

**Project Fiche – IPA centralised programmes –
Erasmus Mundus – External Cooperation Window**

1. Basic information

1.1 CRIS Number: 2007/19333

1.2 Title: Erasmus Mundus – External Cooperation 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 and under-graduate students from Western Balkan countries

1.8 Overall cost: €6.0m

1.9 EU contribution: €6.0m

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:

The overall objective of the Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window (EMECW) is to achieve better understanding and mutual enrichment between the European Union and third countries through the exchange of persons, knowledge and skills at higher education level. More specifically, the Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window aims:

- To enhance the international cooperation capacity of universities in third countries;
- To promote cooperation between sending and hosting institutions;

- To enable students to benefit linguistically, culturally and educationally from the experience of pursuing academic studies in another country, and to promote EU values;
- To improve the transparency and recognition of studies and qualifications, in particular building on the achievements gained of the Bologna process in this area;
- To provide good students from vulnerable groups with higher education.

2.2 Project purpose:

The purpose of this External Cooperation Window is to enable the exchange of academic staff and students at all levels thereby enhancing their knowledge and skills.

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:

The reform efforts of the beneficiaries include improving the responsiveness of their education system. The project aims to build ties at university level through consortia activities, and to set up programmes for student mobility between the EU Members and the Western Balkans.

Moreover, the Commission has proposed to expand the number of scholarships for graduate and under-graduate students in the Western Balkans countries in 2007. This follows both the recommendation of the Salzburg Communication and the Council Conclusions in December 2006 which highlighted the desirability of promoting people-to-people contacts by making more such scholarships available. This is the reason why it is proposed to provide these additional scholarships by extending the current Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window to the Western Balkans.

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

The programme will have a catalytic effect on the implementation of the Bologna recommendations and will strongly contribute 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.

For all activities regarding mobility of students both from partner and non-partner institutions, applicants will need to explain in which way these mobility exchanges can favour the creation of durable links with Western Balkan beneficiaries, how they can respond to the social,

economical and political needs of the beneficiaries concerned and how they will help to disseminate European social and democratic values.

3.3 Results and measurable indicators:

The expected results are:

- Multilateral exchange of students between Europe and Western Balkans;
- Enhanced international cooperation capacity of higher education institutions in the Western Balkans through cooperation with high quality European institutions (Erasmus Charter) and with extensive experience in ECTS and in the implementation of the Bologna acquis;
- The spreading of the experiences of EU universities in the framework of Erasmus exchanges and in the implementation of Bologna process;
- An increased visibility of EU universities as a quality option in the context of globalisation;
- Improved cultural understanding and respect for diversity;

Main performance indicators for the Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window are the number of institutions, students and scholars participating in the programme 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:

The Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window is to be implemented through a Call for Proposals. The Call requests proposals from consortia of higher education institutions (HE) from the EU and from the Western Balkan countries to draw up a mobility scheme for students at all levels and academic staff. Higher education institutions from the EU must all have been awarded an Erasmus Charter. Leading applicants can only be HE institutions from the EU.

Consortia must comprise at least five European HE institutions from at least three EU countries, plus universities from a minimum number of the Western Balkan countries to be determined in the Call for Proposals.

Proposals will state the number of mobility activities planned. In their proposal, consortia will demonstrate the mechanisms for selection of the students and of academic staff for the mobility scheme. These must guarantee a transparent and objective selection which takes into account academic merit, socio-economic situation, gender balance, support for disabled students and compliance with regional priorities. Consortia must prove their capacity and experience in hosting students.

The best consortium or consortia will be retained. An evaluation of the quality of the proposals, including the operational capacity and expertise of the applicant and his partners, will be carried out based on a number of evaluation criteria relating to a) the financial and operational capacity of the consortium, b) the relevance of the proposal as well as c) the methodology proposed.

The EC will conclude a "framework partnership agreement" with the coordinating institution of each consortium. The other consortium members sign a mandate granting power to the coordinating institution: this is annexed to the framework partnership agreement with the EC. The selected consortia will receive a specific grant agreement covering the mobility activities of the call for activities starting in the academic year 2008/2009. Mobility activities comprise:

- (a) individual mobility for students:

The types of mobility to be funded in this first round of the programme are: undergraduate students, master, doctoral and post-doctoral fellowships;

(b) For academic staff: exchanges for the purposes of teaching, practical training and research

(c) Partnership activities to organise mobility and transfer best practice:

The grant awarded covers also the costs of organising the student mobility, to work with partners on a credit transfer system, to apply principles like the diploma supplement and to work with partners on quality assurance issues.

Mobility of students and academic staff within the projects can take place between higher education institutions from the EU and higher education institutions from the Western Balkan countries.

The signature of a new specific grant agreement every year is subject to an annual renewal process and to the requirement of including new partner universities in the consortium

3.5 Conditionality:

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

3.6 Linked activities

To date there have been two EU-funded programmes open to the Western Balkan in the field of higher education:

- **Tempus III** 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**, a world-wide programme which provides scholarships for students to around 100 Erasmus Mundus Master Courses in Europe. In 2006, a specific Window for the Western Balkans has been initiated under the Erasmus Mundus Programme to enable the selection of 100 post-graduate students from the region.

3.7 Lessons learned

Western Balkan countries are eligible to participate in the **Erasmus Mundus** masters programme. 36 students (12 from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 10 from Albania, 10 from Serbia & Montenegro, 3 from Kosovo and 1 from Bosnia and Herzegovina) from the region have benefited from scholarships awarded for the academic years 2004/5, 2005/6 and 2006/7. In addition, the new Western Balkans Window, which was initiated last year, aims at providing 100 additional scholarships for the academic year 2007/8.

The new Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window seeks to extend the best practices of the Erasmus Mundus Programme, by expanding the mobility opportunities to include all levels of higher education (undergraduate, master, doctoral and post-doctoral students as well as academic staff). It will also extend its activities to both candidate and potential candidate countries in the Western Balkans.

The final evaluation of the second phase of the Tempus programme (1994 - 2000) and the mid-term evaluation of its third phase (2000 - 2006) confirmed the opportunity of increasing

higher education exchanges and university mobility activities. All Western Balkan countries are eligible under Tempus.

4. Indicative Budget (amounts in €)

Activities	TOTAL COST	SOURCES OF FUNDING										
		EU CONTRIBUTION				NATIONAL PUBLIC CONTRIBUTION					PRIVATE	
		Total	% *	IB	INV	Total	% *	Central	Regional	IFIs	Total	% *
Activity 1												
contract 1.1												
contract 1.2												
Activity 2												
contract 2.1												
contract 2.2												
.....												
TOTAL	6.0m	6.0m										

* expressed in % of the Total Cost

5. Indicative Implementation Schedule

In principle, there will be an annual call for proposals with one single deadline in January n+1. The selection process will be finalised in May in n+1. The contracting procedures will be carried out in June/July so that mobility activities can start with the beginning of the academic year in September/October.

6. Cross cutting issues

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 EXTERNAL COOPERATION WINDOW	
	Contracting period expires: 31/12/2010	Disbursement period expires: 31/12/2013
	Total budget:	IPA budget: €6,0m

Overall objective	Objectively verifiable indicators	Sources of Verification	
To achieve better understanding and mutual enrichment between the European Union and Western Balkans through the exchange of students, knowledge and skills at higher education level.			
Project purpose	Objectively verifiable indicators	Sources of Verification	Assumptions
This activity involves creating optimal conditions, through quality support measures, for students and teachers to undertake periods of study/training/teaching/research at partner Universities in other participating countries.	- Number of universities / consortia selected through the Call for proposals	Commission and EACEA services.	After selection the assumption is that students and academics from WB are permitted to leave their country and enter the European host country. EC Delegations should cooperate if necessary with local EU embassies in these countries in order to ease the visa application process.
Results	Objectively verifiable indicators	Sources of Verification	Assumptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multilateral exchange of students between Europe and Western Balkans; • Enhanced international cooperation capacity of higher education institutions in the Western Balkans through cooperation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of students participating in the Programme - Impact of students study in the EU on employability and career opportunities 	Universities and Consortia Commission and EACEA	

<p>with high quality European institutions (Erasmus Charter) and with extensive experience in ECTS and in the implementation of the Bologna acquis;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The spreading of the experiences of EU universities in the framework of Erasmus exchanges and in the implementation of Bologna process; • An increased visibility of EU universities as a quality option in the context of globalisation; • Improved cultural understanding and respect for diversity; 			
Activities	Means	Costs	Assumptions
<p>(a) individual mobility for students:</p> <p>The types of mobility to be funded in this first round of the programme are: undergraduate students, master, doctoral and post-doctoral fellowships; All proposals must cover all types of mobility. Mobility is open to students from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia.</p> <p>(b) partnership activities to organise mobility and transfer of best practice:</p> <p>The grant awarded covers also the costs of organising the individual mobility, to work with partners on a credit transfer system, to apply principles like the diploma supplement and to work with partners on quality assurance issues.</p>	<p>The selected consortia will receive a specific grant agreement covering the mobility activities of the call for activities starting in the academic year 2008/2009</p>	<p>€6.0m</p>	

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

Contracted	4th 2007	4th 2008	4th 2009	4th 2010
E.M. External Cooperation Window	0	4.200.000	1.800.000	
Cumulated	0	4.200.000	6.000.000	
Disbursed	4th 2007	4th 2008	4th 2009	4th 2010
E.M. External Cooperation Window	0	2.400.000	1.800.000	1.800.000
Cumulated	0	2.400.000	4.200.000	6.000.000

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)