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Erasmus+

Enriching lives, opening minds.

**Forward-Looking Projects:
School Education, Vocational Education
and Training, Adult learning, Digital
education**

ERASMUS-EDU-2025-PI-FORWARD



European
Commission



TOOLKIT

Forward-Looking Projects:

School Education, Vocational Education and
Training, Adult learning, Digital education
(ERASMUS-EDU-2025-PI-FORWARD)

Tips on how to write a good proposal
Do's and Don'ts

What is a good proposal?

Proposal is aligned to the **objectives** and policy **priorities** of the Action, and **complies with call conditions and quality standards**

- **NOT ENOUGH** - submitting a **COMPLETE** application package and ensuring proposal is **ADMISSIBLE** and **ELIGIBLE**;
- **FUNDING** availability is **competitive**. Only high-quality proposals **ABOVE FUNDING THRESHOLDS** may be granted;
- Proposal must **STAND OUT** with **QUALITATIVE NARRATIVE** on all award **criteria**;
- **COST – EFFECTIVENESS** is also key (adequate lump sums to achieve project objectives and implement foreseen activities)

Tips to succeed

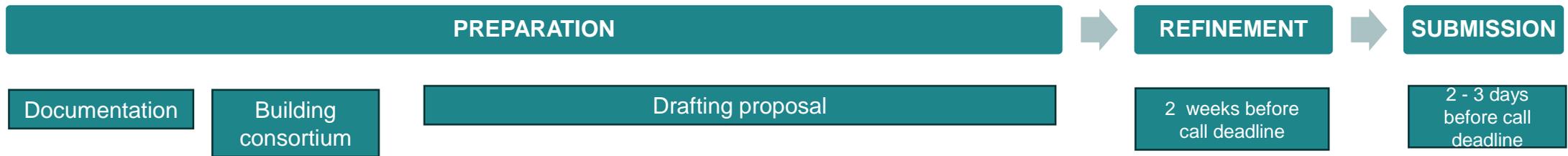


1. **Start early** to allow ample preparation time.
2. Familiarize yourself with all **relevant information**.
3. **Review the Call requirements**, including eligibility and admissibility conditions.
4. Understand the **award criteria** thoroughly.
5. Develop a clear and compelling **concept abstract**.
6. Assemble a **strong and capable consortium**.
7. Foster **teamwork** and **ensure collective intelligence management**.
8. Draft your proposal with the **evaluator's perspective** in mind.
9. Create a **realistic** and **well-structured Work Plan**.
10. Ensure your proposal offers **good value for money**.
11. Allocate time to **refine and improve your proposal**.
12. **Plan ahead** to mitigate last-minute stress.

Tip 1: Start early



- **Planning** and **time management** are essential!
- Substantial time will be needed for drafting the proposal.
- A good proposal evolves/matures during the drafting process (e.g. addresses different angles and viewpoints).
- Time should be set aside for partners to review final draft proposal/give feedback → **revise and optimize it!**



Tip 2: Familiarize yourself with all relevant information

To PREPARE your project proposal:

[Call document](#)

Application forms (Part B)

[Lump sum funding](#) F&TOP section

Get inspired: [Projects & Results \(europa.eu\)](#)
(F&TOP from 2021-2024) &
[Erasmus+ project results platform](#) (legacy
projects)

To SUBMIT your project proposal:

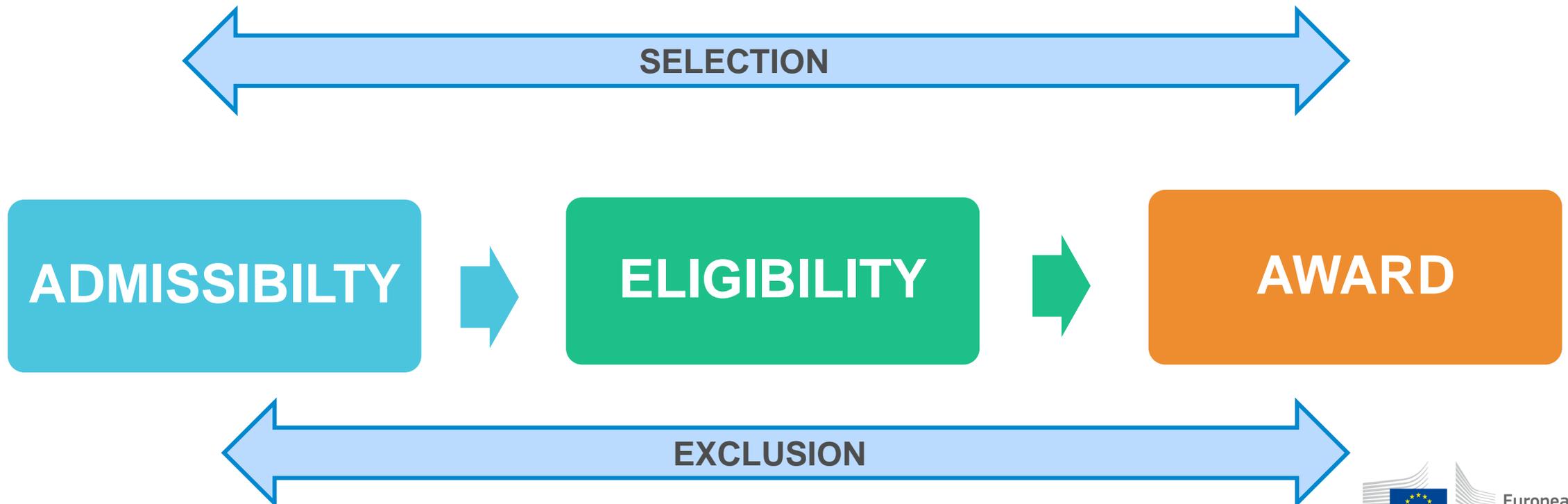
[An introduction to the Funding & Tenders Portal](#)
[IT tools: Business process flow](#) video tutorial

F&TOP [Online Manual](#)

F&TOP [IT How To](#)

Tip 3: Review the call requirements

- ✓ Always read call requirements thoroughly before starting an application.
- ✓ Each call topic has its own conditions, budget, scope (objectives) and expected outcomes.
- ✓ Make sure you don't waste time and effort on something that isn't a good fit!



Admissibility conditions

Submit application **before call deadline** (ideally 48 h before)

Submit application **electronically** via the F&TOP

Use only **OFFICIAL** forms (available in the F&TOP)

Submit **complete** application (including **ALL** required forms, annexes and sections)

Draft your proposal in an **EU language understandable** to all your consortium

Application must be **readable, accessible & printable**

Pages of Part B beyond **70 pages** are disregarded during evaluation

INADMISSIBLE PROPOSAL



PROPOSAL EXCLUDED FROM EVALUATION PROCESS

ADMISSIBLE PROPOSAL



ELIGIBILITY CHECK

Eligibility conditions

Consortium composition

General call conditions:

- ✓ **At least 3 applicants** (beneficiaries, not affiliated entities) from a minimum of 3 EU Member States or third countries associated to the Programme)
- ✓ Must be **legal entity** (public or private) active in the field of education and training, research & innovation or in the world of work
- ✓ For HEIs established in Erasmus+ Programme countries – be holders of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE)
- ✓ **Third countries not associated to the Programme** can participate **only as associated partners** (no budget).

Additional topic specific requirements:

- ✓ **Topic 2:** At least 3 applicants (beneficiaries, not affiliated entity) must be beneficiaries (or affiliated entities) of ongoing or completed Erasmus + CoVE projects
- ✓ **Topic 3:** At least 2 applicants must be a VET provider offering qualifications programmes at EQF ISCED level 3-4
- ✓ **Topic 4:** Applicants must be registered members of the Pact for Skills
- ✓ **Topic 7:** At least 1 applicant (beneficiary, not affiliated) must be a public education and training authority at national, regional or local level → public body with mandate, responsibility and power to define and adopt systemic policy reforms in the field of education and training at their level.

In scope

- ✓ Content corresponds wholly (or at least in part) to the topic description for which it is submitted.

EU alignment

- ✓ Proposal complies with EU policy interests and priorities, and respects EU values and ethical standards.

Duration & coverage

- ✓ Project normally ranges between 24 and 36 months and activities are taking place in eligible countries.

Tip 4: Understand the award criteria

Address ALL award criteria

Your proposal will be evaluated solely on the basis of the information it provides and not on its potential whether changes/improvements will be made.

Criterion 1: RELEVANCE

The proposal should present **WHAT you want to do** (support a forward- looking idea at EU level) and **WHY you want to do it**.

- ✓ **Objectives** should be clearly stated to **match the call and topic specific objectives**
- ✓ Demonstrate strong **links to EU policies & values**.
- ✓ **Provide a convincing preliminary needs analysis** to address identified problems/challenges:
Is the proposal responding to a need to fill-in a gap?
 - **Provide statistics**, refer to survey results/ research data/reports, consultations with relevant stakeholders, etc.
 - **Define your target group(s)** and demonstrate understanding of specific needs
- ✓ **Show innovation and European added value:**
 - **Emphasize what makes your project innovative** and why it should be selected to address identified needs (e.g. innovative features, methods, techniques, solutions)
 - **Explain transnational impact, transferability, broader reach**

Issues of lower scored proposals:

- (-) Repurposed proposals (generic or not aligned with call/topic specificities)
- (-) Needs analysis too generic jeopardizes understanding of project's relevance and impact
- (-) Innovation is not sufficiently demonstrated (e.g. no reflection on state-of-the-art methods and techniques)

Tip 4: Understand the award criteria

Present a **sound project management approach** which is appropriate for achieving project objectives

- ✓ Link the project general objectives to specific objectives formulated in a **SMART** approach; **Be focused and realistic! Do not select too many specific objectives!**
- ✓ Ensure **consistency and coherence** between OBJECTIVES - ACTIVITIES – RESULTS (outputs/outcomes)
- ✓ Introduce **quality control measures and tools** (e.g. evaluation reports by external experts)
- ✓ Define **key performance indicators (KPIs)** against which to measure progress and success
- ✓ Explain the choice of partner institutions and their **complementarity** (expertise, geographical coverage, etc.).
A large consortium is not necessarily better! Choose partners to match the project idea!
- ✓ Each partner should have an active role in the project. **Tasks and responsibilities should be ideally balanced.**
- ✓ Present suitable management structure covering communication, decision-making and conflict resolution mechanisms (e.g. project management board; frequency of communication/meetings; external mediator, etc.)
- ✓ Ensure '**good value for money**' → Lump sums calibrated per partner roles and tasks; no overestimate of staff/project management costs; subcontracting activities if any are explained and budgeted)

Issues of lower scored proposals:

- (-) Project design not coherent with objectives, outputs not well-defined and generic
- (-) Budget is overestimated
- (-) The composition of the partnership doesn't follow the requirements of the specific Topic
- (-) Roles of partners are unbalanced and there is insufficient information on specific expertise directly related to the project domain to reflect complementarities.

Tip 4: Understand the award criteria

Present project impact - **benefits for the target group(s)** and **positive changes** resulting from project and explain how project results will continue to have impact even after project's end (**sustainability**)

- ✓ Refer to different **target groups** and **consider different levels of impact** (e.g. individual, institutional, local, regional, national and/or European level)
- ✓ Explain **how you will assess** whether expected impact has been achieved (e.g. set short and long-term quantitative targets)
- ✓ Clearly **distinguish between 'dissemination' and 'exploitation'**
- ✓ Define **project results** and propose different methods and tools suitable to reach target groups (e.g. website, social media, etc.)
- ✓ Apply **Open Access** policy as a general rule, within the limits of national/EU frameworks
- ✓ Assign **roles to partners** (and associated partners, if any) and **cooperate with multipliers** (national authorities, networks)
- ✓ **Design a long-term sustainability action plan** (covering both project results and activities) → scalability and financial sustainability.

Issues of lower scored proposals:

- (-) Exploitation is often not well understood. Some proposals do not clearly explain how they will use and exploit results. Others, do not differentiate between sustainability actions and exploitation.
- (-) Lack of clear indicators, measurable results, and connection to call objectives
- (-) Underdeveloped sustainability (long-term action plan, governance, scalability, financial sustainability)

Tip 5: Develop a concept abstract

- High-level summary of intended project - keep it short and concise (e.g. **2 pager maximum**)
- Use it to **inform senior management** that project matches institution's goals and missions
- **Essential to invite partners** and get them involved

Key information to include in the project abstract:

- ✓ Clear project **objectives**
- ✓ Background info on current policy and **state of art** in the field/sector
- ✓ Clear identified **need/gap** for **specific target group(s)**
- ✓ **Innovative** features for a unique proposal that brings **added value**
- ✓ **Identification of complementary partners** covering a wide geographical area, also per call eligibility conditions
- ✓ **Explanation on budget** supporting objectives and number of intended partners
- ✓ **Planning timeline** for proposal drafting and timely submission.



Tip 6: Build a strong and capable consortium



Be **consistent** – remain relevant to your objective & target group(s)

Be **adaptable** – be ready to omit a country if you do not secure the right partner

Choose well your partners – with diverse competences

Avoid overlaps and redundancies - ensure complementarity of expertise, capabilities and resources among partners to cover all aspects of the call requirements.

Ensure a **balanced geographical representation**, involving partners from different countries. Do not cover the EU map **artificially**.

Consider having a **lead and co-lead partner structure**, allowing the co-lead to gain experience

Allocate resources/budget strategically considering the **complexity and ambition of tasks** rather than an equal split

Involve partners in the proposal preparation – avoid surprises after submission

Tip 7: Foster teamwork and ensure collective intelligence management



While the coordinator manages and guides the process, the proposal is a **collaborative effort** requiring input from all consortium members, especially Work Package Leaders.

Coordinator's Role:

- ✓ Develops Project Concept: Leads in defining objectives, work plan, and consortium structure.
- ✓ Manages Writing Process: Ensures alignment with program goals and timely submission.
- ✓ Drafts Key Sections: Writes overall project description, objectives, and management structure.

Work Package Leaders' Role:

- ✓ Draft specific sections: Write sections related to their expertise, detailing tasks/methodologies, etc.
- ✓ Collaborates with Coordinator: Provide input to ensure coherence and consistency.

Communication with WP Leaders during the whole proposal drafting process is key.

Discuss ideas, consider different angles and viewpoints → This will ensure their commitment to project.

One single person should review and edit all contributions from partners

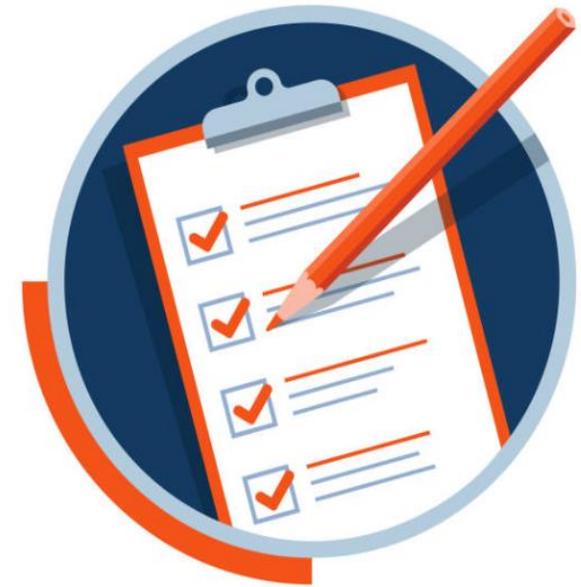
→ Maintain a unified voice and consistent style throughout the document.

Tip 8: Draft your proposal with the evaluator's perspective in mind!

Your proposal will be assessed based entirely on the written information you provide.

Key aspects to consider:

- ✓ **Simplicity:** Keep sentences concise and focused, avoiding lengthy or vague explanations
- ✓ **Clarity:** Avoid assumptions, be concrete and explicit (e.g. provide examples to substantiate claims and give enough context); Include visuals (e.g. diagrams/graphs) to better explain complex concepts, interactions, etc.
- ✓ **Coherence:** Ensure no contradictions between sections and there is a uniform use of terminology/abbreviations
- ✓ **Focus:** Stick to what is asked to cover each award criteria
- ✓ **Completeness:** Provide **quality narrative** for all award criteria and make sure all required annexes and mandatory formal requirements are met.



Overall tips & hints for proposal drafting



Be **coherent** with the objectives of the Action and **relevant** to the policy priorities, avoid contradictions and patchwork

Be **concrete** use examples, justify your statements, bring evidence

Be **focused**, think before you write, stick to what is asked, think about your audience - what is the main message?

Be **accurate, clear** and **complete** – give adequate reply to each question

Keep it **simple** - complexity creates fog; simplicity clears it

Be **precise** - develop the idea, provide concrete examples

Make sure you apply under the **correct topic** and follow the applicable requirements

Generative AI Use in Proposals (if used): Verify accuracy, cite sources, avoid plagiarism, disclose AI usage, acknowledge limitations



Do not use very **long sentences** – 1 main idea per sentence

Do not provide **vague statements** (general or abstract) and **do not contradict yourself** – this undermines project's feasibility and credibility

Beware of **jargon** - Avoid jargon wherever possible, but if you have to use a jargon term then explain it in plain language at first use

Spell out abbreviations and acronyms at first use and avoid using them too often or if used it should be less than three times in a section

Do not be **repetitive** – avoid repeating the same information in different parts of the application

Be aware of **plagiarism** – checked during evaluation

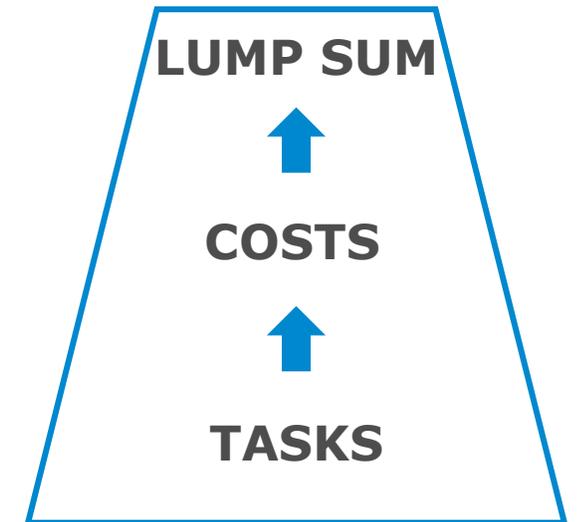
Tip 9: Write a realistic and well-structured Work Plan

Your project **performance** will be assessed by EACEA during project's lifetime, based on submitted deliverables and mandatory periodic reporting obligations.

- ✓ Write a Work Plan that is **realistic** and fit for purpose in order to avoid amendments.
- ✓ Be **reasonable** - Adapt the number of deliverables to the size of your project and work packages
- ✓ **Rationalize deliverables** – try to combine similar deliverables into one.
- ✓ Try to keep **balance** of the deliverables to be submitted along the lifetime of the project (e.g. check whether they can be replaced by tasks or milestones).
- ✓ Refer only to **major outputs** - Do NOT include minor sub-items, internal working papers, meeting minutes, etc.
- ✓ **Horizontal** deliverable (over the whole project): Try to split it into two deliverables (for each reporting period). If not possible, set a submission deadline at the end of the project.
- ✓ **Formal reporting obligations towards EACEA** (progress, interim and final technical reports) and **consortium & financial arrangements/reports** should **not be set as deliverables**.

Tip 10: Ensure ‘good value for money’

- ✓ First decide on **roles and tasks** – then define the **budget for each partner**
- ✓ There should be **appropriate allocation between partners** (no equal split approach) based on the Work Plan
- ✓ Avoid allocating more than 30% of the overall budget to a single partner, and also check not to direct significant budget share to a single country.
- ✓ Be specific if subcontracting is necessary (e.g. tasks and allocated budget)
- ✓ Do not overestimate staff costs and project management costs
- ✓ Share resources and be economical; try to combine travels for different events (e.g. project management meeting back-to-back with training)
- ✓ Choose **suitable budget for each Work Package** (calibrated on complexity, volume of tasks/deliverables, expected impact)



Tip 11: Allocate time to refine your proposal

TIP 12: Plan ahead to mitigate last-minute stress

- Ask someone not involved in proposal drafting for **critical reading** and feedback
- If you have the chance, have a native speaker for **proofreading**
- **CLEAR your calendar in the last week** for a **complete check of the application** (e.g. cross-reference proposal with the guidelines for completeness; check consistency of Work Plan and required lump sums)
- Be **careful how you integrate last minute changes** to match overall proposal approach!
- And, last but not least..... Keep your eyes on the clock and **SUBMIT IT ON TIME!!!**



BE REACHABLE – Keep Coordinator’s contact details updated during the whole evaluation process

Thank you and good luck!