Development coordinated by the Trento University. No institutions from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia or from Albania were involved in partnership projects.
- No participation in “Attractiveness” projects for any of these countries.

In the past five country specific-windows within the general Erasmus Mundus Programme have been operational since the academic year 2005-2006 (China Window, India Window, Thailand Window, Malaysia Window, Other Asian countries Window). These windows have allowed for a strong increase of the participation of students from these countries. Financial absorption of additional funds has been very satisfactory.

The proposed Western Balkans Window is foreseen to start as of the academic year 2008-2009 and will benefit from the lessons learnt of the existing windows. It will allow offering additional scholarships to students from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia.

4. Indicative Budget (amounts in €)

	<u>TOTAL COST</u>	<u>SOURCES OF FUNDING</u>										
		<u>EU CONTRIBUTION</u>				<u>NATIONAL PUBLIC CONTRIBUTION</u>					<u>PRIVATE</u>	
		<u>Total</u>	<u>% *</u>	<u>IB</u>	<u>IN V</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>% *</u>	<u>Central</u>	<u>Regional</u>	<u>IFIs</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>% *</u>
<u>Activities</u>												
<u>Activity 1</u>												
<u>contract 1.1</u>												
<u>contract 1.2</u>												
<u>Activity 2</u>												
<u>contract 2.1</u>												
<u>contract 2.2</u>												
<u>.....</u>												
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>4,0m</u>	<u>4,0m</u>										

* expressed in % of the Total Cost

5. Indicative Implementation Schedule

See point 3.4 where the implementation schedule is indicated together with the activities.

6. Cross cutting issues (where applicable)

There is a need to step up Community efforts to promote dialogue and understanding between cultures world-wide, bearing in mind the social dimension of higher education as well as the ideals of democracy and respect for human rights, including gender equality, especially as mobility fosters the discovery of new cultural and social environments and

facilitates understanding thereof, and in so doing to ensure that no group of citizens or of Western Balkan nationals is excluded or disadvantaged.

6.1 Equal Opportunity:

Over the past few decades there has been increasing attention paid to the gender dimension of poverty and development in transition economies, particularly in relation to the role of women in educational processes and the impact of higher education on equal opportunity policies.

Projects should integrate gender mainstreaming in their aims and activities, specifically in subject matters and areas of study where the presence of women in the economy has traditionally been very low (science and technology). Projects should promote gender balance and identify factors influencing gender discrimination. They should monitor and evaluate the transition from education and training to working life, recruitment and career development of potential female top managers.

Projects in the sphere of education and sciences should promote the change of gender roles and societal stereotypes, avoiding in any sort of cultural prejudice educational materials.

The principle of equal opportunities should be taken into account when evaluating the quality of all projects proposed under the three components. Specific attention will be paid to this dimension when determining the benefit of mobility activities.

While implementing the project activities and, to the extent applicable, the Beneficiary will try to assure that gender disaggregated data will be made available to carry out an analysis of the social and economic impact of the actions undertaken.

6.2 Environment:

The project beneficiaries shall ensure that, during implementation of their actions, due cognisance is given to the Government's development policy relating to environmental management and that such policy is embodied, as appropriate, within all strategic policy documents they may draft, all training activities they may carry out and new study programmes and curricula they may design.

6.3 Minorities:

Rights of minorities should be taken into account when evaluating the quality of all projects proposed under the programme.

ANNEXES

- 1- Log frame in Standard Format
- 2- Indicative amounts contracted and disbursed by quarter for the project
- 3 - Reference to laws, regulations and strategic documents

ANNEX 1: Logical framework matrix in standard format

LOGFRAME PLANNING MATRIX FOR PROJECT FICHE	ERASMUS MUNDUS WESTERN BALKAN WINDOW	
	Contracting period expires: 31/12/2010	Disbursement period expires: 31/12/2013
	Total budget:	IPA budget: €4.0m

Overall objective	Objectively verifiable indicators	Sources of Verification	
The Programme's overall aim is to enhance the quality of European higher education by fostering cooperation with third countries in order to improve the development of human resources and to promote dialogue and understanding between people and cultures.	Main performance indicators for Erasmus Mundus are the number of institutions, students and scholars participating in the programme.	Commission and EACEA services. Universities and Consortia	
Project purpose	Objectively verifiable indicators	Sources of Verification	Assumptions
<p>To strengthen European cooperation and links in higher education by enabling highly qualified graduates from the Western Balkans to engage in postgraduate study at European universities and to obtain qualifications and/or experience in the European Union and EFTA-EEA states;</p> <p>To develop more structured cooperation between European Union/EFTA-EEA states and the Western Balkans institutions.</p> <p>The project purpose is the provision of approximately 100 scholarships to students from Western Balkans countries.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of students applying to the scheme; - Impact of their study in the EU on employability and career opportunities. 	<p>Universities and Consortia</p> <p>Commission and EACEA services.</p>	<p>After selection the assumption is that students and academics from WB are permitted to leave their country and enter the European host country.</p> <p>EC Delegations should cooperate if necessary with local EU embassies in these countries in order to ease the visa application process.</p>

By supporting the mobility of students from the potential candidate countries of the Western Balkans, Erasmus Mundus intends to prepare its European participants for life in a global, knowledge-based society.			
Results	Objectively verifiable indicators	Sources of Verification	Assumptions
<p>1. Additional scholarships to students from certain Western Balkans countries</p> <p>2. Indirectly: increased cooperation between EU and Western Balkans higher education institutions</p> <p>3. Indirectly: increased mobility of students, academic staff at national and EU level</p>	<p>- Number of students participating in the Programme</p> <p>- Impact of students study in the EU on employability and career opportunities</p>	Universities and Consortia	
Activities	Means	Costs	Assumptions
Award of scholarships		€4.0m	

ANNEX 2: Indicative amounts (in €) contracted and disbursed by quarter for the project

Contracted	4th 2007	4st 2008	4st 2009	4st 2010
Erasmus Mundus Western Balkan Window	0	2.800.000	1.200.000	
Cumulated	0	2.800.000	4.000.000	
Disbursed	4th 2007	4st 2008	4st 2009	4st 2010
Erasmus Mundus Western Balkan Window	0	1.600.000	1.200.000	1.200.000
Cumulated	0	1.600.000	2.800.000	4.000.000

Annex 3: Reference to laws, regulations and strategic documents:

- Council decision of 20/02/2006 (2006/145/EC) on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the Accession Partnership with Croatia and repealing Decision 2004/648/EC
- Council decision of 30/01/2006 (2006/57/EC) on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the European Partnership with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and repealing Decision 2004/518/EC
- Council decision of 30/01/2006 (2006/55/EC) on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the European Partnership with Bosnia and Herzegovina and repealing Decision 2004/515/EC
- Council decision of 30/01/2006 (2006/54/EC) on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the European Partnership with Albania and repealing Decision 2004/519/EC
- Council decision of 30/01/2006 (2006/56/EC) on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the European Partnership with Serbia and Montenegro, including Kosovo as defined by the UNSCR 1244 of 10/06/1999, and repealing Decision 2004/520/EC
- Multi-Beneficiary Multi-annual Indicative Planning Document (2007/2009)