

Standard Summary Project Fiche – IPA centralised programmes

Erasmus Mundus – External Cooperation Window

1. Basic information

- 1.1 CRIS Number: 2008/020-370
- 1.2 Title: External Cooperation Window
- 1.3 ELARG Statistical code: 02.26. Education and Culture
- 1.4 Location: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia as well as Kosovo¹

Implementing arrangements:

- 1.5 Contracting Authority (EC) European Community represented by the Commission of the European Communities on behalf of the Beneficiaries.
- 1.6 Implementing Agency: The programme will be implemented by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Agency.
- Executive
- 1.7 Beneficiaries: Graduate and under-graduate students from the Western Balkans.

Financing:

- 1.8 Overall cost (VAT excluded)²: EUR 8 500 000
- 1.9 EU contribution: EUR 8 500 000
- 1.10 Final date for contracting: 30/11/2009
- 1.11 Final date for execution of contracts: 30/11/2011
- 1.12 Final date for disbursements: 30/11/2012

¹ under UNSCR 1244/99

² The total cost of the project should be net of VAT and/or other taxes. Should this not be the case, the amount of VAT and the reasons why it should be considered eligible should be clearly indicated.

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 non EU Members through the exchange of persons, knowledge and skills at higher education level.

More specifically, EMECW aims:

- To enhance international cooperation capacity of universities in the Beneficiaries;
- To promote cooperation between visiting 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 through the "Bologna process";
- 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 mentioned in all the European / Accession Partnerships as a medium priority.

2.4 Link with MIPD

This project has been designed on the basis of the Multi-beneficiary MIPD 2008-2010 in which education is a priority under Section 2.3.2.2.1 – Sufficient human and physical capital.

The objective to be achieved according to the MB MIPD is to "*enable mutual enrichment and better understanding between the EU Member States and the Western Balkans through the exchange of academic staff and students at all levels*".

2.5 Link with National Development Plan (where applicable)

Here are some examples of national development plans in the region:

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, priorities for higher education identified in the MTDS (Medium Term Development Strategy), besides the adoption of Higher Education Law, aim at establishing entity-level higher education funds as well as public and transparent mechanisms of quality assurance, including the procedures for periodic external assessment of universities

In addition, there exists a set of priorities for the implementation of the Higher Education Law in relation to the harmonisation of lower level of legislation with the state law, institutional development in particular the establishment of relevant agencies for the recognition of qualifications, quality assurance and accreditation; the transformation of public universities from loose associations of faculties to being integrated institutions.

In Croatia, the Accession Partnership includes the key priority of ensuring adequate capacity of the Croatian authorities to manage the Life-long Learning Programme.

The key priorities of the National Programme for Croatia's Accession into EU 2008³ referring to higher education include fostering of mobility in higher education institutions both within and outside Croatia. The Programme also includes plans that Croatia joins the Erasmus Mundus programme. One of mid-term priorities specifically refers to fostering cooperation with foreign higher education institutions.

Higher education is also a key priority in Croatian Government's strategic document for education development "Education Sector Development Plan 2005-2010" whose priorities and activities are in line with the National Programme for Croatia's Accession into EU.

2.6 Link with national/sectoral investment plans (where applicable)

Not applicable

- **Description of project**

3.1 Background and justification:

The reform efforts of the beneficiaries include improving the capacity 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 Member States and the Western Balkans.

In 2007, the Commission proposed to increase the number of scholarships for graduate and undergraduate students in the Western Balkans. This follows both the recommendation of the Salzburg Communication and the Council Conclusions in December 2006 which emphasised

³ The Programme was adopted by the Croatian Government in February 2008, but adoption of the Programme by Croatian Parliament is still to follow.

the desirability of promoting people-to-people contacts by making more such scholarships available.

3.2 Assessment of project impact, catalytic effect, sustainability and cross-border impact (where applicable)

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 from both partner and non-partner institutions, applicants will have to explain in which way these mobility exchanges 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";
- Improved cultural understanding and respect for diversity;

Main performance indicators for the EMECW 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 EMECW 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 Balkans 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 may 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 Balkans 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 the selection of students and of academic staff for the scheme. They must guarantee a transparent and objective selection that 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 its 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, and (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 2009/2010.

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;
- For academic staff: exchanges for the purposes of teaching, practical training and research;

(b) Partnership activities to organise mobility and transfer best practice.

The grant awarded covers also the costs of organising 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 Balkans.

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

3.5 Conditionality and sequencing

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 IV 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 was started under the Erasmus Mundus Programme to enable the selection of 100 post-graduate students from the region.

3.7 Lessons learned

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. Since the start of the EMECW last year, mobility activities have been removed from Tempus IV and are being entirely transferred to Erasmus Mundus.

4. Indicative Budget (amounts in €)

			TOTAL EXP.RE	SOURCES OF FUNDING								
				IPA COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION		DOMESTIC CONTRIBUTION					PRIVATE CONTRIBUTION	
ACTIVITIES	IB (1)	INV (1)	EUR (a)=(b)+(c)+(d)	EUR (b)	% (2)	Total EUR (c)=(x)+(y)+(z)	% (2)	Central EUR (x)	Regional/Local EUR (y)	IFIs EUR (z)	EUR (d)	% (2)
Activity 1	x		8,500,000	8,500,000	100	∕	∕	∕	∕	∕	∕	∕
TOTAL IB			8,500,000	8,500,000	100	∕	∕	∕	∕	∕	∕	∕
TOTAL INV			/	/	/	∕	∕	∕	∕	∕	∕	∕
TOTAL PROJECT			8,500,000	8,500,000	100%							

Amounts net of VAT

(1) In the Activity row use "X" to identify whether IB or INV

(2) Expressed in % of the **Total** Expenditure (column (a))

5. Indicative Implementation Schedule (periods broken down per quarter)

Contracts	Start of Tendering	Signature of contract	Project Completion
Call for proposals	2009 Q1	2009 Q3	2012 Q4

All projects should in principle be ready for tendering in the 1ST Quarter following the signature of the FA

6. Cross-cutting issues (where applicable)

It is necessary to increase Community efforts to promote dialogue and understanding between cultures world-wide. It is important to bear 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. In so doing, no group of citizens or of Western Balkan nationals is excluded or put at a disadvantage.

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 education 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 is 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 cognizance 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 that 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- Amounts contracted and Disbursed per Quarter over the full duration of Programme
- 3- Reference to laws, regulations and strategic documents:
 - Reference list of relevant laws and regulations
 - Reference to AP /NPAA / EP / SAA
 - Reference to MIPD
 - Reference to National Development Plan
 - Reference to national / sectoral investment plans
- 4- Details per EU funded contract (*) where applicable:

ANNEX 1: Logical framework matrix in standard format

LOGFRAME PLANNING MATRIX FOR PROJECT FICHE	ERASMUS MUNDUS EXTERNAL COOPERATION WINDOW	
	Contracting period expires: 30/11/2009	Disbursement period expires: 30/11/2012
	Total budget: €8.5m	IPA budget: €8.5m

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	- 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.

study/training/teaching/research at partner Universities in other participating countries.			EC Delegations should cooperate if necessary with local EU embassies in the Beneficiaries 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 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; 	<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	
Activities	Means	Costs	Assumptions
(a) individual mobility for students:	The selected consortia will receive a	€8.5m	

<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>specific grant agreement covering the mobility activities of the call for activities starting in the academic year 2008/2009</p>	
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ANNEX 2: Indicative amounts (in €) contracted and disbursed by quarter for the project

Contracted	4th 2008	4th 2009	4th 2010	4th 2011
E.M. External Cooperation Window	0	5,950,000	2,550,000	
Cumulated	0	5,950,000	8,500,000	
Disbursed	4th 2008	4th 2009	4th 2010	4th 2011
E.M. External Cooperation Window	0	3,400,000	2,550,000	2,550,000
Cumulated	0	3,400,000	5,950,000	8,500,000

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

- Council Decision of 18 February 2008 (2008/210/EC) on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the European Partnership with Albania and repealing Decision 2006/54/EC
- Council Decision of 18 February 2008 (2008/211/EC) on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the European Partnership with Bosnia and Herzegovina and repealing Decision 2006/55/EC
- Council Decision of 12 February 2008 (2008/119/EC) on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the Accession Partnership with Croatia and repealing Decision 2006/145/EC
- Council Decision of 18 February 2008 (2008/212/EC) on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the Accession Partnership with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and repealing Decision 2006/57/EC
- Council Decision of 22 January 2007 (2007/49/EC) on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the European Partnership with Montenegro.
- Council Decision of 18 February 2008 (2008/213/EC) on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the European Partnership with Serbia including Kosovo as defined by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 of 10 June 1999 and repealing Decision 2006/56/EC
- Multi-Beneficiary Multi-annual Indicative Planning Document (2008/2010)

ANNEX 4: Details per EU funded contract

The programme will be implemented on an indirect centralised basis by the European Commission following Article 53.1(a) of the Financial Regulation and corresponding provisions of the Implementing Rules.

Implementation tasks are delegated under Article 54.2(a) of the Financial Regulation to the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, which was created by Commission Decision 2005/56/EC of 14 January 2005. The mandate of the agency was extended by Commission Decision 2007/114/EC of 8 February 2007.

According to Article 12 (3) of the Council Regulation No (EC) 58/2003 of 19 December 2002 laying down the statute for executive agencies to be entrusted with certain tasks in the management of Community programmes⁴, any programme delegated to an executive agency has to contribute to the financing of the administrative budget of the agency. Due to the nature of implementation, the administrative expenditure associated with operational appropriations in any given year is incurred in the following year. Hence the provision of management costs has been envisaged in 2008 to cover the administrative expenditure for the programmes planned under the 2007 budget (not included in the present Financing Proposal).

⁴ OJ L11, 16.1.2003, p. 1.