European Commission

EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS GUIDE

2018 Call

In case of discrepancy between language versions, the English text will prevail.

EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS

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INTRODUCTION

This Guide is a tool for anybody who would like to have a thorough knowledge of what the European Solidarity Corps (referred also as 'Corps') is about. This document is mainly addressed to those who wish to be:

- **participating organisations**: meaning those organisations, institutions, bodies organising activities supported by the Corps;
- **participants**: meaning young people involved in solidarity activities supported by the Corps, whether those are organised by the participating organisations or directly by the EU.

Every year, thousands of projects are submitted by organisations across Europe in order to receive financial support from the EU funding programmes in the area of youth; for this reason, the Commission has set up a transparent evaluation process that aims at providing grants for the best projects. All rules and conditions for receiving a grant from the European Solidarity Corps are specified in this Guide.

HOW TO READ THE EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS GUIDE

The Guide has four main parts:

- **Part A** offers a general overview of the European Solidarity Corps. It provides information about its objectives, priorities and main features; eligible countries; implementing structures and the overall budget available. This section is addressed to those who wish to have a general overview of the scope and the structure of the European Solidarity Corps.
- **Part B** provides specific information about the Actions of the European Solidarity Corps. This section is mainly addressed to those who are interested in knowing more in detail which types of projects are supported by the European Solidarity Corps and what criteria they have to respect.
- **Part C** provides important information concerning quality and support measures offered to participating organisations and participants during the preparation, implementation and follow-up of projects.
- **Part D** gives detailed information on procedures for grant application and selection of projects, as well as the financial and administrative provisions linked to the award of a European Solidarity Corps grant. This section is addressed to all those who intend to submit a project proposal under the framework of the European Solidarity Corps.

Furthermore, this Guide includes the following Annexes:

- **Annex I**: Dissemination Guidelines for beneficiaries
- **Annex II**: Glossary of the key terms used in this Guide
- **Annex III**: Contact details

The European Solidarity Corps Guide is drafted in accordance with the 2018 Annual Work Programme adopted by the European Commission, and therefore may be revised to reflect the priorities and lines of action defined in the Work Programmes adopted in the following years. The implementation of this Guide is also subject to:

- The adoption without significant modifications by the legislative authority of the Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down the legal framework of the European Solidarity Corps and amending Regulations (EU) No 1288/2013, (EU) No1293/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1305/2013, (EU) No 1306/2013 and Decision No 1313/2013/EU;
- The positive opinion or to the lack of an opinion by the Committee mentioned in the basic act on the Annual Work Programme for the implementation of the European Solidarity Corps for 2018.

PART A - GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS

NEW SINGLE ENTRY POINT FOR SOLIDARITY ACTIVITIES

The European Union is built on solidarity, a shared value which is strongly felt throughout European society. Solidarity defines the European project and provides the necessary unity to cope with current and future crises by holding a strong moral ground. Solidarity provides a clear compass to guide the European youth in their aspirations for a better Union.

Young people need easily accessible opportunities to engage in solidarity activities, which could enable them to express their commitment to the benefit of communities while acquiring useful experience, skills and competences for their personal, educational, social, civic and professional development, thereby improving their employability.

The European Solidarity Corps brings together young people to build a more inclusive society, supporting vulnerable people and responding to societal challenges. It offers an inspiring and empowering experience for young people who want to help, learn and develop and provides a single entry point for such solidarity activities throughout the Union.

It opens up more and better opportunities covering a broad range of areas, such as integration of migrants, environmental challenges, prevention of natural disasters, education and youth activities. It also supports national and local actors, in their efforts to cope with different societal challenges and crises.

The European Solidarity Corps aims also to complement the efforts made by Member States to support young people and ease their school-to-work transition under the Youth Guarantee[1] by providing them with additional opportunities to make a start into the labour market in the form of traineeships or jobs in solidarity-related areas within their respective Member State or across borders.

The activities of the European Solidarity Corps support the objectives of the current EU Youth Strategy[2] that promotes volunteering across borders for young people as one of its fields of action and the Commission's proposal for a new EU Youth Strategy for 2019-2027[3] which intends to encourage young people to become active citizens, agents of solidarity and positive change for communities across Europe, inspired by EU values and a European identity.

BUILDING ON PAST EXPERIENCE, LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE

The European Solidarity Corps builds on the achievements of more than 25 years of European programmes in the field of youth and solidarity, especially on the success of the European Voluntary Service and on a first phase of the European Solidarity Corps, launched in December 2016, whereby different Union programmes have been mobilised to offer volunteering, traineeship or job opportunities to young people across the EU.

The European Solidarity Corps shall now go even further in fostering quality improvements as well as a major increase in the accessibility of engagement in solidarity.

[1] Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013 on establishing a Youth Guarantee (2013/C 120/01).
[2] https://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/youth-strategy_en .
[3] https://ec.europa.eu/youth/sites/youth/files/youth_com_269_1_en_act_part1_v9.pdf .

WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES, PRINCIPLES AND IMPORTANT FEATURES OF THE EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS?

OBJECTIVES

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

The European Solidarity Corps aims to promote solidarity as a value, mainly through volunteering, to enhance the engagement of young people and organisations in accessible and high quality solidarity activities as a means to contribute to strengthening cohesion, solidarity, democracy and citizenship in Europe, while also responding to societal challenges and strengthening communities, with particular effort to promote social inclusion. It shall also contribute to European cooperation that is relevant to young people.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

More specifically, its objectives are as follows:

- to provide young people, with the support of participating organisations, with easily accessible opportunities for engagement in solidarity activities effecting positive societal change, while improving their skills and competences for personal, educational, social, civic, cultural and professional development, as well as facilitating their active citizenship, employability and transition into the labour market, including by supporting the mobility of young volunteers, trainees and workers;
- to ensure that the solidarity activities that are offered to the European Solidarity Corps participants are of high quality, properly validated and respect the principles of the European Solidarity Corps;
- to ensure that particular efforts are made to promote social inclusion and equal opportunities, in particular for the participation of young people with fewer opportunities through a range of special measures such as appropriate formats of solidarity activities and personalised support;
- to contribute to European cooperation relevant to young people and raising awareness of its positive impact.

PRINCIPLES

European Solidarity Corps projects and participating organisations should respect the following principles: equal treatment, equal opportunities and non-discrimination, avoidance of job substitution, provision of high-quality activities with learning dimension focusing on personal, socio-educational and professional development, adequate training, working and volunteering arrangements, safe and decent environment and conditions, and, the 'no-profit principle' in compliance with the Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046[4].

IMPORTANT FEATURES

In line with the objectives of the European Solidarity Corps, the following features deserve special attention.

SOCIAL INCLUSION

The European Solidarity Corps aims to promote social inclusion by facilitating the access to young people with fewer opportunities. Young people with fewer opportunities are young people who need additional support due to the fact that they are at a disadvantage compared to their peers because of various obstacles, such as disabilities, health problems, educational difficulties, cultural differences or economic, social or geographical obstacles, including young people from a marginalised community or at risk of facing discrimination based on any of the grounds enshrined in Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union[5].

Young people with fewer opportunities might face the following – non exhaustive – obstacles:

- disability (i.e. participants with special needs): related to people with mental (intellectual, cognitive, learning), physical, sensory or other disabilities;

[4] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1533194679232&uri=CELEX:32018R1046 .
[5] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:12012P/TXT .

- educational difficulties: associated with young people with learning difficulties; early school-leavers; young people with poor school performance;
- economic obstacles: associated with people with a low standard of living, low income, dependence on the social welfare system or homeless; young people in long-term unemployment or poverty; people in debt or with financial problems;
- cultural differences: related to immigrants or refugees or descendants from immigrant or refugee families; people belonging to a national or ethnic minority; people with linguistic adaptation and cultural inclusion difficulties;
- health problems: related to people with chronic health problems, severe illnesses or psychiatric conditions;
- social obstacles: associated with people facing discrimination because of gender, age, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability, etc.; people with limited social skills or anti-social or risky behaviours; people in a precarious situation; (ex-)offenders, (ex-)drug or alcohol abusers; young and/or single parents; orphans;
- geographical obstacles: related to people from remote or rural areas; people living in small islands or in peripheral regions; people from urban problem zones; people from less serviced areas (limited public transport, poor facilities).

The Corps foresees special measures to help the participation of those young people:

- several projects' formats are particularly appropriate for inclusion groups;
- specific support measures have also been foreseen for this purpose such as additional guidance but also additional funding that would allow participating organisations to better accommodate and cater for the needs of young people with fewer opportunities.

Within the framework of the Erasmus+ Youth Programme, an Inclusion and Diversity Strategy has been designed to support the participation and inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities. European Solidarity Corps implementing bodies, participating organisations and participants are invited to make use of this framework to ensure that the European Solidarity Corps reaches out to young people with fewer opportunities and responds positively to diversity. The Strategy is available on the website[6] of the European Commission.

NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

Non-formal learning refers to learning that mostly takes place outside the formal education. It has a participative and learner-centred approach; it is carried out by learners on a voluntary basis and is therefore closely linked to young people's needs, aspirations and interests.

Informal learning refers to the learning in daily life activities, at work, with peers, etc. It can often be characterised as learning by doing. In the youth sector, informal learning has an important role for example in peer group discussions, in voluntary activities and in a variety of other situations.

Non-formal and informal learning enable young people to acquire essential competences that contribute to their personal and socio-educational development and foster their active participation in society, thereby improving their employment prospects. Such learning experiences have also a strong potential to improve the attainment in formal education and training as well as to address young NEETs (i.e. young people not in employment, education or training) or young people with fewer opportunities and combat social exclusion.

Learning activities within the youth field are meant to have a significantly positive impact on young people as well as on the organisations involved, the communities in which these activities take place, the youth field itself and the European economic and societal sectors at large.

RECOGNITION AND VALIDATION OF SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS

To ensure the impact of European Solidarity Corps activities on the personal, educational, artistic, social, civic and professional development of the participants, the competences that are the learning outcomes of the solidarity activities should be properly identified and documented.

To that end, the use of effective instruments at Union and national level for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, such as Youthpass and Europass should be encouraged, as appropriate. For further information, see part C of this Guide.

EUROPEAN ADDED VALUE

The European Solidarity Corps shall support solidarity activities which present a clear European added value, for example by virtue of their:

[6] The Inclusion and Diversity Strategy in the field of youth: http://ec.europa.eu/youth/library/reports/inclusion-diversity-strategy_en.pdf .

- transnational character, particularly with regard to learning mobility and cooperation;
- ability to complement other programmes and policies at local, regional, national, Union and international level;
- European dimension with regard to the topics, aims, approaches, expected outcomes and other aspects of those solidarity activities;
- approach with regard to involving young people from different backgrounds;
- contribution to the effective use of Union transparency and recognition tools.

INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION

European Solidarity Corps includes a strong international dimension (i.e. cooperation with partner countries, through involvement of young people and organisations) under its volunteering strand.

MULTILINGUALISM

Multilingualism is one of the cornerstones of the European project and a powerful symbol of the EU's aspiration to be united in diversity. Foreign languages have a prominent role among the skills that will help equip people better for the labour market and make the most of available opportunities. The EU has set the goal that every citizen should have the opportunity to acquire at least two foreign languages, from an early age.

While the promotion and support of language learning is primarily covered under other EU initiatives, it has been demonstrated that the lack of language competences is one of the main barriers to European cross-border mobility in general such as those supported by the European Solidarity Corps. In order to help overcoming this barrier, linguistic support is provided in the context of the European Solidarity Corps.

PROTECTION AND SAFETY OF PARTICIPANTS

Protection and safety of participants involved in the activities supported by the European Solidarity Corps are important principles of this initiative. All persons participating in the European Solidarity Corps should have the opportunity to take full advantage of the possibilities for personal and professional development and learning. This should be assured in a safe environment which respects and protects the rights of all persons.

To this end, each organisation participating in the European Solidarity Corps must have in place effective procedures and arrangements to promote and guarantee the safety and protection of the participants in their activity. With this regard, all young people (volunteers, trainees, job holders) involved in an activity in the context of the European Solidarity Corps, must be insured against the risks linked to their participation. A specific insurance policy is foreseen for volunteering, jobs and traineeships. For further information, see part C of this Guide.

DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION OF PROJECT RESULTS

Dissemination and exploitation of results are important areas of the European Solidarity Corps project lifecycle. They give participating organisations the opportunity to communicate and share outcomes and deliverables, thus extending the impact of their projects, improving their sustainability and justifying the European added value of the European Solidarity Corps. Specific guidelines in this respect can be found in Annex I to this Guide.

WHAT IS SUPPORTED UNDER THE EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS?

In order to achieve its objectives, the European Solidarity Corps implements the following operational Actions:

- Volunteering;
- Traineeships and Jobs;
- Solidarity projects.

Additionally, the European Solidarity Corps supports a series of activities and measures aiming at providing high-quality solidarity activities:

- networking activities for individuals and organisations participating in the European Solidarity Corps;
- measures aimed at ensuring the quality and accessibility of volunteering, traineeships, jobs, or solidarity projects and equal opportunities for all young people across participating countries including offline and online training, language support, administrative support for participants and participating organisations, complementary insurance, support before and where necessary after the solidarity activity as well as the further use of Youthpass that identifies and documents the competences acquired during the solidarity activities;
- the development and maintenance of separate Quality Labels for entities willing to provide respectively volunteering or traineeships and jobs for the European Solidarity Corps in order to ensure compliance with the principles and requirements of the European Solidarity Corps;
- the activities of European Solidarity Corps Resource Centres to support and raise the quality of the implementation of the actions of the European Solidarity Corps and enhance the validation of their outcomes;
- the establishment, maintenance and updating of the European Solidarity Corps Portal and other relevant online services as well as the necessary IT support systems and web-based tools, taking into account the need to overcome the digital divide.

WHAT IS THE BUDGET?

The European Solidarity Corps has an overall indicative financial envelope of EUR 375.6 million of the EU Budget for the period 2018-2020. The annual budget is adopted by the Budgetary Authority. The different steps for the adoption of the EU budget can be followed at: http://ec.europa.eu/budget/documents/budget_current_year_en.htm

For information about the available budget by action, planned number of projects to be granted as well as indicative average grants, please consult the 2018 European Solidarity Corps Annual Work Programme: (http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/more_info/awp/index_en.htm)

WHO IMPLEMENTS THE EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS?

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

The European Commission is ultimately responsible for the running of the European Solidarity Corps. It manages the budget and sets priorities, targets and criteria for the initiative on an on-going basis. Furthermore, it guides and monitors the general implementation, follow-up and evaluation of the initiative at European level. The European Commission also bears the overall responsibility for the supervision and coordination of the structures in charge of implementing the initiative at national level.

At European level, the European Commission's **Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency** (Executive Agency) is responsible for the implementation of the centralised Actions of the European Solidarity Corps. The Executive Agency is in charge of the complete life-cycle management of these projects, from the promotion of the initiative, the analysis of the grant requests, the monitoring of projects on the spot, up to the dissemination of the result of the initiative and individual projects supported in its context.

The European Commission, directly or through the Executive Agency, is also responsible for:

- improving the visibility and the systemic impact of the European Solidarity Corps through dissemination and exploitation of the results;
- ensuring the contractual management and financing of bodies and networks supported by the European Solidarity Corps;
- managing calls for tenders to provide services within the framework of the Corps.

THE NATIONAL AGENCIES

The European Solidarity Corps is mainly implemented through Indirect Management, meaning that the European Commission entrusts budget implementation tasks to National Agencies; the rationale of this approach is to bring the European Solidarity Corps as close as possible to its beneficiaries and to adapt to the diversity of each country. For this purpose, each participating country has appointed one or more National Agencies. These National Agencies promote and implement the European Solidarity Corps at national level and act as the link between the European Commission and participating organisations at local, regional and national level. It is their task to:

- provide appropriate information on the European Solidarity Corps;
- administer a fair and transparent selection process for project applications to be funded in their country;
- monitor and evaluate the implementation of the European Solidarity Corps in their country;
- provide support to project applicants and participating organisations throughout the project life-cycle;
- collaborate effectively with the network of all National Agencies and the European Commission;
- ensure the visibility of the Corps;
- promote the dissemination and exploitation of the results at local and national level.

In addition, National Agencies play an important role as intermediate structures for the qualitative development of the European Solidarity Corps by:

- carrying out activities - outside the tasks of project life-cycle management - that support the qualitative implementation of the European Solidarity Corps and/or trigger policy developments;
- contributing to the links and synergies between the European Solidarity Corps and the Union youth policy;
- providing a supportive approach to newcomers and less advantaged target groups in order to remove the obstacles to full participation;
- seeking cooperation with external bodies in order to increase the impact of the European Solidarity Corps in their country.

The supportive approach of National Agencies aims at guiding the users through all phases, from the first contact with the European Solidarity Corps through the application process to the realisation of the project and the final evaluation. This principle is not in contradiction with the fairness and the transparency of selection procedures. Rather, it is based on the idea that in order to guarantee equal opportunities for everybody, it is necessary to give more assistance to some target groups through advising, counselling, monitoring and coaching systems tailored to their needs.

WHAT OTHER BODIES ARE INVOLVED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS?

Apart from the bodies mentioned above, the following bodies provide complementary expertise to the implementation of the European Solidarity Corps:

RESOURCE CENTRES

EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS RESOURCE CENTRE

The aim of the Resource Centre is to support the implementing bodies, the participating organisations and the participants taking part in the Corps in order to raise the quality of the implementation of the European Solidarity Corps. The European Solidarity Corps Resource Centre ensures expertise and common understanding of the concept of solidarity in the framework of the European Solidarity Corps.

Its work involves:

- organising training courses, study visits, forums, cooperation and partnership-building activities;
- developing and documenting training methods and tools related to the activities supported by the European Solidarity Corps;
- issuing practical publications and guidance;
- contributing to the links and synergies between the European Solidarity Corps and the Union youth policy;
- supporting the identification and validation of competences acquired through the Corps activities;
- supporting the National Agencies in the development and implementation of networking activities;
- coordinating alumni networks at European level;
- coordinating with the SALTO Youth Resource Centres to ensure synergies in their areas of work.

SALTO YOUTH RESOURCE CENTRES

SALTO Youth Resource Centres are structures mainly supported through the Erasmus+ programme aiming to improve the quality of Erasmus+ projects in the field of youth. Through their thematic (participation, information, inclusion, diversity, training and recognition) or geographical (Eastern Partnership countries and Russia, Southern Mediterranean, Western Balkans) focus, they provide resources, information and training in specific areas for National Agencies and other actors involved in the youth field, and foster the recognition of non-formal and informal learning. In the areas relevant for the Corps, the experience and knowledge of the SALTOs can benefit the stakeholders of the European Solidarity Corps.

Their work, directly linked to the Corps, involves:

- coordinating the implementation of Youthpass;
- carrying out the award and monitoring of the Quality Label in partner countries neighbouring the EU;
- carrying out the Training and Evaluation Cycle in partner countries neighbouring the EU.

More information available at: www.salto-youth.net.

EURODESK NETWORK

The Eurodesk network is supported through the Erasmus+ Programme and offers information services to young people and those who work with them on European opportunities in the education, training and youth fields, and the involvement of young people in European activities.

Present in all countries participating in the European Solidarity Corps and coordinated at European level by the Eurodesk Brussels-link Office, the Eurodesk network offers enquiry answering services, funding information, events and publications. It also contributes to the animation of the European Solidarity Portal.

For more information on Eurodesk, go to: http://www.eurodesk.eu.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS?

Individuals – young people between 18 and 30 year of age constitute the main target population of the European Solidarity Corps. The Corps mainly involves these individuals through organisations, institutions, bodies or groups that organise solidarity activities. The conditions of access to the Corps therefore relate to these two actors: the "participants" (young people participating in the Corps) and the "organisations". For both participants and participating organisations, the conditions for participation depend on the country in which they are based.

PARTICIPANTS

Young people express their willingness to participate in the European Solidarity Corps by registering on the European Solidarity Corps Portal. The registration at the European Solidarity Corps Portal is possible as of 17 years of age but participants must have reached 18 and must not be older than 30 at the start date of the activity.

The specific conditions for participating in a European Solidarity Corps project depend on the Action concerned. For more details on the conditions for participation in each specific Action, please consult Part B of this Guide.

ORGANISATIONS

European Solidarity Corps projects are mainly submitted and managed by participating organisations. As a general rule, organisations participating in European Solidarity Corps projects must be established in a participating country or a partner country.

The specific conditions for participating in a European Solidarity Corps project depend on the Action concerned. For more details on the conditions for participation in each specific Action, please consult Part B of this Guide.

ELIGIBLE COUNTRIES

The following countries can fully take part in all the Actions of the European Solidarity Corps:

PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES

Member States of the European Union (EU)[7]			
Belgium	Greece	Lithuania	Portugal
Bulgaria	Spain	Luxembourg	Romania
Czech Republic	France	Hungary	Slovenia
Denmark	Croatia	Malta	Slovakia
Germany	Italy	Netherlands	Finland
Estonia	Cyprus	Austria	Sweden
Ireland	Latvia	Poland	United Kingdom[8]

Additionally, some Actions are open for participation of the following partner countries

PARTNER COUNTRIES

EFTA countries		
Liechtenstein	Iceland	Norway

Candidate countries	
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Turkey

[7] According to Article 33.3 of the Council Decision 2013/755/EU on the Association of the OCTs with the European Union, the Union shall ensure that individuals and organisations from or to Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT) shall be eligible to participate in the European Solidarity Corps on a participating Country status, subject to the rules of the Programme and the arrangements applicable to the Member State with which these OCTs they are connected. The list of OCTs can be found at: https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/regions/overseas-countries-and-territories-octs/eu-oct-dialogue_en .

[8] **FOR BRITISH APPLICANTS**: Please be aware that eligibility criteria must be complied with for the entire duration of the grant. If the United Kingdom withdraws from the European Union during the grant period without concluding an agreement with the European Union ensuring in particular that British applicants continue to be eligible, you will cease to receive EU funding (while continuing, where possible, to participate) or be required to leave the project on the basis of the relevant provisions of the grant agreement on termination.

Partner countries neighbouring the EU[9]			
Western Balkans	**Eastern Partnership countries**	**South-Mediterranean countries**	**Russian Federation**
Albania Bosnia and Herzegovina Kosovo[10] Montenegro Serbia	Armenia Azerbaijan Belarus Georgia Moldova Territory of Ukraine as recognised by international law	Algeria Egypt Israel Jordan Lebanon Libya Morocco Palestine[11] Syria Tunisia	Territory of Russia as recognised by international law

[9] The eligibility criteria formulated in commission notice Nr.2013/C-205/05 (OJEU C-205 of 19/07/2013, pp. 9-11) shall apply for all actions implemented through this Programme Guide, including with respect to third parties receiving financial support in the cases where the respective action involves financial support to third parties by grant beneficiaries in accordance with article 204 of the EU's Financial Regulation.

[10] This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

[11] This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue.

PART B – INFORMATION ABOUT THE ACTIONS COVERED BY THIS GUIDE

In this Part readers will find, for all of the Actions and activities covered by the European Solidarity Corps Guide, the following information:

- a description of their objectives and expected impact;
- a description of the supported activities;
- tables presenting the criteria which are used to assess project proposals;
- additional information useful in order to have a good understanding of the type of projects supported;
- a description of the funding rules.

Before submitting an application, applicants are advised to read carefully the entire section concerning the Action under which they wish to apply.

WHICH ACTIONS ARE SUPPORTED?

The following Actions may be supported:

- Quality Label;
- Volunteering (Volunteering Projects; Volunteering Partnerships; Volunteering Teams in high-priority areas);
- Traineeships and jobs;
- Solidarity projects.

In line with the general and specific objectives of the European Solidarity Corps, the above actions supported by the initiative are expected to bring positive and long-lasting effects on the participants and participating organisations involved, as well as on the communities in which these actions take place.

As regards individual participants, the solidarity activities, as well as any other supported activities related to them (e.g. quality and support measures), are meant to produce the following main outcomes:

- improved skills and competences for personal, educational, social, civic, cultural and professional development;
- more active participation in democratic life and in society in general;
- enhanced employability and transition into the labour market;
- increased sense of initiative and entrepreneurship;
- increased self-empowerment and self-esteem;
- improved foreign language competences;
- enhanced intercultural awareness;
- better awareness of the European project and the EU common values;
- increased motivation for further engagement in solidarity activities.

Supported solidarity activities are also expected to produce the following outcomes on participating organisations:

- increased capacity to operate at EU/international level;
- innovative and improved way of operating towards their target groups;
- greater understanding and responsiveness to social, linguistic and cultural diversity;
- more modern, dynamic, committed and professional environment inside the organisations.

As regards communities where the activities related to supported solidarity activities are implemented, the following outcomes are expected:

- increased ability to address societal challenges;
- greater understanding and responsiveness to social, linguistic and cultural diversity.

In the long run, the combined effect of supported solidarity activities is expected to have a positive impact on a large number of stakeholders in participating countries.

QUALITY LABEL

WHAT IS THE QUALITY LABEL?

The European Solidarity Corps Quality Label certifies that an organisation participating in the European Solidarity Corps is able to ensure the necessary framework conditions for young people to take part in solidarity activities in compliance with the principles and objectives of the European Solidarity Corps and further requirements necessary to ensure quality. All participating organisations must show they are able to implement European Solidarity Corps projects according to the rules of the Corps.

The Quality Label is an organisation's entry ticket for the European Solidarity Corps. It is a prerequisite for participation in Volunteering, Traineeships and Jobs, but does not automatically lead to a European Solidarity Corps project grant. The future project grant applications will be assessed based on the criteria presented in this Programme Guide and according to the quality of the specific project. The applications for the Quality Label can be submitted on a continuous basis (i.e. at any time) during the programming period.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

To obtain the Quality Label, the applying organisation must be clearly identified. A Quality Label application should only refer to the entirety of an organisation with its departments and/or branches in general terms[12]. Finally, the application cannot be submitted by any informal group or even a de facto association without legal personality.

Depending on the role of the organisation, and the type of participants concerned, there are different requirements in order to obtain the Quality Label. An organisation can apply for a supporting and/or host role for volunteering and/or Traineeships and Jobs (Occupational Quality Labels). An organisation willing to support or engage participants in Traineeships and Jobs, both cross-border and in-country, will need to first obtain the relevant Quality Label, unless the activity takes part with the support of an organisation already holding the relevant Occupational Quality Label.

An organisation can apply for different scopes and roles of Quality Label, depending on the Actions it wishes to be involved in, as well as for a combination of several Quality Labels:

- Quality Label for Volunteering – supporting and/or host role
- Quality Label for Traineeships
- Quality Label for Jobs

An organisation can apply directly to obtain the Quality Label or an organisation can apply on behalf of organisations linked to it by legal or capital links as affiliated entities[13], which are considered as Dependent Entities. In this case, the applicant organisation must monitor, and accept to be accountable for; the quality and safety of the activities offered by the Dependent Entities on which behalf it is applying, as well as accountable for the appropriate skill development and learning opportunities of the young participants.

The Quality Label is awarded for the entire duration of the programming period (2018-2020) and will remain valid until the end of the last project in which the organisation is involved, implemented through a grant of the current programming period. The bodies in charge of the Quality Label may carry out regular or punctual controls to verify that the organisations holding a Quality Label still meet the quality standards. Following these controls, the Quality Label may be temporarily suspended or withdrawn by the awarding bodies (e.g. National Agency or Executive Agency).

In order to facilitate partner-finding, profiles of all organisations holding a Quality Label are published in a database of Quality Label organisations. Additionally, as soon as the Quality Label has been awarded, organisations have access to the European Solidarity Corps Portal where they are invited to advertise their volunteering activity when they are looking for participants. Organisations have to make use of the European Solidarity Corps Portal's database to search and select participants. Information in the database is published as it is formulated in the Quality Label application form. It is therefore crucial that organisations write clearly so that potential participants and partner organisations can get a good impression of the organisation and its involvement in the European Solidarity Corps.

The accreditation of the European Voluntary Service (EVS) and Erasmus+ volunteering will be considered equivalent to the Quality Label during this programming period. Therefore, organisations having been accredited under these programmes do not need to apply for the Quality Label. The accreditation for coordinating organisations and the accreditation for sending

[12] In other words, departments within an organisation should not apply for several Quality Labels. Instead, the organisation itself should apply for a Quality Label, which is awarded at organisation level.

[13] Affiliated entities must be understood as defined in Article 187 of the Financial Regulations.

organisations will be considered as a Quality Label for volunteering, for the supporting role; the accreditation for receiving organisations will be considered as a Quality Label for volunteering for the host role.

Finally, organisations having been accredited by other EU programmes must apply for the Quality Label. However, in assessing their application, the awarding body will take into account the existing accreditation, and will thus conduct a simplified assessment.

WHAT ARE THE TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ORGANISATIONS HOLDING A QUALITY LABEL?

QUALITY LABEL FOR VOLUNTEERING

Project management *(supporting role)*	▪ Ensure effective coordination of the project in cooperation with all other participating organisations; ▪ Distribute the grant between all organisations; ▪ Carry out all or some of the administrative tasks of the other organisation(s) involved; ▪ Carry out dissemination and information activities.
Before the activity *(supporting role)*	▪ Select and match registered candidates in the European Solidarity Corps Portal or support the registered candidates to find suitable opportunities; ▪ Ensure that the volunteer signs a volunteering agreement which includes a learning and training component. ▪ Encourage the volunteer to enrol and take part in the general online training; ▪ Ensure that the volunteer receives support in carrying out language preparation (if applicable, support to carry out the online language course and assessments provided by the Commission); ▪ Provide adequate preparation for the volunteer before departure, according to the individual needs and in line with the Training and Evaluation Cycle; ▪ Ensure the participation of the volunteer in the pre-departure training session, if organised by the National Agency or SALTO (if applicable); ▪ Ensure that the volunteer is in possession of the European Health Insurance Card and is covered by the obligatory Insurance plan foreseen by the European Solidarity Corps (if applicable); ▪ Ensure that the volunteer receives the European Solidarity Corps Info Kit; ▪ Stay in touch with the volunteer and the host organisation throughout the activity.
During the activity *(host role)*	*Learning, mentoring and support* ▪ Ensure that the volunteer attends the full Training and Evaluation Cycle (if applicable); ▪ Ensure that the volunteer makes proper use of the European Health Insurance Card, and only uses the insurance scheme when required by the circumstances (if applicable); ▪ Offer to the volunteer the opportunity to carry out a well-defined set of tasks, allowing some of the volunteer's ideas, creativity and experience to be integrated; ▪ Identify clear learning opportunities for the volunteer; ▪ Provide task related support, supervision and guidance to the volunteer through experienced staff; ▪ Provide support for the learning process and for the identification and documentation of learning outcomes, through EU or national validation tools, e.g. Youthpass and Europass; ▪ Provide support to volunteers undertaking language courses; ▪ Identify a mentor who is responsible for providing to the volunteers: – personal support – support to carry out self-reflection, identification and documentation of the learning outcomes of the activity (through the use of EU or national validation tools). ▪ Encourage contact with other European Solidarity Corps participants whenever possible; ▪ Provide opportunities to integrate in the local community, meet other people, etc. *Pocket money and volunteering conditions* ▪ Provide suitable accommodation and meals (or a food allowance) to the volunteer, including the holiday period; ▪ Ensure that means of local transport are available for the volunteer; ▪ Provide the due allowance to the volunteer on a weekly or monthly basis.

After the activity *(supporting role)*	▪ Provide support to the volunteer to help them reintegrate into their home community; ▪ Provide the volunteer with the opportunity to exchange and share experiences and learning outcomes; ▪ Encourage the involvement of the volunteer in dissemination and exploitation of results and learning outcomes; ▪ Provide guidance regarding further education, training or employment opportunities; ▪ Ensure the participation of the volunteers in the annual European Solidarity Corps event organised by the National Agency in their country.

QUALITY LABEL FOR TRAINEESHIPS AND JOBS

Project management	▪ Ensure effective coordination of the project in cooperation with all other organisations; ▪ Distribute the grant between all organisation(s); ▪ Carry out all or some of the administrative tasks of the other organisation(s) involved; ▪ Coordinate the activities designed to reach out to employers in order to identify opportunities and to encourage their involvement; ▪ Carry out dissemination and information activities.
Before the activity	▪ Select and match registered candidates in the European Solidarity Corps Portal with suitable vacancies in solidarity-related sectors; ▪ Ensure that the participant signs the traineeship agreement which includes a learning and training component in accordance with the European Solidarity Corps Regulation and national regulatory framework of the country where the activity takes place (in case of traineeships); ▪ Ensure that the participant signs an employment contract including clear learning opportunities for the participant in accordance with the European Solidarity Corps Regulation and national regulatory framework of the country where the activity takes place (in case of jobs); ▪ Encourage the participant to enrol and take part in the general online training; ▪ Ensure that the participant receives support in carrying out language preparation (if applicable, support to carry out the online language course and assessments provided by the Commission); ▪ Provide adequate preparation for the participant before departure, according to the individual needs and in line with the Training and Evaluation Cycle; ▪ Ensure the participation of the participant in the pre-departure training session, if organised by the National Agency or SALTO (if applicable); ▪ Ensure that the participant is in possession of the European Health Insurance Card and is covered by the obligatory Insurance plan foreseen by the European Solidarity Corps (if applicable); ▪ Ensure that the participant receives the European Solidarity Corps Info Kit.
During the activity	*Learning, mentoring and support* ▪ Ensure that the participant attends the full Training and Evaluation Cycle (if applicable); ▪ Ensure that the participant makes proper use of the European Health Insurance Card, and only uses the insurance scheme when required by the circumstances (if applicable); ▪ Provide support for the learning process and for the identification and documentation of learning outcomes, through EU or national validation tools, e.g. Youthpass and Europass; ▪ Facilitate the drafting and implementation of an on-the-job and continuous training programme; ▪ Design tasks and activities for the participant in line with the qualitative principles of the European Solidarity Corps and the Quality Framework for Traineeships (if applicable); ▪ Support the participant undertaking language courses, if necessary; ▪ Identify a mentor who is responsible for providing to the participant: – personal support – on-the-job training if relevant – support to carry out self-reflection, identification and documentation of the learning outcomes of the activity (through the use of EU or national validation tools); ▪ Offer supervision and guidance to the participant through experienced staff; ▪ Encourage contact with other European Solidarity Corps participants whenever possible. *Remuneration and work conditions* ▪ Ensure that the trainee or the job holder is paid based on the written traineeship agreement or employment contract and in accordance with applicable national regulatory frameworks; ▪ Provide the due relocation allowance; ▪ Ensure the fairness of working conditions.
After the activity	▪ Assist the participant in their job search to make the most of the solidarity experience in terms of labour market integration in their home country or other, further training, etc.; ▪ Give the participant the opportunity to exchange and share experiences and learning outcomes; ▪ Encourage the involvement of the participant in dissemination and exploitation of results and learning outcomes; ▪ Provide guidance regarding further education, training or employment opportunities; ▪ Ensure the participation of the participant in the annual European Solidarity Corps event organised by the National Agency in their country.
Other Criteria	A Declaration of Honour of the legal representative must be annexed to the application form.

WHAT ARE THE CRITERIA USED TO ASSESS A QUALITY LABEL?

To obtain a Quality Label valid for the duration of the programming period (2018-2020), an application will be assessed against the following criteria:

GENERAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Who can apply?	Any organisation legally established in a participating country or a partner country for the Volunteering Quality Labels; any organisation legally established in a Member State for the Occupational Quality Labels. Any organisation having control links with affiliated entities can apply on behalf of these, referred to as Dependent Entities.
Duration	The whole duration of the programming period (2018-2020).
When to apply?	Applications can be submitted on a continuous basis, i.e. any time.
Where to apply?	To the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency for: ▪ Europe-wide networks or platforms of organisations with structural links as affiliated entities; ▪ National public authorities and services (e.g. government ministries, national civic services etc.); ▪ Organisations offering activities run with the support of EU programmes other than the European Solidarity Corps, providing volunteering, traineeship or job opportunities. To the National Agency in which the applicant organisation is established for all other cases and for organisations established in a participating country. To the relevant SALTO for organisations established in a partner country neighbouring the EU: ▪ SALTO South East Europe for organisations established in Western Balkans countries; ▪ SALTO Eastern Europe and Caucasus for organisations established in Eastern Partnership countries and the territory of Russia as recognised by international law; ▪ SALTO EuroMed for organisations established in Southern Mediterranean countries.

Applicant organisations will be assessed against the relevant exclusion criteria; for more information please consult Part D of this Guide.

AWARD CRITERIA

The awarding of a Quality Label is subject to a positive assessment of all criteria demonstrating the capacity of the organisation to ensure the relevant above mentioned tasks and responsibilities. Some criteria are specific to the scope of the Quality Label and/or the role applied for.

Relevance	▪ The relevance of the organisation's aims to the European Solidarity principles; ▪ The extent to which the Quality Label will provide benefits to the organisation; ▪ The extent to which the organisation reaches out to young people with fewer opportunities.
Quality of Management	▪ The capacity of the organisation to ensure quality project management, including proper communication and coordination measures with partners; ▪ The extent to which the organisation shows quality levels of support, guidance and monitoring of participants; ▪ The capacity of the organisations to ensure logistical arrangements; ▪ The appropriateness of measures to ensure a solid learning dimension for participants; ▪ The appropriateness of measures for the recognition and validation of participants' learning outcomes as well as consistent use of European transparency and recognition tools; ▪ The extent to which the organisation will ensure a transparent and fair selection process; ▪ The appropriateness of measures to ensure the participation of young people with fewer opportunities.

For Quality Label for Volunteering - host role:

Quality of Management	▪ The quality of the measures foreseen to avoid job substitution, routine tasks and tasks without qualifying learning impact.

For Quality Label for Traineeships:

Quality of Management	▪ The quality of measures foreseen to ensure that the Quality Framework for Traineeships is respected, as well as applicable national legislation, in particular regarding remuneration.

For Quality Label for Jobs:

Quality of Management	▪ The quality of measures foreseen to ensure that the specific conditions and benefits of the European Solidarity Corps are respected under the employment contract.

For umbrella applications:

Quality of Management	▪ The capacity of the applicant organisation to ensure quality project management, in particular proper communication and coordination measures with its dependent entities.

VOLUNTEERING

WHAT IS VOLUNTEERING?

Volunteering is a solidarity activity that takes the form of a voluntary unpaid activity for a period of up to twelve months. It provides young people with the opportunity to contribute to the daily work of organisations in solidarity activities to the ultimate benefit of the communities within which the activities are carried out. As the main mechanism for promoting solidarity as a value, volunteering helps to overcome important societal challenges and addresses the needs of local communities. It also enables young people to acquire useful experience, skills and competences for their personal, educational, social, civic and professional development, thereby improving their employability and active citizenship.

Volunteering can take place in a broad range of areas, such as in the fields of environmental protection, climate change mitigation and greater social inclusion. It does not include activities that are part of curricula in formal education, vocational education and training systems and activities for emergency response, and must not interfere with the functioning of the labour market.

Activities supported under volunteering must constitute a rich experience in a non-formal and informal learning context, which enhances young people's skills and competences. They must not substitute traineeships or jobs and, should be based on a written volunteering agreement.

Volunteering should cover the participants' expenditure arising from participation in such solidarity activities but should not provide them with salaries or an economic benefit. Participation in volunteering activities must be free of charge for the volunteer, with the exception of possible contributions to travel costs (if the grant does not fully cover these costs) and additional expenses not linked to the implementation of the activity.

Volunteering activities are open to all young people, including people with fewer opportunities. Volunteers are to be selected in a fair, transparent and objective way, regardless of their ethnic group, religion, sexual orientation, political opinion, etc. No previous qualifications, educational level, specific experience or language knowledge must be required. A more specific profile of the volunteer might be drawn up if justified by the nature of the tasks of the activity or by the project context.

WHICH ACTIVITIES CAN BE SUPPORTED UNDER VOLUNTEERING?

The following Volunteering activities are supported under the Corps.

Individual Volunteering is a full-time (at least 30 and not more than 38 hours per week) unpaid solidarity activity for a duration of 2 to 12 months. This type of solidarity activity provides young people with the opportunity to contribute to the daily work of organisations in solidarity activities to the ultimate benefit of the communities within which the activities are carried out.

In duly justified cases, especially to encourage the participation of young people with fewer opportunities, volunteering activities of 2 weeks – 2 months can be accepted and implemented.

Individual volunteering activities can take place:

- **Cross-border** i.e. activities taking place in a country different from the country of residence of the participant(s); or
- **In-country,** i.e. activities taking place in the same country as the country of residence of the participant. For instance, to encourage and facilitate the participation of young people with fewer opportunities, to provide opportunities where national schemes do not exist, or to cater for priorities identified at European level within the framework of the European Solidarity Corps.

Volunteering teams are solidarity activities which allow teams of 10 to 40 participants coming from at least two different countries to volunteer together for a period between 2 weeks and 2 months. Such solidarity activities could especially contribute to the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities in the European Solidarity Corps. At least a quarter of the volunteers must come from abroad. In volunteering teams, European Solidarity Corps' volunteers will carry out tasks for a project over a short period of time (usually, but not exclusively, during holidays, breaks between study periods, transition from education to work, etc.). Despite their shorter duration, these activities will be valuable both for the individuals and for the communities benefitting from this service.

Examples of the valuable work that can be accomplished even over a short period of time include: e.g. restoring cultural heritage damaged by natural disaster, catering for species threatened by extinction; organising educational activities in refugee camps, etc.

The advantages of this specific type of group activities compared to standard individual volunteering activities include the

following:

- Volunteers will carry out the activity in a group. This can be an incentive for youngsters who do not feel ready to embark into challenging experiences on their own;
- The activity will be shorter in its duration. This can foster the participation of those youngsters who cannot commit for a long period of time because of their studies or jobs, but still want to be of help for the community.

Furthermore, the following side activities can also be funded:

- **Advance planning visits (APV)**: are planning visits to the country of the host organisation before the start of the volunteering activities. The purpose of the APVs is to ensure high quality activities by facilitating and preparing administrative arrangements, building trust and understanding and setting-up a solid partnership between the organisations involved. The visits will be typically organised for activities involving young people with fewer opportunities. In duly justified cases, visits will also be organised for participants who may encounter various difficulties throughout their activities, such as young people who have never travelled abroad. Participants can also be involved in the visit to help integrate them fully in the project and complement any other preparatory activity.
- **Complementary activities**: are relevant side activities designed to add value and augment the results of the project as well as to strengthen its impact on the local, regional, and/or European level. These complementary activities also aim at raising awareness of the value of volunteering for young people and for communities as well as at strengthening the recognition of the skills and competences gained by the volunteers. Complementary activities could include: job shadowing, meetings, workshops, conferences, seminars, training courses, coaching, etc. A maximum of 10 % of the total project budget can be allocated to complementary activities.

HOW ARE VOLUNTEERING ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED?

The above activities can be implemented through three types of projects: **Volunteering Projects**, **Volunteering Partnerships** and **Volunteering Teams in high priority areas**.

Volunteering Projects are the most common type of project, the format which allows the applicant organisations to apply for a European Solidarity Corps grant in order to implement one or more volunteering activities, as described in the tables below.

Volunteering Partnerships are a specific project format designed for enabling experienced volunteering organisations to develop and implement long-term projects, within a stable contractual framework. Volunteering Partnerships will also help enhance the quality and quantity of European Solidarity Corps volunteering opportunities. Projects should strategically respond to important societal needs; contribute to strengthening communities while enabling young people to acquire useful experience, skills and competences for their personal, educational, social, civic and professional development, thereby improving their employability. Volunteering Partnerships may implement the same volunteering activities as Volunteering Projects, except complementary activities.

Volunteering Teams in high priority areas is a distinct project format that supports activities by volunteering teams with a specific focus on thematic priorities defined each year at EU level. For 2018, applications for funding under this Action are expected to address the below policy priorities:

- European cultural heritage;
- Integration of third-country nationals (including asylum seekers and refugees);
- Response to environmental challenges, including disaster prevention, preparedness and recovery (excluding immediate disaster response).

The following table presents the eligible activities per project format:

Project Format	Eligible activities
Volunteering Projects	Individual volunteering Volunteering teams Advance planning visits Complementary activities
Volunteering Partnerships	Individual volunteering Volunteering teams Advance planning visits
Volunteering Teams in high priority areas	Volunteering teams Advance planning visits Complementary activities

HOW DO THE PROJECTS WORK?

Projects will typically consist of the following stages:

- Preparation (including practical arrangements, selection of participants, set up of agreements with partners and participants, linguistic/intercultural/task-related preparation of participants before departure);
- Implementation of activities;
- Follow-up (including the evaluation of the activities, issue of the certificate of participation as well as the dissemination and use of the project's outcomes).

Organisations taking part in volunteering activities should cover the following roles:

- A host role that covers the full range of activities related to hosting a Solidarity Corps participant, including the development of a programme of the young person's activities and providing guidance and support to the participant during all the phases of the project as appropriate (some of these activities can be carried out by a supporting organisation involved in the same project).
- A supporting role that entails supporting, preparing and/or training participants before departure, a mediation between them and their host organisations and/or providing support to participants upon return from their activity. Furthermore, where the host organisation cannot or does not wish to be responsible for some aspects of the host functions, these may also be covered by the supporting organisation.

In order to be able to take part in volunteering activities and carry out these roles, organisations need to hold either an Erasmus+ volunteering accreditation or the relevant (host/supporting) Quality Label for volunteering. Minimum two organisations, one host and one supporting need to be involved when implementing individual volunteering activities. This is not a requisite for in-country activities and volunteering teams where the minimum requirement is to have at least one host organisation. Nevertheless, the involvement of a supporting organisation in activities involving young people with fewer opportunities is highly recommended.

Volunteering Partnerships provide experienced organisations with a simplified and flexible alternative format for implementing volunteering activities. The projects will be delivered in two stages.

In the first stage, applicants will be required to submit a project proposal laying down the objectives, relevance and impact of their project, an overall description of activities for the entire duration and indicative annual targets. After the selection and awarding process is completed, a 3-year financial framework partnership agreement is signed by the applicant organisation and the National Agency. The financial and operational capacity of the applicant will be verified before signature. The financial framework partnership agreement will set out the procedure to conclude specific agreements for annual grants as well as the general rights and obligations of each party under the specific grant agreements. An indicative budget corresponding to the entire duration of the project will be included. The financial framework partnership agreement will not give rise to any obligation of the National Agency to award specific grants.

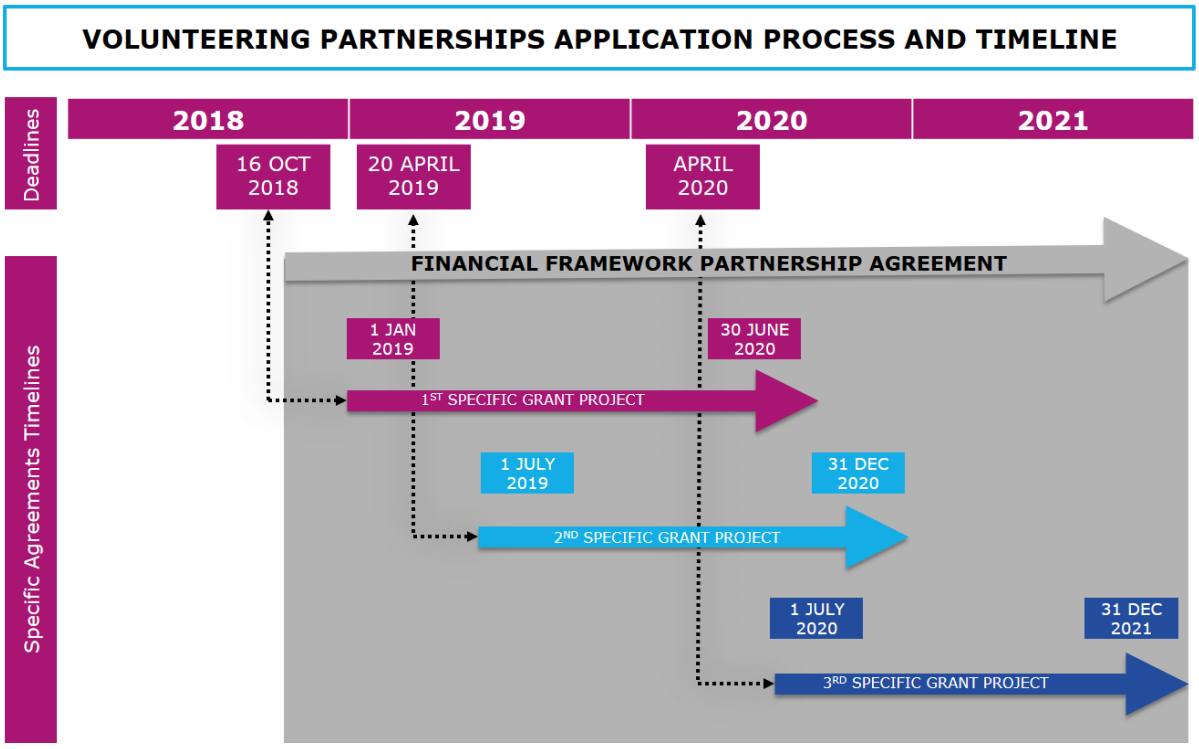
In the second stage, the award of a financial framework partnership agreement will give applicant organisations the possibility to apply for funding for volunteering activities in a simplified way under three annual calls (2018, 2019, 2020). Subject to the funds being available, the National Agencies will invite the organisations with whom the financial framework partnership agreements have been signed to provide a detailed work plan of volunteering activities in order to conclude specific agreements for grants for periods of 18 months.

In order to ensure a timely start of the activities, in 2018 the applications for the financial framework partnership agreements and the applications for the first specific agreements will have the same deadline, 16 October 2018. The applications for specific grant agreements will be evaluated only after the framework partnership agreement has been

awarded. The quality of the activities proposed in the applications for specific grant will be assessed by taking into account the context provided in the framework partnership agreements.

For the subsequent years, specific agreements of duration of 18 months will be awarded following a simplified assessment of the quality of project performance and depending on the availability of funds. The graphic below illustrates the process envisaged.

Successful Volunteering Partnership applicants are not eligible for funding under the Volunteering Projects format.



WHAT ARE THE CRITERIA USED TO ASSESS PROJECTS?

Here below are listed the formal criteria that the projects must respect in order to be eligible for a grant:

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

GENERAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Eligible participating organisations	Any organisation that holds a relevant Quality Label or an Erasmus+ volunteering accreditation or has applied for a relevant Quality Label by the deadline for grant applications. Participating organisations must hold a valid Quality Label or an Erasmus+ volunteering accreditation at the start of the activities. Participating organisations must be legally established in a participating country or a partner country.	
Eligible applicants	Any eligible participating organisation from a participating country holding a relevant Quality Label or Erasmus+ volunteering accreditation before grant award decision.	
Duration of project	Volunteering Projects	From 3 to 24 months.
	Volunteering Partnerships	A volunteering partnership will cover 3 annual calls (2018, 2019 and 2020). Specific grants will cover periods of 18 months.
	Volunteering Teams in high priority areas	From 3 to 24 months.
Where to apply?	Volunteering Projects	To the National Agency of the country in which the applicant organisation is established.
	Volunteering Partnerships	To the National Agency of the country in which the applicant organisation is established. The applications for specific grants must be submitted to the National Agency which awarded the related financial framework agreement for a Volunteering Partnership.
	Volunteering Teams in high priority areas	To the Education, Audiovisual and Cultural Executive Agency.
When to apply?	Volunteering Projects	Applicants have to submit their grant application by 16 October 2018 at 12:00 (midday CET - Brussels time) for projects starting between 1 January and 31 May of the following year.
	Volunteering Partnerships	Applicants have to submit their application (including for the first specific grant) by 16 October 2018 at 12:00 (midday CET - Brussels time).
	Volunteering Teams in high priority areas	Applicants have to submit their grant application by 18 February 2019 at 12:00 (midday CET - Brussels time).
How to apply?	Please see Part D of this Guide for details on how to apply.	
Other criteria	A Declaration of Honour of the legal representative must be annexed to the application form. Advance Planning Visit (APV): mainly for activities involving volunteers with fewer opportunities. If the project foresees APVs, then the following eligibility criteria must be respected: ▪ duration of the APV: maximum 2 days (travel days excluded); ▪ number of participants: 1 representative per supporting organisation. The number of participants can be raised provided that all additional participants are volunteers with fewer opportunities taking part in the activity.	

ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTEERING ACTIVITIES

Duration	From 2[14] to 12 months, excluding travel time In the case of young people with fewer opportunities, the activity can start as from 2 weeks, excluding travel time.

[14] As from 60 days, excluding travel days.

Venue(s)	Activities have to take place in a participating Country or a partner country. A volunteer from a participating country must carry out the activity in a participating country or in a partner country. A volunteer from a partner country neighbouring the EU cannot carry out the activity in another partner country neighbouring the EU.
Eligible participants	Young people between 18 and 30 years[15] who are legally residing in a participating country or in a partner country and have registered in the European Solidarity Corps Portal. A volunteer can take part in only one Solidarity Corps volunteering activity. Volunteers who have taken part in an Erasmus+ volunteering activity or a European Voluntary Service are not eligible. **Exceptions**: In duly justified cases, volunteers who have taken part in in-country volunteering activities can subsequently take part in cross-border volunteering activities. The reverse is not possible. Volunteers who carried out an Erasmus+ volunteering activity, a European Voluntary Service (EVS) or a European Solidarity Corps volunteering activity lasting up to 2 months[16] can take part in an additional European Solidarity Corps volunteering activity. In all cases, the total amount of time must not exceed 14 months.
Number of participating organisations	For cross-border activities at least two organisations must participate, one host organisation and one supporting organisation. A supporting organisation from the country in which the participant is legally residing (country of origin of the participant) is required. For in-country activities, at least one host organisation is required.
Other criteria	In order to maintain a clear link to the country where the National Agency is based, either ▪ the venue of the activity must be the country of the National Agency to which the application is submitted; or ▪ the participant must be from the country of the National Agency to which the application is submitted. A timetable for the activities planned must be annexed to the application form (only for Volunteering Projects).

[15] Participants must have reached 18 and must not be older than 30 at the start date of the activity.
[16] Up to 59 days, excluding travel days.

ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR VOLUNTEERING TEAMS

Duration of activity	2 weeks to 2 months[17], excluding travel time
Venue(s)	Activities have to take place in a participating country or in a partner country.
Eligible participants	Young people between 18 and 30 years[18] who are legally residing in a participating country or in a partner country and have registered in the European Solidarity Corps Portal.
Number of participants and composition of teams	10 to 40 participants coming from at least 2 different countries out of which one is a participating country. At least a quarter of the volunteers should come from abroad.
Number of participating organisations	At least one host organisation must participate.
Other criteria	In order to maintain a clear link to the country where the National Agency is based, either ▪ the venue of the activity must be in the country of the National Agency to which the application is submitted; or ▪ the participant(s) from the country of the National Agency to which the application is submitted must be involved. A timetable for the activities planned must be annexed to the application form (only for Volunteering Projects) .

Applicant organisations will be assessed against the relevant **exclusion and selection criteria** (See Part D of this Guide).

[17] Up to 59 days, excluding travel days.
[18] Participants must have reached 18 and must not be older than 30 at the start date of the activity.

AWARD CRITERIA

To be considered for funding, proposals must score at least 60 points. Furthermore, they must score at least half of the maximum points in each of the categories of the award criteria mentioned below.

AWARD CRITERIA FOR VOLUNTEERING PROJECTS

Relevance, rationale and impact (maximum 30 points)	▪ The relevance of the project to the objectives of the European Solidarity Corps; ▪ The degree to which the project takes into account the European Solidarity Corps principles and values and promotes solidarity; ▪ The extent to which the proposal will address well defined and important societal needs; ▪ The relevance of the project to the needs and objectives of individual participants, participating organisations and the community in which the solidarity activities will take place; ▪ The potential impact of the project: – on participants and participating organisations; – outside the organisations and individuals directly participating in the project, at local, regional, national and/or European levels; ▪ The extent to which the project will provide benefits to the communities within which the activities are carried out; ▪ The extent to which the project provides European added value; ▪ The extent to which the project involves young people with fewer opportunities.
Quality of project design (maximum 40 points)	▪ The consistency between project objectives and activities proposed; ▪ The clarity, completeness and quality of all the phases of the project (preparation, implementation of activities and follow-up); ▪ The quality of the preparation provided to participants and of the support provided on participants' return; ▪ The quality of arrangements for the recognition and validation of participants' learning outcomes, as well as the consistent use of European transparency and recognition tools; ▪ The appropriateness of measures for selecting and/or involving participants in activities; ▪ The quality of proposed measures to reach out and involve young people with fewer opportunities; ▪ The quality of the non-formal learning methods and measures proposed to enable the participants to gain skills and competences that are valuable for their personal, educational, social, civic and cultural development; ▪ The appropriateness and quality of the measures proposed to improve the participants' employability and facilitate their integration on the labour market; ▪ If relevant, the added value of the complementary activities to the project objectives and the impact of the project.
Quality of project management (maximum 30 points)	▪ The quality of the practical arrangements, management and support modalities; ▪ The quality of cooperation and communication between the participating organisations, as well as with other relevant stakeholders; ▪ The quality of measures for evaluating the outcomes of the project; ▪ The appropriateness and quality of measures aimed at disseminating the outcomes of the project within and outside the participating organisations.

AWARD CRITERIA FOR VOLUNTEERING PARTNERSHIPS

Relevance, rationale and impact (maximum 40 points)	▪ The relevance of the project to the objectives of the European Solidarity Corps; ▪ The degree to which the project takes into account the European Solidarity Corps principles and values and promotes solidarity; ▪ The extent to which the proposal will address well defined and important societal needs; ▪ The relevance of the project to the needs and objectives of individual participants, participating organisations and the community in which the solidarity activities will take place; ▪ The potential impact of the project: – on participants and participating organisations; – outside the organisations and individuals directly participating in the project, at local, regional, national and/or European levels; ▪ The extent to which the project will provide benefits to the communities within which the activities are carried out; ▪ The extent to which the project provides European added value; ▪ The extent to which the project involves young people with fewer opportunities.
Quality of project design (maximum 20 points)	▪ The consistency between project objectives and activities proposed; ▪ The clarity, completeness and quality of all the phases of the project (preparation, implementation of activities and follow-up) ; ▪ The quality of the preparation provided to participants and of the support provided on participants' return; ▪ The quality of arrangements for the recognition and validation of participants' learning outcomes, as well as the consistent use of European transparency and recognition tools; ▪ The appropriateness of measures for selecting and/or involving participants in activities; ▪ The quality of proposed measures to reach out and involve young people with fewer opportunities.
Quality of project management (maximum 40 points)	▪ The appropriate experience of the organisation to reach the objective of the project; ▪ The quality of the practical arrangements, management and support modalities; ▪ The quality of cooperation and communication between the organisations; ▪ The quality of measures for evaluating the outcomes of the project; ▪ The appropriateness and quality of measures aimed at disseminating the outcomes of the project within and outside the participating organisations.

AWARD CRITERIA FOR VOLUNTEERING TEAMS IN HIGH PRIORITY AREAS

Relevance, rationale and impact (maximum 30 points)	▪ The degree to which the project addresses one or more of the policy priorities identified in the call; ▪ The degree to which the project takes into account the European Solidarity Corps principles and values and promotes solidarity; ▪ The extent to which the proposal will address well defined and important societal needs; ▪ The relevance of the project to the needs and objectives of individual participants, participating organisations and the community in which the solidarity activities will take place; ▪ The potential impact of the project: – on participants and participating organisations; – outside the organisations and individuals directly participating in the project, at local, regional, national and/or European levels; ▪ The extent to which the project will provide benefits to the communities within which the activities are carried out; ▪ The extent to which the project provides European added value; ▪ The extent to which the project involves young people with fewer opportunities; ▪ The quality of measures for evaluating the outcomes of the project; ▪ The appropriateness and quality of measures aimed at disseminating the outcomes of the project within and outside the participating organisations.
Quality of project design (maximum 40 points)	▪ The consistency between project objectives and activities proposed; ▪ The quality of the preparation provided to participants and of the support provided on participants' return; ▪ The quality of arrangements for the recognition and validation of participants' learning outcomes, as well as the consistent use of European transparency and recognition tools; ▪ The appropriateness of measures for selecting and/or involving participants in activities; ▪ The quality of proposed measures to reach out and involve young people with fewer opportunities; ▪ The quality of the non-formal learning methods and measures proposed to enable the participants to gain skills and competences that are valuable for their personal, educational, social, civic and cultural development; ▪ The appropriateness and quality of the measures proposed to improve the participants' employability and facilitate their integration on the labour market.
Quality of project management (maximum 30 points)	▪ The quality of the practical arrangements, management and support modalities; ▪ The clarity, completeness and quality of all the phases of the project (preparation, implementation of activities and follow-up) ; ▪ The quality of cooperation and communication between the participating organisations, as well as with other relevant stakeholders.

WHAT ARE THE FUNDING RULES?

Eligible costs		Financing mechanism	Amount	Rule of allocation
Travel	Contribution to the travel costs of participants from their place of origin to the venue of the activity and return. In addition, if applicable, travel costs for Advance Planning Visits.	Contribution on the basis of unit costs	For travel distances between 10 and 99KM: EUR 20 per participant	Based on the travel distance per participant, including accompanying persons. Travel distances must be calculated using the distance calculator supported by the European Commission. The applicant must indicate the distance of a one-way travel to calculate the amount of the EU grant that will support the round trip[19].
			For travel distances between 100 and 499 KM: EUR 180 per participant	
			For travel distances between 500 and 1 999 KM: EUR 275 per participant	
			For travel distances between 2 000 and 2 999 KM: EUR 360 per participant	
			For travel distances between 3 000 and 3 999 KM: EUR 530 per participant	
			For travel distances between 4 000 and 7 999 KM: EUR 820 per participant	
			For travel distances of 8 000 KM or more: EUR 1 500 per participant	
Organisational Support	Project management costs (e.g. planning, finances, coordination and communication between partners, administrative costs)	Contribution on the basis of unit costs	EUR 2 000 per volunteering team activity EUR 225 per participant in individual volunteering Maximum EUR 4 500 per project	Based on the number of participants in volunteering activities, excluding accompanying persons.

[19] For example, if a person from Madrid (Spain) is taking part in an activity taking place in Rome (Italy), the applicant will a) calculate the distance from Madrid to Rome (1365,28 KM); b) select the applicable travel distance band (i.e. between 500 and 1999 KM) and c) calculate the EU grant that will provide a contribution to the costs of travel of the participant from Madrid to Rome and return (275 EUR).

	Activity costs - Costs directly linked to the implementation of volunteering activities (e.g. preparation, monitoring and support of participants, validation of learning outcomes), including costs linked to the subsistence of participants (e.g. boarding, lodging and local travel). For Advance Planning Visits, costs linked to the subsistence of the participants.	Contribution on the basis of unit costs	A1 per day per participant For Advance Planning Visit: A2 per day per participant	Based on the host country and the duration of the stay (if necessary, including also one travel day before the activity and one travel day following the activity) per participant, including accompanying persons.
Inclusion Support	Costs directly linked to the implementation of volunteering activities involving young people with fewer opportunities (e.g. preparation, reinforced mentorship, monitoring and support of participants, validation of learning outcomes), excluding subsistence.	Contribution on the basis of unit costs	A3 per day per participant	Based on the host country and the duration of the stay (if necessary, including also one travel day before the activity and one travel day following the activity) per participant with fewer opportunities, excluding accompanying persons.
Pocket Money	Contribution to additional personal expenses for participants.	Contribution on the basis of unit costs	A4 per day per participant	Based on the host country and the duration of the stay (if necessary, including also one travel day before the activity and one travel day following the activity) per participant, excluding accompanying persons.
Linguistic support	Costs linked to the support offered to participants - prior to departure or during the activity – in order to improve the knowledge of the language they will use to carry out their volunteering tasks.	Contribution on the basis of unit costs	EUR 150 per participant	Conditional: Only for activities lasting 60 days and more. Only for languages and/or levels not offered by the Online Linguistic Support.
Exceptional costs	Costs for providing a financial guarantee, if the National Agency asks for it. Financial support for expensive travel costs (e.g. from and to outermost regions). Visa and visa-related costs, residence permits, vaccinations, medical certifications.	Real costs	Costs for financial guarantee: 75 % of eligible costs Expensive travel costs: maximum up to 80 % of eligible costs Other costs: 100 % of eligible costs	Conditional: The request for financial support to cover exceptional costs must be motivated in the application form. For Exceptional costs for expensive travel, applicants must justify that the standard funding rules (based on unit costs per travel distance band) do not cover

	Costs to support the participation of young people with fewer opportunities or with special needs on equal terms as others not covered by any other unit cost budget category.			at least 70 % of the travel costs of participants. If awarded, the exceptional costs for expensive travel replace the standard travel grant.
Complementary activity costs	Costs directly linked to the implementation of the complementary activities of the project. Indirect costs: A flat-rate amount, not exceeding 7 % of the eligible direct costs of the complementary activities, is eligible under indirect costs, representing the beneficiary's general administrative costs which can be regarded as chargeable to the complementary activities (e.g. electricity or internet bills, costs for premises, cost of permanent staff, etc.)	Real costs	Maximum up to 80 % of eligible costs Maximum 10 % of the total project budget	Conditional: the request for financial support must be motivated in the application form and justified in relation to the planned activities.

WHAT ARE THE RATES?

	Organisational Support – Activity Costs (EUR per day)	Organisational Support – Activity Costs APV only (EUR per day)	Inclusion Support (EUR per day)	Pocket Money (EUR per day)
	A1	A2	A3	A4
Austria	24	16	8	**5**
Belgium	27	18	9	4
Bulgaria	18	12	6	4
Croatia	20	13	7	5
Cyprus	22	15	7	5
Czech Republic	18	12	6	5
Denmark	27	18	9	6
Estonia	19	12	6	4
Finland	27	18	9	5
France	21	14	7	6
Germany	24	16	8	5
Greece	22	15	7	5
Hungary	18	12	6	5
Ireland	27	18	9	6
Italy	22	15	7	5
Latvia	20	13	7	4
Lithuania	19	12	6	4
Luxembourg	27	18	9	5
Malta	23	15	8	5
Netherlands	27	18	9	5
Poland	19	12	6	4
Portugal	21	21	7	5
Romania	18	12	6	3
Slovakia	20	13	7	5
Slovenia	21	14	7	4
Spain	19	12	6	5
Sweden	27	18	9	5
United Kingdom	27	18	9	6
former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	16	11	5	3
Iceland	27	18	9	6
Liechtenstein	25	17	8	6
Norway	27	18	9	6
Turkey	18	12	6	4
Neighbouring partner country	16	11	5	3

TRAINEESHIPS AND JOBS

WHAT ARE TRAINEESHIPS AND JOBS?

Traineeships and Jobs are solidarity activities that provide young people with opportunities for work practice or employment, helping them to enhance their skills and experience thus facilitating their employability and transition into the labour market.

Traineeships and jobs offer young people a unique opportunity to gain experience and make a start on the labour market while contributing to address important societal challenges. The participation of young people in these activities will be of benefit to themselves and to national and local authorities and bodies, non-governmental organisations and companies in their efforts to cope with various challenges. Traineeships and jobs can take place in a broad range of areas such as in the fields of environmental protection, climate change mitigation and greater social inclusion, but do not include activities that are part of curricula in formal education, vocational education and training systems and activities for emergency response.

The traineeships and jobs will be available for a large variety of profiles and cover a broad range of skill-levels. The specific activities that young people will engage in will vary from sector to sector. The solidarity dimension of a traineeship or job can be demonstrated by the nature and/or scope of the opportunity being offered. Any occupation, regardless of whether it is one requiring high skilled workers or low-skilled workers, and regardless of the sector it belongs to, can be regarded as a solidarity-related activity provided the nature and/or scope of that particular activity reflects a clear desire to commit to the common good and serve others. Enabling young people to offer their skills and motivation to address societal challenges while also making a living may be the purpose of any organisation, irrespective of its legal form or sector of activity.

The European Solidarity Corps seeks to promote social inclusion and enhance young people's career perspectives. Having been a participant in the Corps is a valuable achievement for any young person (in particular for the most vulnerable and detached from the labour market) and will be an asset when applying for a job. Paid traineeships and jobs can represent an incentive for disadvantaged young people and young people with fewer opportunities to participate in solidarity-related activities that they might not otherwise be able to access.

Traineeships can ease the transition of young people from education to employment and can help foster the employability of young people, which is key to achieving their sustainable integration into the labour market.

The availability and scope of traineeships is uneven across the participating countries, as there is a plurality of regulatory frameworks. Consequently, the number of traineeships available may vary and depends on the practices and opportunities in each national labour market.

The action will also enable employers to find the skills they need in a pool of socially-minded young people with varied qualifications who can contribute to the future of their businesses or organisations. They can use this precious resource to strengthen their activities on the ground for the benefit of citizens and society as a whole. They may have a bigger choice of potential employees with the skills they are looking for. They could additionally benefit from highlighting the socially responsible activities of their businesses or organisations.

Traineeships and jobs could be facilitated by relevant labour market actors, in particular public and private employment services, social partners and Chambers of Commerce, as well as the member organisations of EURES, in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2016/589 of the European Parliament and of the Council[20] in the case of cross-border activities. These actors – on the condition of holding a Quality Label – may submit a project in view of intermediating between registered candidates and employers offering traineeships and jobs.

[20] Regulation (EU) 2016/589 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 April 2016 on a European network of employment services (EURES), workers' access to mobility services and the further interpretation of labour market and amending Regulations (EU) No 492/2011 and (EU) No 1296/2013 (OJ L 107, 22.4.2016, p. 1).

WHAT ACTIVITIES CAN BE SUPPORTED UNDER TRAINEESHIPS AND JOBS?

Applicants will be able to apply for projects combining the activities described below.

Traineeships: a European Solidarity Corps traineeship is a period of full-time (in line with national legislation) work practice of between 2 to 6 months renewable once. Eligible traineeship activities need to meet the following conditions:

- are remunerated by the organisation responsible for the traineeship;
- include a learning and a training component to help the participant gain relevant experience with a view to developing competences useful for the participants' personal, educational, social, civic and professional development;
- are based on a written traineeship agreement concluded at the beginning of the traineeship in accordance with the applicable regulatory framework of the country where the traineeship takes place, as appropriate; indicating the educational objectives, the working conditions, the duration of the traineeship, the remuneration of the participant and the rights and obligations of the parties and taking into account the principles outlined in the Council Recommendation of 10 March 2014 on a Quality Framework for Traineeships[21];
- should be clearly separated from volunteering, both from a financial and organisational point of view and should never lead to job substitution.

In exceptional cases and if justified by the organisation responsible for the traineeship - taking into account national practices and the nature of the tasks - the traineeship can be renewed once and for a maximum duration of 12 months, within the same participating organisation (e.g. in case of traineeships for young people with fewer opportunities who might require a longer traineeship experience to be able to integrate into the labour market). The National Agency will decide on a case-by-case basis whether a traineeship's duration of more than 6 months is justified.

Jobs: a European Solidarity Corps job is a solidarity activity undertaken for a full-time period (in line with national legislation) of a minimum duration of 3 months that is paid by the participating organisation employing the participant. There is no maximum duration set for the employment contract but the financial support provided through the European Solidarity Corps is limited to 12 months. Eligible activities need to meet the following conditions:

- are remunerated by the participating organisation employing the participant;
- include a learning and a training component to help the participant gain relevant experience with a view to developing competences useful for the participants' personal, educational, social, civic and professional development;
- are based on a written employment contract which respects all the terms and conditions of employment as defined in the national law, applicable collective agreements, or both, of the country in which the job is being carried out.

Traineeships and jobs should be accompanied by adequate preparation, on-the-job training and support upon return in relation to the participation of the participant.

Traineeships and jobs can take place:

- **Cross-border,** i.e. activities taking place in a country different from the country of origin of the participant(s); or
- **In-country,** i.e. activities taking place in the same country as the country of residence of the participant; for instance, to encourage and facilitate the participation of young people with fewer opportunities; to provide opportunities where national schemes do not exist, or present a clear European added value.

Furthermore, the following side activities can also be included in a project:

- **Advance Planning visits (APV):** are planning visits to the location of the activity before the start of traineeship/job. The purpose of the APVs is to ensure high quality activities by making necessary administrative arrangements, building trust and understanding and setting-up a solid partnership between organisations and people involved. The visits will be typically organised for activities involving young people with fewer opportunities. In duly justified cases, visits will also be organised for participants who may encounter various difficulties throughout their activity, such as young people who have never travelled abroad. APVs cannot not be used for traineeship/job interviews, they should be organised after the participant was selected.
- **Complementary activities:** are relevant side activities designed to add value and augment the results of the project as well as to strengthen its impact on the local, regional, and/or European level. These complementary activities also aim at raising awareness of the value of training and working in solidarity related fields for young

[21] OJ C 88, 27.3.2014, p. 1.

people and for communities as well as at strengthening the recognition of the skills and competences gained when undertaking such activities. Complementary activities could include: job shadowing, meetings, workshops, conferences, seminars, training courses, coaching, etc. A maximum of 10 % of the total project budget can be allocated to complementary activities.

HOW DO THE PROJECTS WORK?

Individual projects will typically consist of the following stages:

- Preparation (including practical arrangements, selection of participants, set up of agreements with partners and participants, linguistic/intercultural/task-related preparation of participants before departure);
- Implementation of activities;
- Follow-up (including the evaluation of the activities, the formal recognition - where applicable - of the learning outcomes of participants during the activity, issue of the certificate of participation as well as the dissemination and use of the project's outcomes).

There is no minimum requirement regarding the number of organisations involved in a project. A single organisation holding a Quality Label can submit an application.

The applicant organisation can deliver the project by itself or in cooperation with partners, which are not required to have a Quality Label. The applicant is accountable for the entire project but can delegate responsibilities to partners. For cross-border activities, the applicant will have to demonstrate its capacity to prepare participants in the country of departure and provide support upon return.

Young people express their willingness to participate in the European Solidarity Corps by registering on the European Solidarity Corps portal. Organisations have to select the participants through the database of young people registered.

WHAT ARE THE CRITERIA USED TO ASSESS PROJECTS?

Here below are listed the formal criteria that the projects must respect in order to be eligible for a grant:

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

GENERAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Eligible participating organisations	Any organisation that holds a relevant Quality Label or has applied for a relevant Quality Label by the deadline for grant applications. Participating organisations must hold a valid Quality Label at the start of the activities. The organisations must be legally established in a participating country.
Eligible applicants	Any eligible participating organisation from a participating country holding a relevant Quality Label before grant award decision.
Duration of project	From 6 to 24 months.
Where to apply?	To the National Agency of the country in which the applicant organisation is established.
When to apply?	Applicants have to submit their grant application by the 16 October 2018 at 12:00 (midday CET - Brussels time) for projects starting between 1 January and 31 May of the following year.
How to apply?	Please see Part D of this Guide for details on how to apply.
Other criteria	A Declaration of Honour of the legal representative must be annexed to the application form. Advance Planning Visit (APV): mainly for activities involving young people with fewer opportunities. If the project foresees an APV, then the following eligibility criteria must be respected: ▪ duration of the APV: maximum 2 days (travel days excluded); ▪ number of participants: 1 representative per participating organisation. The number of participants can be raised provided that all additional participants are participants with fewer opportunities that are taking part in the activity.

ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR TRAINEESHIPS

Duration	From 2[22] to 6 months, excluding travel time. Traineeships should be temporary and have a maximum duration of six months renewable once with a maximum duration of 12 months within the same participating organisation.
Venue(s)	Activities have to take place in a participating country.
Eligible participants	Young people between 18 and 30 years[23] who are legally residing in a participating country and have registered in the European Solidarity Corps Portal. A participant can engage in only one European Solidarity Corps traineeship. In duly justified cases, participants who have completed an in-country traineeship can subsequently engage in a cross-border traineeship. The reverse is not possible.
Number of participating organisations	At least one organisation holding a Quality Label. For cross-border activities, the applicant will have to demonstrate its capacity to prepare participants in the country of departure and provide support on return.
Other criteria	In order to maintain a clear link to the country where the National Agency is based, either ▪ the venue of the activity must be the country of the National Agency to which the application is submitted; or ▪ the participant must be from the country of the National Agency to which the application is submitted. The traineeships offered need to be in line with the Quality Framework for Traineeships[24] and must be based on a written traineeship agreement. The trainees must be remunerated in line with national legislation, including minimum wage conditions for trainees.

ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR JOBS

Duration	From 3[25] to 12 months, excluding travel time.
Venue(s)	Activities have to take place in a participating country.
Eligible participants	Young people between 18 and 30 years[26] who are legally residing in a participating country and have registered at the European Solidarity Corps Portal. A participant can engage in only one Solidarity Corps job. In duly justified cases, participants who have completed an in-country job can subsequently engage in a cross-border job. The reverse is not possible.
Number of participating organisations	At least one organisation holding a Quality Label. For cross-border activities, the applicant will have to demonstrate its capacity to prepare participants in the country of departure and provide support on return.
Other criteria	In order to maintain a clear link to the country where the National Agency is based, either ▪ the venue of the activity must be the country of the National Agency to which the application is submitted; or ▪ the participant must be from the country of the National Agency to which the application is submitted. The job will be based on an employment contract in accordance with the national regulatory framework of the country where the job is located. The job holders must be remunerated in line with national legislation, including minimum wage conditions.

Applicant organisations will be assessed against the relevant **exclusion and selection criteria** (See Part D of this Guide).

[22] As from 60 days, excluding travel days.
[23] Participants must have reached 18 and must not be older than 30 at the start date of the activity.
[24] See also Council Recommendation of 10 March 2014 on a Quality Framework for Traineeships (2014/C 88/01).
[25] As from 90 days, excluding travel days.
[26] Participants must have reached 18 and must not be older than 30 at the start date of the activity.

AWARD CRITERIA

To be considered for funding, proposals must score at least 60 points. Furthermore, they must score at least half of the maximum points in each of the categories of award criteria mentioned below.

Relevance, rationale and impact (maximum 30 points)	▪ The relevance of the project to the objectives of the European Solidarity Corps; ▪ The degree to which the project takes into account the European Solidarity Corps principles and values and promotes solidarity; ▪ The extent to which the project will address well defined and important societal needs; ▪ The relevance of the project to the needs and objectives of individual participants, participating organisations and the community in which the solidarity activities will take place; ▪ The potential impact of the project: – on participants and participating organisations; – outside the organisations and individuals directly participating in the project, at local, regional, national and/or European levels; ▪ The extent to which the project will provide benefits to the communities within which the activities are carried out; ▪ The extent to which the project provides European added value; ▪ The extent to which the project involves young people with fewer opportunities.
Quality of project design (maximum 40 points)	▪ The consistency between project objectives and activities proposed; ▪ The clarity, completeness and quality of all the phases of the project (preparation, implementation of activities and follow-up) ; ▪ The quality of the preparation provided to participants; ▪ The quality of arrangements for the recognition and validation of participants' learning outcomes, as well as the consistent use of European transparency and recognition tools; ▪ The appropriateness of measures for selecting and/or involving participants in activities; ▪ The quality of proposed measures to reach out and involve young people with fewer opportunities; ▪ The appropriateness and quality of the measures proposed to enable the participants to gain skills and competences that are valuable for their personal, professional, educational, social, civic and cultural development; ▪ The appropriateness and quality of the measures proposed to improve the participants' employability and facilitate their integration on the labour market.
Quality of project management (maximum 30 points)	▪ The quality of the practical arrangements, management and support modalities; ▪ The quality of cooperation and communication between the participating organisations, as well as with other relevant stakeholders; ▪ The quality of measures for evaluating the outcomes of the project; ▪ The appropriateness and quality of measures aimed at disseminating the outcomes of the project within and outside the participating organisations.

WHAT ARE THE FUNDING RULES?

The budget of any project under the action Traineeships and Jobs must be drafted according to the following funding rules (in euro):

Eligible costs		Financing mechanism	Amount	Rule of allocation
Travel	Contribution to the travel costs of participants from their place of origin to the venue of the activity and return. In addition, if applicable, travel costs for Advance Planning Visits.	Contribution on the basis of unit costs	For travel distances between 10 and 99KM: EUR 20 per participant	Based on the travel distance per participant, including accompanying persons. Travel distances must be calculated using the distance calculator supported by the European Commission. The applicant must indicate the distance of a one-way travel to calculate the amount of the EU grant that will support the round trip[27].
			For travel distances between 100 and 499 KM: EUR 180 per participant	
			For travel distances between 500 and 1 999 KM: EUR 275 per participant	
			For travel distances between 2 000 and 2 999 KM: EUR 360 per participant	
			For travel distances between 3 000 and 3 999 KM: EUR 530 per participant	
			For travel distances between 4 000 and 7 999 KM: EUR 820 per participant	
			For travel distances of 8 000 KM or more: EUR 1 500 per participant	
Organisational Support	**Project management costs** (e.g. planning, finances, coordination and communication between partners, administrative costs)	Contribution on the basis of unit costs	EUR 225 per participant Maximum EUR 4 500 per project	Based on the number of participants in traineeships or job activities, excluding accompanying persons.

[27] For example, if a person from Madrid (Spain) is taking part in an activity taking place in Rome (Italy), the applicant will a) calculate the distance from Madrid to Rome (1365,28 KM); b) select the applicable travel distance band (i.e. between 500 and 1999 KM) and c) calculate the EU grant that will provide a contribution to the costs of travel of the participant from Madrid to Rome and return (275 EUR).

	Activity costs - Costs directly linked to the implementation of traineeships or job activities (e.g. preparation, monitoring and support of participants, integration programme, validation of learning outcomes), excluding subsistence. For Advance Planning Visits, costs linked to the subsistence of the participants.	Contribution on the basis of unit costs	B1 per day per participant For Advance Planning Visit B2 per day per participant	Based on the host country and the duration of the stay (if necessary, including also one travel day before the activity and one travel day following the activity) per participant, including accompanying persons.
Inclusion Support	Costs directly linked to the implementation of traineeships or job activities involving young people with fewer opportunities (e.g. preparation, reinforced mentorship, monitoring and support of participants, validation of learning outcomes), excluding subsistence.	Contribution on the basis of unit costs	B3 per day per participant	Based on the host country and the duration of the stay (if necessary, including also one travel day before the activity and one travel day following the activity) per participant with fewer opportunities, excluding accompanying persons.
Relocation Allowance	Contribution to additional personal expenses for participants.	Contribution on the basis of unit costs	B4 per day per participant Maximum 180 days.	Based on the host country and the duration of the stay envisaged in the traineeship agreement / employment contract (if necessary, including also one travel day before the activity and one travel day following the activity) per participant, excluding accompanying persons. At least 80 % of the total amount will be paid to the participant at the start of the activity. The remainder will be paid before the end of the activity.
Linguistic support	Costs linked to the support offered to participants - prior to departure or during the activity – in order to improve the knowledge of the language they will use to carry out their tasks.	Contribution on the basis of unit costs	EUR 150 per participant	Conditional: Only for languages and/or levels not offered by the Online Linguistic Support.

Exceptional costs	Costs for providing a financial guarantee, if the National Agency asks for it. Financial support for expensive travel costs (e.g. from and to outermost regions). Visa and visa-related costs, residence permits, vaccinations, medical certifications. Recognition of academic and/or professional qualifications (e.g. certified copies, translations, administrative proceedings, aptitude tests, etc). Costs to support the participation of young people with fewer opportunities or with special needs on equal terms as others not covered by any other unit cost budget category.	Real costs	Costs for financial guarantee: 75 % of eligible costs Expensive travel costs: maximum up to 80 % of eligible costs Other costs: 100 % of eligible costs	Conditional: The request for financial support to cover exceptional costs must be motivated in the application form. For exceptional costs for expensive travel, applicants must justify that the standard funding rules (based on unit costs per travel distance band) do not cover at least 70 % of the travel costs of participants. If awarded, the exceptional costs for expensive travel replace the standard travel grant.
Complementary activity costs	Costs directly linked to the implementation of the complementary activities of the project. Indirect costs: A flat-rate amount, not exceeding 7 % of the eligible direct costs of the complementary activities, is eligible under indirect costs, representing the beneficiary's general administrative costs which can be regarded as chargeable to the complementary activities (e.g. electricity or internet bills, costs for premises, cost of permanent staff, etc.)	Real costs	Maximum up to 80 % of eligible costs Maximum 10 % of the total project budget	Conditional: the request for financial support must be motivated in the application form and justified in relation to the planned activities.

WHAT ARE THE RATES?

	Organisational Support – Activity Costs (EUR per day)	Organisational Support – Activity Costs for APVs (EUR per day)	Inclusion Support (EUR per day)	Relocation allowance (EUR per day)
	B1	B2	B3	B4
Austria	8	16	8	5
Belgium	9	18	9	4
Bulgaria	6	12	6	4
Croatia	7	13	7	5
Cyprus	7	15	7	5
Czech Republic	6	12	6	5
Denmark	9	18	9	6
Estonia	6	12	6	4
Finland	9	18	9	5
France	7	14	7	6
Germany	8	16	8	5
Greece	7	15	7	5
Hungary	6	12	6	5
Ireland	9	18	9	6
Italy	7	15	7	5
Latvia	7	13	7	4
Lithuania	6	12	6	4
Luxembourg	9	18	9	5
Malta	8	15	8	5
Netherlands	9	18	9	5
Poland	6	12	6	4
Portugal	7	21	7	5
Romania	6	12	6	3
Slovakia	7	13	7	5
Slovenia	7	14	7	4
Spain	6	12	6	5
Sweden	9	18	9	5
United Kingdom	9	18	9	6

SOLIDARITY PROJECTS

WHAT IS A SOLIDARITY PROJECT?

A solidarity project is an in-country solidarity activity initiated, developed and implemented by young people themselves for a period from 2 to 12 months. It gives a group of minimum five young persons the chance to express solidarity by taking responsibility and committing themselves to bring positive change in their local community. The project should have a clearly identified topic which the group of young people wish to explore together and which has to be translated into the concrete daily activities of the project and involve all the participants. Solidarity Projects should address key challenges within the communities but it should also clearly present European added value. Participation in a solidarity project is an important non-formal learning experience through which young people can enhance their personal, educational, social and civic development.

A solidarity project will typically consist of the following stages:

- Preparation;
- Implementation of the activities;
- Follow-up (including the evaluation of the activities as well as the dissemination of project's result).

WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES AND IMPACT?

A Solidarity Project should clearly refer to the **European Solidarity Corps' principles and values**, in particular towards solidarity. This common value provides the necessary unity to cope with current and future societal challenges, which young Europeans are willing to help address by expressing their solidarity in practice. A Solidarity Project could address young people with fewer opportunities facing the situations that make their inclusion in society more difficult.

The young people should take the initiative to respond to the issues and challenges around them, which is why a solidarity project should be directly linked to the **local community** they live in, although some of them can also tackle regional or even national issues. A solidarity project should have an impact on the local community by addressing local issues, targeting a specific group or developing local opportunities (particularly in communities located in rural, isolated or marginalised areas) but also through involving different actors and developing new partnerships. Thus, by setting common goals and cooperating together to achieve them, communities can benefit from a solidarity project.

Together with addressing the local challenges, a Solidarity Project should also clearly demonstrate **European added value** by addressing priorities identified at European level. A Solidarity Project should reflect a common concern for issues within the European society, such as for example integrating third-country nationals, climate change or democratic participation. The European added value can be expressed through any element of a solidarity project that is linked with European issues, values and priorities. The European priorities will also be promoted through dissemination of the results of the project.

Participation in a Solidarity Project will also be an important **non-formal learning experience** for young people. It should foster sense of initiative, active European citizenship and entrepreneurial spirit. In particular, the participants could absorb in practice the concept of social entrepreneurship by creating new products or services that benefit local community or society in general and address important societal challenges. By putting their own ideas into practice, meeting unexpected situations and finding solutions for them, trying out innovative and creative measures, young people will learn new skills and capacities, express their own creativity and take responsibility for their action. They will boost their self-esteem, autonomy and motivation to learn. Participation in a solidarity project could be also a first step into self-employment or setting up organisations in the solidarity, non-profit or youth sectors.

HOW IS A SOLIDARITY PROJECT IMPLEMENTED?

Young people who want to form a group to run a Solidarity Project must be registered in the European Solidarity Corps portal. There is no maximum number of participants. The activities will take place in the country of residence of the participants, facilitating the participation of young people with fewer opportunities who may encounter difficulties to engage in transnational activities.

The group will decide autonomously on the working methods and how the project will be managed. One of the participants will assume a role of legal representative who will submit the application (unless an organisation applies on behalf of the group). The group will arrange the distribution of tasks and responsibilities, ensure efficient coordination and communication between the participants and define the amount of time spent in carrying out the tasks in relation to the goals of the project. Working methods should aim to involve all participants of the group in a balanced way through various phases of the project and of activities (preparation, implementation and dissemination). The phases should be clearly structured.

A group of young people who plan a solidarity project can seek for support from **an organisation** (any public or private body). An organisation may apply on their behalf for a grant under the European Solidarity Corps. The role of the organisation should be mainly administrative, to support the group in the project life-cycle administrative and financial tasks. However it can also offer support and guidance in identifying and documenting learning outcomes.

Young people carrying out a Solidarity Project may be supported by **a coach**. A coach is a resource person who could have youth work experience to accompany groups of young people and support their participation. She/he can play different roles depending on the needs of a given group of young people. The coach will remain outside the Solidarity Project but may support the group of young people in the preparation, implementation and evaluation of their project based on the needs of the group. The coach can facilitate and foster the quality of the learning process and assist in identifying and documenting learning outcomes at the end of the project. Coaches can be volunteers or professionals. A coach will not be a project leader, a consultant, a member of the group or a legal representative of the project.

Through the different phases of the project, the group should reflect on the **learning process**, which they experience and have experienced. During the planning phase of the project, the learning goals should be discussed alongside the general aims of the project. During the implementation, regular reflection is encouraged and towards the end of the project, the group should consider measures that make the learning outcomes visible. For recognising and validating these learning outcomes it is recommended to use Youthpass and the related learning process reflection.

The group should reflect together on measures aimed at enhancing the visibility of their project and the visibility of the European Solidarity Corps in general. The group should also reflect on **follow-up measures**. The project should be framed within a longer-term perspective and planned with a view to achieve a sustainable impact. In order to make the project and its results more sustainable, the group is expected to carry out a final evaluation. The final evaluation should make it possible to assess whether the objectives of the project have been achieved; the expectations of the group have been met and evaluate the overall success. The group should consider the ways of sharing the results of the project and reflect on with who they should be shared.

WHAT ARE THE CRITERIA USED TO ASSESS PROJECTS?

Here below are listed the formal criteria that the projects must respect in order to be eligible for a grant:

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Who implements the project?	A group of minimum 5 young people aged between 18 and 30 years[28] who are legally residing in one and the same participating country and have registered in the European Solidarity Corps Portal.
Who can apply?	The group that will implement the project. One of the young people in the group assumes the role of the legal representative and takes the responsibility of submitting the application. Any public or private body on behalf of the group that will implement the project.
Number of participants	Minimum 5. There is no maximum number of participants.
Venue of the project	The project must take place in the country of the applicant.
Duration of project	2 to 12 months
Where to apply?	To the National Agency of the country where the applicant is legally resident.
When to apply?	Applicants have to submit their grant application by 16 October 2018 at 12:00 (midday CET - Brussels time) for projects starting between 1 January and 31 May of the following year.
How to apply?	Please see part D of this Guide for details how to apply.
Other criteria	A Declaration of Honour of the legal representative must be annexed to the application form.

Applicants will be assessed against the relevant **exclusion and selection criteria** (See Part D of this Guide).

[28] Participants must have reached 18 and must not be older than 30 at the start date of the activity.

AWARD CRITERIA

To be considered for funding, proposals must score at least 60 points. Furthermore, they must score at least half of the maximum points in each of the categories of award criteria mentioned below.

Relevance, rationale and impact of the project (maximum 40 points)	▪ The relevance of the project to the objectives of the European Solidarity Corps; ▪ The degree to which the project takes into account the European Solidarity Corps principles and values in particular solidarity; ▪ The extent to which the project provides European added value; ▪ The extent to which the project will address well defined and important societal needs; ▪ The relevance of the project to the needs of individual participants, communities and target group (if any); ▪ The extent to which the project addresses young people with fewer opportunities; ▪ The potential impact of the project on participants, incl. their personal, entrepreneurship skills and social involvement; ▪ The potential impact on communities.
Quality of the project design (maximum 40 points)	▪ The consistency between project objectives and activities proposed; ▪ The extent to which the composition of the group permits to reach the project objectives; ▪ The clarity, completeness and quality of all the phases of the project (preparation, implementation and dissemination); ▪ The balanced involvement of the participants of the group at the various phases of the project; ▪ The demonstration of the reflection on the learning process of the project.
Quality of project management (maximum 20 points)	▪ The quality of the practical arrangements and management modalities; ▪ The quality of cooperation and communication between the participants of the group; ▪ The measures for evaluating the outcomes of the project; ▪ The appropriateness and quality of measures aimed at disseminating the outcomes of the project and making it visible.

WHAT ARE THE FUNDING RULES?

The budget of any project under the action Solidarity projects must be drafted according to the following funding rules (in euro):

Eligible costs		Financing mechanism	Amount	Rule of allocation
Project Management	Costs linked to the management and implementation of the project (e.g. preparation, implementation, of activities, evaluation, dissemination and follow-up activities).	Contribution on the basis of a unit cost	EUR 500 per month	Based on the duration of the Solidarity project.
Coaching costs	Costs linked to the involvement of a coach in the project.	Contribution on the basis of a unit cost	C1 per day of work. Maximum 12 days.	Based on the venue country and the working days. Conditional: The request for financial support to cover coach costs must be motivated in the application form.
Exceptional costs	Costs to support the participation of young people with fewer opportunities.	Real costs	100 % of eligible costs	Conditional: The request for financial support to cover exceptional costs must be motivated in the application form.

WHAT ARE THE RATES?

	Coaching Costs (EUR per day)
	C1
Austria	241
Belgium	214
Bulgaria	74
Croatia	74
Cyprus	137
Czech Republic	137
Denmark	241
Estonia	74
Finland	214
France	214
Germany	214
Greece	137
Hungary	74
Ireland	241
Italy	214
Latvia	74
Lithuania	74
Luxembourg	241
Malta	137
Netherlands	241
Poland	74
Portugal	137
Romania	74
Slovakia	74
Slovenia	137
Spain	137
Sweden	241
United Kingdom	214

PART C – INFORMATION ABOUT THE QUALITY AND SUPPORT MEASURES

In this Part, readers will find the following information:

- a description of the support measures;
- a description of their objectives and for whom they are;
- additional information on key elements of the participation in a European Solidarity Corps project;

Before submitting an application, applicants are advised to read carefully the entire section.

WHICH MEASURES ARE SUPPORTED?

The European Solidarity Corps provides a range of quality and support services for participants and participating organisations.

- General Online Training;
- Linguistic Support;
- Training and Evaluation cycle;
- Mentoring;
- Recognition of Learning Outcomes;
- Insurance;
- Certificate of participation;
- European Solidarity Corps Portal.

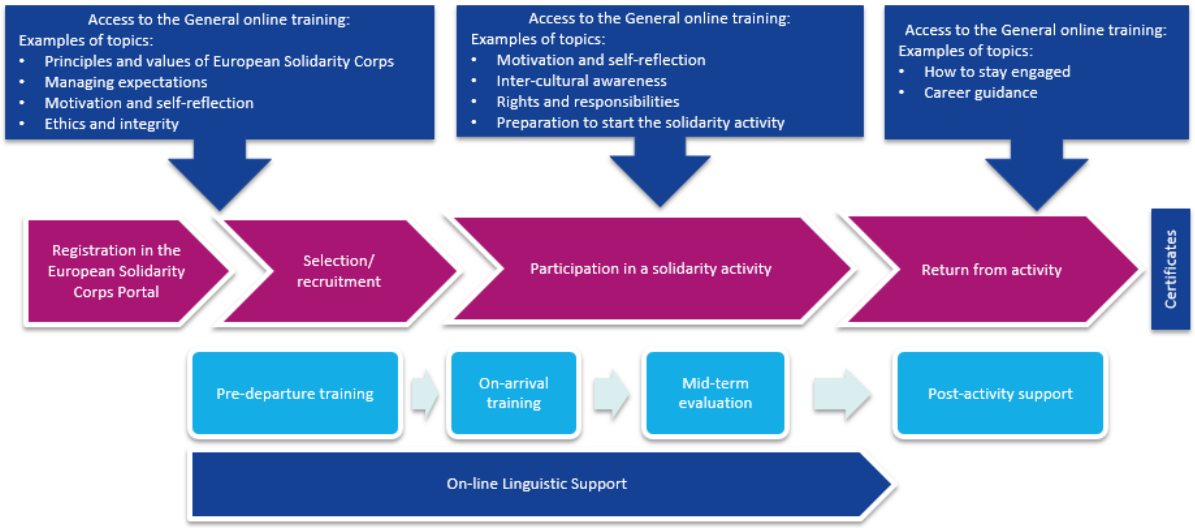
WHAT ARE THE AIMS OF THESE MEASURES?

Insofar as quality and support measures are concerned, the specific objectives of the European Solidarity Corps shall be pursued through actions that aim:

- to ensure compliance with the principles and requirements of the European Solidarity Corps Charter on the part of all public and private organisations seeking to participate in the activities of the European Solidarity Corps;
- to ensure that the solidarity activities that are offered to the European Solidarity Corps participants contribute to addressing concrete, unmet societal needs and strengthening communities and are of high quality and properly validated.

SUPPORT TO NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

Non-formal learning is a key feature of the European Solidarity Corps. In addition to being embedded in the activities, from which the participants will learn, some quality and support measures aiming at supporting and reinforcing the learning development of the participants are foreseen. These include the General Online Training, the Online Linguistic Support, and the Training and Evaluation Cycle.



GENERAL ONLINE TRAINING

WHAT IS THE GENERAL ONLINE TRAINING?

The General Online Training is an open access training for the registered candidates and participants selected for an activity provided via the European Solidarity Corps' portal. General Online Training is a general induction with various modules such as the mission of the European Solidarity Corps, ethics, integrity, roles and responsibilities of the participants, European values, inter-cultural awareness, thematic training, health and safety etc. General objective of the training will be to support European Solidarity Corps registered candidates in their engagement in quality solidarity activities and contribute to the building of the community of the European Solidarity Corps. The training should become part of a non-formal learning process of European Solidarity Corps participants who will be involved in specific projects and for the registered candidates in the portal not yet selected to capture their attention and stimulate their motivation. General Online Training will be made available in the course of 2019.

FOR WHOM?

General Online Training will be available to the registered candidates and participants selected for an activity via the European Solidarity Corps' portal.

LINGUISTIC SUPPORT

WHAT IS THE LINGUISTIC SUPPORT?

Linguistic support is available for the language used by participants for carrying out a solidarity activity abroad in the framework of the European Solidarity Corps. Linguistic support will mainly be offered via the European Solidarity Corps Online Linguistic Support, as e-learning offers advantages for language learning in terms of access and flexibility. The Online Linguistic Support includes a mandatory assessment of language competences and voluntary language courses. Language assessment is a crucial aspect of the initiative in order to provide the right preparation for each participant and collect evidence on language skills of participants. Therefore, a language assessment will be undertaken by participants before their

activity and another assessment will be carried out at the end of the activity period to monitor progress in language competences. The results of the language assessment test carried out by participants before their departure will not preclude them from taking part in the activity, whatever the result may be. The online language assessment shall thus not be used to select potential participants in European Solidarity Corps activities, but to provide them with an opportunity to boost the level of their language skills where needed. The provision of linguistic support shall be based on mutual trust between organisations who should ensure appropriate linguistic support.

FOR WHOM?

Participants undertaking a volunteering, traineeship or job activity abroad lasting two months or longer are eligible to receive linguistic support prior to departure or during the activity.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Through the Online Linguistic Support (OLS):

The Commission makes available an online tool for participants with a view to assess their competence in the language they will use to carry out their volunteering, traineeship or job abroad. This tool offers them, where necessary, the possibility to improve the knowledge of the language before and/or during the activity. Participants with a level of at least B2 in the main language of their activity may choose to follow an OLS course in the language of the host country, if available. The linguistic support is provided as follows:

- at the time of applying, the applicant organisation will estimate the need for linguistic support for their participants - in the main language that participants will use to carry out their tasks or in the language of the host country, if applicable;
- National Agencies allocate online licences to beneficiary organisations according to general criteria specified by the European Commission;
- once selected, all participants (except native speakers and in duly justified cases) benefiting from the online service must carry out an online language test to assess their competences in the foreign language they will use during their mobility abroad or in the language of the receiving country, if applicable. The results of this assessment will be communicated to the participants and will not have any influence on their possibility to go abroad;
- based on the number of online licences available for language courses, the participants who need linguistic support may be offered the possibility to follow an online language course;
- at the end of their activity, participants will carry out a second online language assessment to measure the progress made in the selected language (unless they scored a C2 level in their initial assessment round). The results will be communicated to the volunteer, to the coordinating organisation upon request, and could thereafter be integrated in the Youthpass certificate and/or Europass.

In the initial stages of the Programme, the online assessment and courses will not be provided in all EU languages and language courses may not be available for all participants requesting them. Further details are made available on the websites of the Commission and National Agencies.

The existence of Online Linguistic Support should not prevent organisations from providing other types of language support to volunteers, trainees or job-holders.

Through the Linguistic Support Grant:

For languages not covered by the online service, support for language learning must be arranged by the participating organisations in the project. A specific grant for "linguistic support" may be provided for that purpose. Beneficiaries of this grant should encourage participants to start learning the language before their activity. Furthermore, organisations involved can use the "organisational support" grant to address the needs of participants in terms of pedagogical, task-related, intercultural or specific linguistic preparation (see the "funding rules" section in Part B of this Guide).

TRAINING AND EVALUATION CYCLE

WHAT IS THE TRAINING AND EVALUATION CYCLE (TEC)?

One of the key features of the European Solidarity Corps is the training and evaluation it provides to participating organisations and participants. Firstly, guiding young participants through a non-formal learning process before, during and after their period of activity. Secondly, supporting Quality Label organisations in offering a qualitative frame for the experience to take place. The training and evaluation dimension within the European Solidarity Corps aims at:

- Providing young participants with continuous guidance and support throughout their activity period. Such training and evaluation contributes to the education and development of each young person and facilitates contacts between participants, participating organisations and National Agencies / SALTOs (Support, Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities centres). It also helps resolve conflicts and prevent risks, and it provides a means of assessing the participants' experience. The training and evaluation cycle for participants complements other ongoing support offered by the participating organisations before and during the activity period;
- Providing organisations involved with the necessary support and tools to develop and carry out qualitative projects as well as the opportunity to exchange and network with other European Solidarity Corps actors.

Quality is the main objective of preparation, training and evaluation. Given the diversity of countries, National Agencies, organisations holding the Quality Label and participants; there is a large degree of flexibility in the training format, whereas the quality indicators should be common to all training sessions.

What follows outlines the minimum that should be covered by a training/evaluation session. Trainers and organisers are of course free to add any country-specific or project-specific features they deem necessary or interesting for the people attending their training/evaluation event. The minimum quality standards clarify what can be expected to be achieved at a training/evaluation session, whether by the organisers of the event, the project supervisors, the mentors or the participants themselves. At the same time, concerning training of participants, the NAs, regional SALTOs and the participating organisations should as far as possible try to ensure that the training/evaluation opportunities offered to each participant are in line with their specific needs.

Training providers can link the different training/evaluation stages while avoiding any overlaps in the content, and can thus help create a continuous learning process for the participants before, during and following their activity period.

FOR WHOM IS THE TRAINING AND EVALUATION CYCLE?

- Participants in Volunteering, Traineeships and Jobs;
- Organisations holding a Quality Label.

TRAINING AND EVALUATION CYCLE FOR PARTICIPANTS – HOW DOES IT WORK?

The Training and Evaluation Cycle for participants consists of the following sessions:

- pre-departure training (only cross-border activities);
- on-arrival training (activity of 2 months and longer);
- mid-term evaluation (activity of 6 months and longer);
- annual European Solidarity Corps events.

Participants have a right and an obligation to attend the pre-departure training, the on-arrival training and the mid-term evaluation sessions and the participating organisations must ensure that their participants take part in the TEC, which is considered an integral part of the activity.

In addition to the Training and Evaluation Cycle, participants receive continuous counselling and guidance before, during and after the activity period, while training for project managers, mentors and trainers adds up to a complex set of measures, accompanying participants and participating organisations throughout the European Solidarity Corps experience.

PRE-DEPARTURE TRAINING

In order for the project to be successful and the European Solidarity Corps experiences to be positive and enriching for the participant, it is crucial that the applicant organisation adequately prepares the participant prior to departure. This training is only mandatory to participants in cross-border activities.

This preparation should take place at least one month before departure and should be tailored to the individual needs of the participant and the specificities of the project, the activity and the host country. The organisation in charge of the training is responsible for ensuring that the Info-Kit is given to all participants involved in its project.

It is essential to provide information on "What to expect from the European Solidarity Corps" (part of the Info-Kit) — as well as on the basics of conflict prevention and crisis management. It must participants with practical and technical information on matters such as insurance, visa, pocket money and working hours, etc.

For traineeships and jobs this preparation should focus on practical and legal issues related to the country of destination (e.g. working conditions, labour law applicable, social security entitlements, taxation, housing, etc.). The training may also include the development of intercultural competences (i.e. information on social, history and cultural aspects of the country of destination, capacity to adapt to a multicultural working environment, etc.).

ON-ARRIVAL TRAINING

The main objective of the on-arrival training is to introduce the participants to the host country, preparing them for the activity period and the European Solidarity Corps experience. On-arrival training helps the participants adapt to cultural and personal challenges. It allows participants to get to know each other and to build a network. Participants should also receive guidance on conflict prevention and crisis management. NAs are responsible for organising this training for all participants in activities taking place in the country. The NAs can opt to delegate all or some of the sessions to subcontractors. However, the Agencies should remain involved in the sessions as much as possible and keep regular contact with the trainers.

At the same time, this training session equips the participants with communication skills, including aspects of intercultural learning. It helps them become aware that cultural differences require different models of behaviour. Participants in traineeships and jobs may receive information about adapting to a foreign working environment, rights and obligations, useful contacts to help with his/her settlement etc. The training is also a good time for the participants to plan the coming months and to develop their own personal goals for their activity period, in line with the non-formal learning philosophy of the European Solidarity Corps.

For volunteers in activities with a duration of less than two months, the host or supporting organisation has to organise a training in line with the minimum quality standards detailed in the table below, although possibly with a shorter duration.

Finally, it must be noted that the on-arrival training is also mandatory to in-country participants. Given the different requirements of information between participants in cross-border and in-country activities, the training provider can tailor the content of the training to each target group.

MID-TERM EVALUATION

The mid-term evaluation allows participants to assess their experience up to that point and to reflect on the activities, role and support of the host organisation and on their own contribution. The evaluation provides the opportunity to learn from everybody's experience and enables the participants to plan developments and/or further improvements in their activity and to think about what they will do in the longer term, once their experience is over. The evaluation should also raise awareness of the personal learning process, linking it to the key competences of the Youthpass and Europass. NAs are responsible for organising this training for all participants in activities taking place in the country. The NAs can opt to delegate all or some of the sessions to subcontractors. However, the Agencies should remain involved in the sessions as much as possible and keep regular contact with the trainers.

It is essential that the event be designed as a meeting between participants. It takes place long enough after their arrival for the participants to have gained enough experience to review their situation, but also sufficiently long before the end of the activity period so that there is still time to improve the situation if necessary.

ANNUAL EVENTS

The European Solidarity Corps events are organised by the sending National Agency and bring together former, current and potential participants. It may serve as an evaluation meeting, alumni meeting and/or promotional event. It is particularly important as an opportunity for those who have finished their volunteering activity during the past year to discuss and evaluate their experiences and to pass them on to current and potential participants. One of the objectives of the event is to ensure that the National Agency receives feedback about the projects, the participating organisations, the practical arrangements and the overall impression of the participation in the activities. A key question will be what learning effect the activity period had for the participant.

	Expected achievements
Pre-departure training (only for participants in cross-border activities)	The pre-departure preparation will vary according to training practices, organisational possibilities and participant needs. Nevertheless, pre-departure preparation should ensure that, by the time they leave, all participants: ▪ know about the concept of the European Solidarity Corps; ▪ are familiar with the partners involved in the activity, i.e. the host and supporting organisation in volunteering activities, the organisations holding an Occupational Quality Label in the case of traineeships and jobs, the mentor and, where applicable, the National/Executive Agency, Resource Centres and the European Commission; ▪ are familiar with the documents in the Info-Kit; ▪ have shared their motivations, expectations and fears, and have reflected on their goals, including goals for learning; ▪ have received appropriate practical and technical information on visas, residence permits, their legal status as a participant, their insurance (including guidance on how to obtain the mandatory European Health Insurance Card before the departure), pocket money, the relevant agreement under the European Solidarity Corps and the working conditions and labour law applicable (for traineeships and jobs participants) ; ▪ understand the meaning of intercultural learning and are aware of the ongoing intercultural learning process; ▪ have received guidance or at least hints on crisis management; ▪ understand the importance and usefulness of getting recognition for the individual learning outcomes, in particular through EU level tools such as Youthpass and Europass. The training should also contain modules for language learning in the host country's language or the language used in the context of the activity if such language training is not offered through the Online Linguistic Support or through grants for language learning. In addition to the pre-departure preparation by the supporting organisation, certain National Agencies may, in justified cases, offer a one-day information session to participants prior to their departure.
On-arrival training (only for participants in activities of 2 months and longer)	On-arrival training will vary according to national conditions, realities and training practices. Nevertheless, it should ensure that each participant: ▪ is aware of and has the chance to discuss questions about visas, residence permits, her/his legal status as a participant, insurance, the agreement under European Solidarity Corps, and the documents in the Info-Kit; ▪ has received information about adapting to a foreign working environment, rights and obligations, useful contacts to help with his/her settlement, etc.; ▪ knows the insurance and crisis management systems (insurance documentation and procedures), and is fully aware that using the European Health Insurance Card when possible is mandatory; ▪ knows what support is available from the National Agency and SALTO; ▪ has received information on the host country's history, political and social situation, on key aspects of the host culture and on how to get involved in the local community; ▪ is aware of how to deal with cultural differences and with conflicts; ▪ is familiar with the role of each partner (supporting organisation and host organisation) in the activity and knows her/his own rights and responsibilities; ▪ has the chance to meet and network with other participants; ▪ receives basic information about the European Union and its policies and programmes in the field of youth; ▪ learns about the objectives and principles of the European Solidarity Corps; ▪ knows the meaning of being a European Solidarity Corps participant; ▪ understands the importance and usefulness of getting recognition for the individual learning outcomes, in particular through EU level tools such as Youthpass and Europass; ▪ has identified clear learning goals and ideas for his/her activity. When needed, support should be offered to participants following the Online Linguistic Support for taking language assessments and courses.

Mid-term evaluation (only for participants in activities of 6 months and longer)	Mid-term evaluations will vary according to national conditions, realities and training practices. Nevertheless, by the end of the evaluation, each participant should have: ▪ personally assessed the activity so far and reflected on the scope of his/her activities; ▪ shared personal experiences (learning new skills and competences, being part of community life, living within a different culture, using the language); ▪ identified problems, difficulties, conflicts faced or about to be faced and consequently received satisfying support and clues on the 'next steps' to solve these problems; ▪ worked on developing/improving the activities he/she is involved in; ▪ received information and guidance on opportunities he/she could be involved in after the period of activity; ▪ understood how to use EU level recognition tools, such as Youthpass and Europass, to identify and document individual learning outcomes; ▪ received information about the Final Report to be produced.
Annual event (for all participants)	Events will vary according to national conditions, realities and practices. Nevertheless, by the end of the event, each participant who has finished their activity during the past year should have evaluated their experience in terms of: ▪ the cooperation between the participant and the participating organisations, and the personal support and supervision received; ▪ their personal contribution to the activity; ▪ the overall pedagogical approach and their own learning achievements (personal, professional, social), including being aware of their personal capacities and skills and (if relevant) having finalised their Youthpass and Europass; ▪ their increased knowledge about Europe, changes in their attitude towards Europe and their greater understanding of cultural diversity; ▪ having shared their experience with peers. Moreover, the event may be: ▪ a chance for potential participants and participating organisations to meet experienced participants; ▪ an opportunity to promote the European Solidarity Corps and its impact through contacts with stakeholders, decision-makers and the media; ▪ a networking event to explore and develop new projects and other ways of using their experiences; ▪ a showcase for successful projects; ▪ a celebration of solidarity and a step towards the reinforcement of the European Solidarity Corps community.

TRAINING AND EVALUATION CYCLE FOR ORGANISATIONS – HOW DOES IT WORK?

The Training and Evaluation Cycle of organisations consists of the following:

- training for organisations having been awarded recently the Quality Label;
- an annual event for organisations holding the Quality Label.

National Agencies are responsible for organising such trainings for all organisations holding a Quality Label in their country. For organisations in Neighbouring partner countries, the relevant SALTOs are the ones in charge. NAs/SALTOs may decide not to organise such trainings if other instruments are in place to ensure monitoring and quality implementation.

National Agencies / SALTOs can opt to delegate all or some of the sessions to subcontractors. However, the NAs/SALTOs should remain involved in the sessions as much as possible and keep regular contact with the trainers.

Organisations holding a Quality Label are recommended to attend these sessions.

TRAINING FOR ORGANISATIONS HOLDING THE EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS QUALITY LABEL

In order for the project to be successful and the experiences to be positive and enriching for all actors involved, organisations participating in the European Solidarity Corps which have been awarded a Quality Label need to have a thorough understanding of the core values and features of the Corps. During the training, these organisations will focus on the elements needed for a successful experience and reflections on how their project should be thought through and developed.

The training should:

- ensure understanding of each organisation's roles and responsibilities;
- give appropriate practical and technical information on the project management;
- raise awareness on the important features of the programme such as specific support for young people with fewer opportunities, EU level recognition tools such as Youthpass and Europass, Online Linguistic Support, role of the mentor, etc.;
- provide necessary support and tools to develop and carry out qualitative mentorship;
- support organisations in developing qualitative projects (selection of partners and participants, development of the tasks of the participants, crisis management, dissemination, etc.) ;
- provide networking and partner-building opportunities for organisations.

ANNUAL EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS EVENT

This yearly event should gather representatives of all European Solidarity Corps organisations holding a Quality Label with the aim of sharing experiences, ideas and practices, showcasing success stories, and developing and reinforcing networks / partner building. The event is also the opportunity to remind the core values and features of the programme. It will, additionally, allow assessing the difficulties encountered by organisations and the reasons of inactivity of some accredited organisations. This event can be combined with the Annual European Solidarity Corps event for participants.

TRAINING AND MENTORING

Volunteering

Personal support through mentoring should be provided to all participants in volunteering activities. Mentoring consist of regular meetings between the mentor appointed by the host or supporting organisation and the participant, within as well as outside the place where the activity takes place. The meetings should focus on the personal wellbeing of the participants. Mentoring is targeted towards the individual participant and thus the content and frequency of the meetings will vary according to the individual needs. Possible topics of mentoring meetings: personal wellbeing, wellbeing in the team, satisfaction with the tasks, practicalities etc.

Traineeships and jobs

Participants in traineeships and jobs activities should at all times receive specialised and personalised support from a mentor or a coach, to facilitate their integration, both in the new country and in the new training/working environment. This is a recommended measure in accordance with the participants' needs and requests.

Applicant organisations may receive financial support to design and provide an integration programme to the newly recruited participants. An integration programme consists of a package of induction trainings and other support services notably on-the-job mentoring or coaching aimed at improving the participant's skills, competences and adaptability to a "foreign working environment".

The integration programme could consist of one or more modules: a vocational-oriented training to prepare the participant for his/her new responsibilities and include also administrative support and settlement facilitation (e.g. housing, residence registration, etc.). The type of training, mentoring or on-the-job integration support to be offered to each participant will depend on his/her profile in relation to the needs of the recruiting organisation. The duration of the programme may vary, depending on the integration needs (several weeks or months).

Reinforced mentorship

'Reinforced Mentorship' is an intensified mentoring process that might be necessary to support young people with fewer opportunities, if they are not able to implement an activity independently or with normal mentoring or tutoring support. This type of mentoring is applicable to volunteering and traineeships and jobs. Reinforced Mentorship involves closer contact, more frequent meetings and more time allocated to the implementation of tasks. This guarantees a step-by-step support of the participants during project activities as well as outside working hours. Reinforced Mentorship enables the participants to gain as much autonomy as possible, thus contributing to the successful implementation of the project.

RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

WHAT IS RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES?

To support the impact of European Solidarity Corps activities on the personal, educational, social, civic and professional development of the participants, the competences (combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes) that are the non-formal

and informal learning outcomes gained in the solidarity activities shall be identified and documented, in particular through EU level recognition tools such as Youthpass and Europass.

FOR WHOM?

The identification and documentation of non-formal and informal learning outcomes is offered to participants (on a voluntary basis) and participating organisations (mandatory, insofar as the participant requests it). This means that every young person taking part in any European Solidarity Corps activity can benefit from a process and certificate that identifies and documents individual learning outcomes.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Every young person taking part in European Solidarity Corps activities is entitled to go through the Youthpass process and receive a Youthpass certificate at the end of the process. Youthpass identifies and documents the competences developed during the project. It is recommended to embed the educational approach of Youthpass from the start of the project and use it during the project activities as a tool to help participants to become more aware of, reflect on and assess their learning process and outcomes. Depending on the nature of the recognition needs and the individual solidarity activities, other tools can also be used such as e.g. Europass.

For more information and support on Youthpass: www.youthpass.eu

For more information on Europass: www.europass.eu

CERTIFICATE OF PARTICIPATION

WHAT IS THE CERTIFICATE OF PARTICIPATION?

The certificate of participation is a certificate to support the visibility of the participation in European Solidarity Corps activities. At the end of their solidarity activity, participants are entitled to receive a certificate of participation, issued (in the European Solidarity Corps portal) compulsorily by a participating organisation providing the activity.

FOR WHOM?

The certificate of participation is issued (mandatorily) to every participant having finalised a European Solidarity Corps activity.

EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS PORTAL

The European Solidarity Corps Portal offers European and national information and opportunities that are of interest to young people wishing to engage in the solidarity sector. It provides a one-stop shop for both interested young people and organisations wishing to join and to be part of the Corps. The Portal also allows young people to follow online trainings, get access to other services and, importantly, to build a community of like-minded young people. The aim is for the European Solidarity Portal to be integrated into all processes of the Corps. To access the European Solidarity Corps Portal, go to: http://europa.eu/youth/solidarity_en.

FOR WHOM?

Any young person interested in engaging in solidarity activities, who is at least 17 years old when registering, and organisations holding a Quality Label or accreditations from other EU programmes.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

BRINGING TOGETHER YOUNG PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONS

Young people wishing to engage in solidarity activities register in the European Solidarity Corps Portal. The European Solidarity Corps Portal offers a place for those young people and organisations holding a Quality Label and willing to

implement solidarity activities to find each other. In the Portal, organisations holding a Quality Label can advertise opportunities for volunteering activities, traineeships and jobs, search for registered candidates and contact them. Registered candidates can also look for opportunities and express their interest in them. Once the organisation and the registered candidate found each other, the organisation sends an offer to the registered candidate.

BUILDING COMMUNITY AND PROVIDING SERVICES

The European Solidarity Corps Portal offers additional services to registered candidates. Additionally to the Online Training and Certificate of participation - made available through the Portal - registered candidates can benefit from community building activities, updated information through newsletters and other useful functionalities that are gradually being developed. Young people registered as well as participants can also make use of the mobile app, enabling them to exchange and share experiences with the other young people registered in the Corps.

INSURANCE

Participants in cross-border activities must be in the possession of a European Health Insurance Card before arriving to the host country. This card gives access to medically necessary, state-provided healthcare during a temporary stay in any of the EU Member States, as well as in Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, under the same conditions and at the same cost (free in some countries) as people insured in these respective countries[29].

Irrespective whether the participant in cross-border activities is covered through the European Health Insurance Card, the European Solidarity Corps provides insurance coverage as following.

Those participants who are not eligible for the European Health Insurance Card free of charge, or those ineligible for reason of national legislation regarding the activities they perform, shall be entitled to receive a full coverage through the insurance provided by the European Commission[30]. Those that are eligible to a European Health Insurance Card free of charge will obtain complementary coverage from the insurance. Information about the coverage and support available through the insurance for volunteers, as well as instructions for enrolment, is available on the website of the insurance company.

Beyond the framework of this policy, the European Commission does not define a unique format of insurance, nor does it recommend specific insurance companies. It is it up to project organisers to seek the most suitable insurance policy according to the type of project carried out and to the insurance formats available at national level. Furthermore, it is not

[29] More information on the card and on how to obtain it is available at http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catid=559 .
[30] More information on the insurance scheme is available at: https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/actions/study-and-volunteering-in-another-country_en

necessary to subscribe to a project-specific insurance, if the participants are already covered by existing insurance policies of the project organisers. In either case, the following areas must be covered:

- wherever relevant, travel insurance (including damage or loss of luggage);
- third party liability (including, wherever appropriate, professional indemnity or insurance for responsibility);
- accident and serious illness (including permanent or temporary incapacity);
- death (including repatriation in case of projects carried out abroad).

FOR WHOM?

Every participant in a cross-border activity must be enrolled in the insurance scheme of the European Solidarity Corps. The insurance complements the coverage of the mandatory European Health Insurance Card and/or national social security systems.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The applicant organisation (in cooperation with the host organisations in the case of volunteering activities), is responsible for the enrolment of the participant(s). This enrolment must be done before the departure of the participant(s) and cover the duration of the activity. In addition, the organisation is responsible to keep the insurance company updated of any relevant change with regards the registration of its participants, in particular in cases where the participant ends their activity before the previously registered end date.

The insurance provides only complementary coverage to the European Health Insurance Card. Participants must be in possession of their European Health Insurance Card before the departure. In certain cases, when national rules deprive volunteers from coverage under the European Health Insurance Card for the duration of the activity, the insurance company will provide full coverage (see above). The insurance coverage has its own exclusions and ceilings and it is meant to cope with urgent and necessary care which cannot wait until the end of the activity period and the return home of the participant.

Finally, participants and organisations should take into account that it is a private insurance scheme. As such, it is highly recommended to contact the insurer before incurring a medical expense, as they will be able to provide the participant with information on whether the claim will be reimbursed, and how.

AGREEMENTS

AGREEMENTS BETWEEN PROJECT PARTNERS

All participating organisations involved in a European Solidarity Corps project are strongly recommended to sign an internal agreement between them. Such an agreement has the purpose of clearly defining responsibilities, tasks and financial contribution for all parties involved in the project. It is up to the participating organisations to jointly decide on how the EU grant will be distributed and which costs it will cover.

An internal agreement constitutes a key instrument for ensuring a solid and smooth cooperation among partners in a solidarity activity as well as to avoid or manage potential conflicts. Indicatively, it should contain at least the following information:

- project title and reference of the grant agreement between the applicant participating organisation and the granting Agency;
- names and contacts of all the participating organisations involved in the project;
- role and responsibilities of each participating organisation; division of the EU grant;
- modalities of payments and budget transfers among participating organisations.

Although this practice is strongly recommended to safeguard the interests of each partner in a project, such an agreement remains an internal document among partners; it will not be requested by the granting National Agency.

AGREEMENTS WITH PARTICIPANTS

Prior to their departure, each young person participating in an activity supported by the European Solidarity Corps (with the exception of an advance planning visit) must sign a volunteering agreement, a traineeship agreement or an employment contract. Where no national regulations are applicable, such an agreement shall define at least the following aspects of the solidarity activity:

- tasks to be carried out during the activity;
- intended learning outcomes;
- wherever applicable (for traineeships and jobs): remuneration to be provided.

VISA AND RESIDENCE PERMITS

Participants in European Solidarity Corps projects may need to obtain a visa for staying abroad in or coming from a partner Country hosting the activity. It is a responsibility of all the participating organisations to ensure that the authorisations required (short or long-term stay visas or residence permits) are in order before the planned activity takes place. It is strongly recommended that the authorisations are requested from the competent authorities well in advance, since the process may take several weeks. National Agencies and the Executive Agency may give further advice and support concerning visas, residence permits, social security, etc. The EU Immigration Portal contains general information on visa and residence permits, for both short-term and long-term stays:

http://ec.europa.eu/immigration/tab2.do?subSec=11&language=7$en.

PART D - INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

All organisations (including groups of young people in the case of solidarity projects assimilated here below to 'organisations') that intend to submit a project proposal in order to receive financial support from the EU under the European Solidarity Corps are invited to read carefully this section which is drafted in accordance with the applicable provisions of the Financial Regulation[31] applicable to the general budget of the European Union (hereafter defined as "EU Financial Regulation") and with its rules of application. Many of the steps described and information provided is also relevant for organisations wishing to apply for accreditation (Quality Label).

Individuals are not entitled to submit project proposals in the framework of the European Solidarity Corps, except for individuals applying on behalf of a group of (at least five) young people wishing to carry out a Solidarity Project (hereafter defined "Groups of young people").

WHAT TO DO IN ORDER TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION?

To submit a project application or an application for Quality Label, applicants must follow the four steps described below:

- Organisations involved in the application must register in the Participant Portal and receive a Participant Identification Code (PIC). Organisations / groups of young people that have already obtained a PIC through their participation in other EU programmes do not need to register again. The PIC obtained from this previous registration is valid also for applying under the European Solidarity Corps;
- check the compliance with the criteria for the relevant Action;
- check the financial conditions (only applicable to requests for funding, not relevant for Quality Label);
- fill in and submit the application form.

STEP 1: REGISTER IN THE PARTICIPANT PORTAL

Organisations involved in the application must be registered and provide their basic legal and financial data in the Education, Audiovisual, Culture, Citizenship and Volunteering Participant Portal, if not already done.

To register in the Participant Portal, the person representing an organisation (or a group of young people) must carry out the following steps:

- Create an EU Login account (unless the person representing the organisation/group already has an account). EU Login accounts can be created via the following website: https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/cas/login;
- Access the Participant Portal and register on behalf of the organisation/group. Guidance and Frequently Asked Questions are available on the Participant Portal, which can be accessed using the following link: http://ec.europa.eu/education/participants/portal/desktop/en/organisations/register.html .

The organisation needs to register only once in the Participant Portal. Once the registration is completed, the organisation/group will obtain a Participant Identification Code (PIC). The PIC, which is an unique identifier and is necessary for the submission of applications, enables the organisation/group to fill-in the online application forms in a simpler manner (i.e. by inserting the PIC number in the form, all the information provided by the organisation/group at registration stage will be automatically displayed in the form).

[31] The EU Financial Regulation can be found at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018R1046&from=EN .

PROOF OF LEGAL STATUS AND FINANCIAL CAPACITY

At the time of the registration, organisations (or the applicant young person for solidarity projects) must also upload the following documents in the Participant Portal:

- The Legal Entity form (this form can be downloaded from the European Commission's website at: http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/legal_entities/legal_entities_en.cfm);
- The Financial Identification form. Please fill in the form relating to the country in which the bank is located, even if the applicant organisation is officially registered in another country (this form can be downloaded at: http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/financial_id/financial_id_en.cfm).

For grant applications concerning amounts in excess of EUR 60 000, applicants may need to upload specific documents to give proof of their financial capacity. For more details, see the section "Selection Criteria" below.

The Financial Identification form should be provided only for the applicant organisation, but is not required for the partner organisations.

STEP 2: CHECK THE COMPLIANCE WITH THE CRITERIA

When developing their project and before applying for EU support, participating organisations / groups of young people must verify that the project respects the following criteria: eligibility, exclusion, selection and award.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The eligibility criteria mainly relate to the type of project and activities (including, where relevant, duration, participating organisations, etc.), the target group (e.g. status and number of participants involved) and the conditions for submitting a grant request for such a project (e.g. deadlines for submission, completeness of the application form, etc.).

To be eligible, the project must meet all the eligibility criteria relating to the Action under which the proposal is submitted. If the project does not meet these criteria at application stage, it will be rejected without being further evaluated.

As an exception, under some Actions, some eligibility criteria (e.g. duration, profile of participants, etc.) may only be verified during the stage of project implementation or at final report stage (not at application stage). At application stage, the applicants will be asked to declare that these criteria will be met by the project. However, if it appears at implementation or final report stage that these criteria have not been fulfilled, the participants or the activity may be considered ineligible with a consequent reduction/recovery of the EU grant initially awarded to the project.

FOR BRITISH APPLICANTS: Please be aware that eligibility criteria must be complied with for the entire duration of the grant. If the United Kingdom withdraws from the European Union during the grant period without concluding an agreement with the European Union ensuring in particular that British applicants continue to be eligible, you will cease to receive EU funding (while continuing, where possible, to participate) or be required to leave the project on the basis of the relevant provisions of the grant agreement on termination.

The specific eligibility criteria applying to each of the Actions are described in Part B of the Guide.

EXCLUSION CRITERIA

An applicant will be excluded from participating in calls for proposals under the European Solidarity Corps or will be rejected from the award procedure if it is found in one of the situations described below, in accordance with articles 136 - 140 and/or 141 of the EU Financial Regulation.[32]

a) the applicant is bankrupt, subject to insolvency or winding-up procedures, its assets are being administered by a liquidator or by a court, it is in an arrangement with creditors, its business activities are suspended, or it is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for under Union or national law;

b) a final judgement or a final administrative decision has established that the applicant is in breach of its obligations relating to the payment of taxes or social security contributions in accordance with the applicable law;

c) a final judgement or a final administrative decision has established that the applicant is guilty of grave professional misconduct by having violated applicable laws or regulations or ethical standards of the profession to which the applicant belongs, or by having engaged in any wrongful conduct which has an impact on its professional credibility where such conduct denotes wrongful intent or gross negligence, including, in particular, any of the following:

[32] Regulation (EU, EURATOM) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union.

(i) fraudulently or negligently misrepresenting information required for the verification of the absence of grounds for exclusion or the fulfilment of eligibility or selection criteria or in the performance of the legal commitment;

(ii) entering into agreement with other persons or entities with the aim of distorting competition;

(iii) violating intellectual property rights;

(iv) attempting to influence the decision-making of the authorising officer responsible during the award procedure;

(v) attempting to obtain confidential information that may confer upon it undue advantages in the award procedure;

d) a final judgement has established that the applicant is guilty of any of the following:

(i) fraud, within the meaning of Article 3 of Directive (EU) 2017/1371 of the European Parliament and of the Council[33] and Article 1 of the Convention on the protection of the European Communities' financial interests, drawn up by the Council Act of 26 July 1995[34];

(ii) corruption, as defined in Article 4(2) of Directive (EU) 2017/1371 or active corruption within the meaning of Article 3 of the Convention on the fight against corruption involving officials of the European Communities or officials of Member States of the European Union, drawn up by the Council Act of 26 May 199735, or conduct referred to in Article 2(1) of Council Framework Decision 2003/568/JHA36, or corruption as defined in other applicable laws;

(iii) conduct related to a criminal organisation as referred to in Article 2 of Council Framework Decision 2008/841/JHA[37];

(iv) money laundering or terrorist financing within the meaning of Article 1(3), (4) and (5) of Directive (EU) 2015/849 of the European Parliament and of the Council[38];

(v) terrorist offences or offences linked to terrorist activities, as defined in Articles 1 and 3 of Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA[39], respectively, or inciting, aiding, abetting or attempting to commit such offences, as referred to in Article 4 of that Decision;

(vi) child labour or other offences concerning trafficking in human beings as referred to in Article 2 of Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council[40];

e) the applicant has shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations in the performance of a legal commitment financed by the budget which has:

(i) led to the early termination of a legal commitment*;*

(ii) led to the application of liquidated damages or other contractual penalties; or*;*

(iii) been discovered by an authorising officer, OLAF or the Court of Auditors following checks, audits or investigations*;*

f) a final judgment or final administrative decision has established that the applicant has committed an irregularity within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2988/95[41];

g) a final judgment or final administrative decision has establishedthat the applicant has created an entity in a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or any other legal obligations in the jurisdiction of its registered office, central administration or principal place of business;

h) a final judgment or final administrative decision has established that an entity has been created with the intent referred to in point (g);

[33] Directive (EU) 2017/1371 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2017 on the fight against fraud to the Union's financial interests by means of criminal law (OJ L 198, 28.7.2017, p. 29).
[34] OJ C 316, 27.11.1995, p. 48.
[35] OJ C 195, 25.6.1997, p. 1.
[36] Council Framework Decision 2003/568/JHA of 22 July 2003 on combating corruption in the private sector (OJ L 192, 31.7.2003, p. 54).
[37] Council Framework Decision 2008/841/JHA of 24 October 2008 on the fight against organised crime (OJ L 300, 11.11.2008, p. 42).
[38] Directive (EU) 2015/849 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2015 on the prevention of the use of the financial system for the purposes of money laundering or terrorist financing, amending Regulation (EU) No 648/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council, and repealing Directive 2005/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Commission Directive 2006/70/EC (OJ L 141, 5.6.2015, p. 73).
[39] Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA of 13 June 2002 on combating terrorism (OJ L 164, 22.6.2002, p.3).
[40] Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2011 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/629/JHA (OJ L 101, 15.4.2011, p. 1).
[41] Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2988/95 of 18 December 1995 on the protection of the European Communities financial interests (OJ L 312, 23.12.1995, p. 1).

i) in the absence of a final judgement or where applicable a final administrative decision, the applicant is in one of the cases provided in (c), (d), (f), (g) and (h) above based in particular on :

(i) facts established in the context of audits or investigations carried out by EPPO, for those Member States participating in enhanced cooperation pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2017/1939, the Court of Auditors, OLAF or the internal auditor, or any other check, audit or control performed under the responsibility of the authorising officer;

(ii) non-final administrative decisions which may include disciplinary measures taken by the competent supervisory body responsible for the verification of the application of standards of professional ethics;

(iii) facts referred to in decisions of persons and entities implementing Union funds pursuant to point (c) of the first subparagraph of Article 62(1);

(iv) information transmitted in accordance with point (d) of Article 142(2) of EU Financial Regulation by entities implementing Union funds pursuant to point (b) of the first subparagraph of Article 62(1) of EU Financial Regulation.

(v) decisions of the Commission relating to the infringement of Union competition law or of a national competent authority relating to the infringement of Union or national competition law.

j) a applicant referred to in Article 135(2) where:

(i) a natural or legal person who is a member of the administrative, management or supervisory body of the applicant referred to in Article 135(2), or who has powers of representation, decision or control with regard to that applicant, is in one or more of the situations referred to in points (c) to (h) above;

(ii) a natural or legal person that assumes unlimited liability for the debts of the applicant referred to in Article 135(***2***) is in one or more of the situations referred to in point (a) or (b) above;

(iii) a natural person who is essential for the award or for the implementation of the legal commitment is in one or more of the situations referred to in points (c) to (***h***) above;

If an applicant is in one of the situations of exclusion listed above, it should indicate the measures it has taken to remedy the exclusion situation, thus demonstrating its reliability. They may include e.g. technical, organisational and personnel measures to prevent further occurrence, compensation of damage or payment of fines. This does not apply for the situations referred in point (d) of this section.

In the cases provided in (c) to (h) above, in the absence of a final judgement or where applicable a final administrative decision, the National or Executive Agency may exclude an applicant provisionally from participating in a call for proposals where their participation would constitute a serious and imminent threat to the Union's financial interests.

If the action for which the applicant has submitted its proposal foresees particular provisions for the participation of affiliated entities, the same exclusion criteria apply to affiliated entities.

Rejection from this procedure and administrative sanctions (exclusion or financial penalty) may be imposed on applicants or affiliated entities where applicable, if any of the declarations or information provided as a condition for participating in this procedure prove to be false.

The National or Executive Agency may publish on its internet site the following information related to the exclusion and, where applicable, the financial penalty in the cases referred to in points (c) to (h) above:

(a) the name of the applicant concerned;

(b) the exclusion situation;

(c) the duration of the exclusion and/or the amount of the financial penalty.

These exclusion criteria apply to applicants under all Actions of the European Solidarity Corps Programme. To certify that they are not in one of the situations mentioned above, applicants for an EU grant must provide a declaration on their honour certifying that they are not in any of the situations referred above. This declaration of honour constitutes a specific section or an annex of the application form.

In accordance with Articles from 136 to 142 of the EU Financial Regulation, administrative and financial penalties may be imposed on applicants who are guilty of misrepresentation or are found to have seriously failed to meet their contractual obligations under a previous grant award procedure[42].

[42] Except for Actions implemented by National Agencies.

Furthermore, the Commission considers that for the implementation of Actions covered by this Guide, the following organisations are or could be in a situation of conflict of interest and therefore are or could be not eligible to participate:

- National Authorities in charge of supervising National Agencies and the implementation of the European Solidarity Corps Programme in their country cannot apply or participate in any Action managed by National Agencies in any country, but may apply for participation (as applicants or partners) in Actions managed by the Executive Agency or by DG EAC unless that is explicitly excluded for the Action concerned (as indicated in Part B of the Guide);
- National Agencies (sole activity of their legal entity) or National Agencies departments of legal entities dealing with activities outside the remit of National Agencies cannot apply or participate in any Action implemented through this Guide;
- Structures and networks identified or designated in the European Solidarity Corps Regulation or in any Annual Commission Work programme adopted for the implementation of the European Solidarity Corps for specifically receiving a financial contribution from the Commission under the implementation of the European Solidarity Corps, which are hosted by the legal entity that also hosts the National Agency, cannot apply or participate in any Action managed by National Agencies in any country, but may apply for participation (as applicants or partners) in Actions managed by the Executive Agency or by DG EAC unless that is explicitly excluded for the Action concerned (as indicated in Part B of the Guide); they should be able to demonstrate, before being awarded a grant or a contract, that they are not in a conflict of interest either because precautionary measures are taken by them or because their internal organisation is such that there is a clear separation of interests. Furthermore, costs and revenues of each action or activity for which the EU funds are awarded must be identified. The decision for admitting there is sufficient assurance they are not in an actual conflict of interest is taken by the Executive Agency or by DG EAC, under their own responsibility and accountability, to which they apply;
- Legal entities hosting the National Agencies but dealing with other activities inside or outside the remit of the European Solidarity Corps, as well as entities affiliated to these legal entities, cannot apply or participate in any Action managed by National Agencies in any country, but may in principle apply for participation in Actions managed by the Executive Agency or DG EAC unless that is explicitly excluded for the Action concerned (as indicated in Part B of the Guide). However, they have to demonstrate, before being awarded a grant or a contract, they are not in a conflict of interest either because precautionary measures are taken by them or because their internal organisation is such that there is a clear separation of interests.(e.g. a minimum separation of accounts, separation of reporting and decision making lines, measures to prevent access to privileged information). Furthermore, costs and revenues of each action or activity for which the EU funds are awarded must be identified. The decision for admitting there is sufficient assurance they are not in an actual conflict of interest is taken by the Institution, under their own responsibility and accountability, to which they apply.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Through the selection criteria, the National or Executive Agency assesses the applicant's financial and operational capacity to complete the proposed project.

FINANCIAL CAPACITY

Financial capacity means that the applicant has stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain its activity throughout the period during which the project is being carried out or the year for which the grant is awarded and to participate in its funding.

The verification of the financial capacity does not apply to:

- public bodies, including Member States organisations;
- international organisations.

In case of EU grant requests submitted by other types of organisations (i.e. other than those mentioned above) and not exceeding EUR 60 000, applicants must provide a declaration on their honour certifying that they have the financial capacity to implement the project. This declaration of honour constitutes a specific section of the application form.

In case of EU grant requests submitted by other types of organisations and exceeding EUR 60 000, the applicant must submit, in addition to the declaration of honour, the following documents through the Participant Portal:

- For Actions managed by the National Agencies: the applicant's profit and loss account and the balance sheet for the last financial year for which accounts were closed;
- For Actions managed by the Executive Agency: a Financial Capacity Form filled in with the relevant statutory accounting figures and the financial statements (including the profit and loss account, the balance sheet, and other annexes if relevant) for the last two financial years for which accounts were closed;
- For entities which cannot provide the above documents because they are newly created, a financial declaration or an insurance declaration stating the applicant's professional risks may replace the above documents.

Organisations must upload these documents in the Participants Portal either at the time of their registration in the Portal (see section "Step1: Register in the Participants Portal" above) or by the deadline stipulated by the specific Action.

Where the application concerns grants for a project for which the amount exceeds EUR 750 000, in addition to the above, an audit report produced by an approved external auditor may be requested. That report shall certify the accounts for the last financial year available.

If, following the analysis of these documents, the National or Executive Agency concludes that the required financial capacity has not been proved or is not satisfactory, then they may:

- ask for further information;
- offer a grant agreement or grant decision with a pre-financing covered by a financial guarantee;
- offer a grant agreement or grant decision without pre-financing or with a reduced pre-financing;
- offer a grant agreement or grant decision with pre-financing based on several instalments;
- reject the application.

OPERATIONAL CAPACITY

Operational capacity means that the applicant has the necessary professional competencies and qualifications to carry out the proposed project. Applicants must provide a declaration on their honour certifying that they have the operational capacity to implement the project. In the case of the Quality Label, the operational capacity will be assessed according to the relevant questions of the form.

In addition, if required in the application form and if the grant exceeds EUR 60 000, applicants may be asked to submit the curriculum vitae (CVs) of the key persons involved in the project to demonstrate their relevant professional experience or other supporting documents such as:

- A list of relevant publications of the main team;
- An exhaustive list of previous projects and activities performed and connected to the policy field or to this specific Action.

AWARD CRITERIA

The award criteria allow the National or Executive Agency to evaluate the quality of the project proposals submitted in the framework of the European Solidarity Corps.

Within the limits of the budget available for each Action, grants will be awarded to those projects which respond to these qualitative criteria in the best way.

The full set of award criteria applying to each of the Actions implemented through this Guide are described in Part B.

STEP 3: CHECK THE FINANCIAL CONDITIONS

TYPES OF GRANT

The grant may be any of the following types:

- reimbursement of a specified proportion of the eligible costs actually incurred: e.g. the amount awarded to cover additional costs linked to visa related costs;
- reimbursement on the basis of contribution to unit costs: e.g. the amount awarded for organisational support for volunteering projects;
- a combination of the above.

The financing mechanism applied under the European Solidarity Corps in most cases provides grants based on the reimbursement on the basis of contribution to unit costs. These types of grant help applicants to easily calculate the requested grant amount and facilitate a realistic financial planning of the project.

To know which type of grant is applied to each funding item under each European Solidarity Corps activity covered by this Guide, please see the column "financing mechanism" in the "funding rules" tables in Part B.

PRINCIPLES APPLYING TO EU GRANTS

NON RETROACTIVITY

No EU grant may be awarded retroactively for projects already completed.

An EU grant may be awarded for a project which has already begun only where the applicant can demonstrate the need to start the project before the grant agreement has been signed or the grant decision has been notified. In such cases, the costs eligible for financing must not have been incurred prior to the date of submission of the grant application.

If the applicant starts implementing the project before the grant agreement is signed or the grant decision is notified, this is done at the risk of the applicant.

NON-CUMULATIVE AWARD

Each project financed by the EU is entitled to receive only one grant from the EU budget to any one beneficiary. In no circumstances shall the same costs be financed twice by the Union budget.

To avoid the risk of double-funding, the applicant must indicate in the relevant section of the application form, the sources and the amounts of any other funding received or applied for, whether for the same project or for any other project, including operating grants.

Identical or very similar applications – submitted by the same applicant - will be subject to a specific assessment in order to exclude the risk of double-funding and may all be rejected.

NO-PROFIT AND CO-FINANCING

A grant financed from the Union budget must not have the purpose or effect of producing a profit within the framework of the project carried out by the beneficiary. Profit is defined as surplus calculated at the payment of the balance, of receipts over the eligible costs of the action or work programme, where receipts are limited to the Union grant and the revenue generated by that action or work programme[43]. The no-profit principle does not apply to grants provided in the form of a unit cost, a lump sum or a flat-rate financing, neither to grant requests that do not exceed EUR 60 000. For the purpose of calculating the profit generated by the grant, co-financing in the form of contributions in kind will not be taken into account.

Furthermore, an EU grant is an incentive to carry out a project which would not be feasible without the EU financial support, and is based on the principle of co-financing. Co-financing implies that the EU grant may not finance the entire costs of the project; the project must be funded by sources of co-financing other than the EU grant (e.g. beneficiary's own resources, income generated by the action, financial contributions from third parties).

When the EU grant is provided in the form of a unit cost, a lump sum or a flat-rate financing - this is the case for most of the Actions covered by this Guide - the principles of no-profit and co-funding are ensured by the Commission for the Action as a whole in advance when it defines the rates or percentages of such units, lump sums and flat-rates. The respect of the no-profit and co-financing principles is generally assumed and therefore, applicants do not have to provide information about sources of funding other than the EU grant, nor they have to justify the costs incurred by the project.

However, the payment of the grant based on the reimbursement on the basis of contribution to unit costs, lump sums, or flat-rate financing is without prejudice to the right of access to the beneficiaries' statutory records. Where a check or audit reveals that the generating event has not occurred (e.g. project activities not realised as approved at application stage, participants not taking part in the activities, etc.) and an undue payment has been made to the beneficiary on a grant based on the reimbursement on the basis of contribution to unit costs, lump sums, or flat-rate financing, the National or Executive Agency shall be entitled to recover up to the amount of the grant. Similarly, if the activities undertaken or the outputs produced are of insufficient quality, the grant may be reduced partly or in full even if the activities have taken place and are eligible.

In addition, for statistical and monitoring purposes the European Commission may carry out surveys on samples of beneficiaries aimed at quantifying the actual costs incurred in projects funded based on the reimbursement on the basis of contribution to unit costs, lump sums, or flat-rate financing.

SPECIFIC PROVISIONS APPLYING TO GRANTS PAID ON THE BASIS OF REIMBURSEMENT OF A SPECIFIED PORTION OF ELIGIBLE COSTS

When the EU grant is provided as a reimbursement of a specified portion of eligible costs, the following provisions apply:

ELIGIBLE COSTS

An EU grant must not exceed an overall amount which is established by the National or Executive Agency at the time of the project selection on the basis of the estimated eligible costs indicated in the application form. Eligible costs are costs actually incurred by the beneficiary of a grant which meet all of the following criteria:

[43] To this aim, the receipts are limited to income generated by the project. The profit (or the loss) as defined above is then the difference between:
the provisionally accepted amount of the grant and the income generated by the action, and
the eligible costs incurred by the beneficiary.
In addition, whenever a profit is made, it will be recovered. The National Agency or Executive Agency are entitled to recover the percentage of the profit corresponding to the Union contribution to the eligible costs actually incurred by the beneficiary to carry out the action. Further clarifications on the calculation of the profit will be provided for actions for which grants take the form of reimbursement of a specified proportion of eligible costs.

- they are incurred during the lifetime of the project, with the exception of costs relating to final reports and audit certificates;
- they are indicated in the estimated overall budget of the project;
- they are necessary for the implementation of the project which is the subject of the grant;
- they are identifiable and verifiable, in particular being recorded in the accounting records of the beneficiary and determined according to the applicable accounting standards of the country where the beneficiary is established and according to the usual cost accounting practices of the beneficiary;
- they comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation;
- they are reasonable, justified, and comply with the principle of sound financial management, in particular regarding economy and efficiency;
- they are not covered through EU grants in the form of contribution to unit costs, lump sums or flat-rate financing.

The following categories of costs are also considered eligible:

- costs relating to a pre-financing guarantee lodged by the beneficiary of the grant, where that guarantee is required by the National or Executive Agency;
- costs relating to certificates on the financial statements and operational verification reports where such certificates or reports are required in support of the requests for payments by the National or Executive Agency;
- depreciation costs, provided they are actually incurred by the beneficiary.

The beneficiary's internal accounting and auditing procedures must permit direct reconciliation of the costs and revenue declared in respect of the project with the corresponding accounting statements and supporting documents.

Value Added Tax (VAT)

Value added tax will be considered as an eligible cost only if it is not recoverable under the applicable national VAT legislation[44]. The only exception relates to activities or transactions in which states, regional and local government authorities and other public bodies engage as public authorities[45]. In addition:

- deductible VAT not actually deducted (due to national conditions or to the carelessness of beneficiaries) is not eligible;
- the VAT Directive does not apply to non-EU countries. Organisations from partner countries can be exempted from taxes (including VAT), duties and charges, if an agreement has been signed between the European Commission and the partner country where the organisation is established.

Eligible indirect costs

For certain types of activities (for details of the funding rules for Actions, please consult Part B of this Guide), a flat-rate amount not exceeding 7 % of the eligible direct costs of the project is eligible under indirect costs, representing the beneficiary's general administrative costs which are not already covered by the eligible direct costs (e.g. electricity or Internet bills, cost for premises, etc.) but which can be regarded as chargeable to the project.

Indirect costs may not include costs entered under another budget category. Indirect costs are not eligible where the beneficiary already receives an operating grant from the Union budget.

INELIGIBLE COSTS

The following costs shall not be considered eligible:

- return on capital;
- debt and debt service charges;
- provisions for losses or debts;
- interest owed;
- doubtful debts;
- exchange losses;
- VAT, when it is considered as recoverable under the applicable national VAT legislation (see above paragraph on Value Added Tax);
- costs declared by the beneficiary and covered by another project or work programme receiving an EU grant (see also above paragraph on eligible indirect costs);
- excessive or reckless expenditure;
- contributions in kind;
- in the case of renting or leasing of equipment, the cost of any buy-out option at the end of the lease or rental period;

[44] In the Member States the VAT national legislation translates the VAT Directive 2006/112/EC.
[45] See article 13(1) of the Directive.

- costs of opening and operating bank accounts (including costs of transfers from/to the National or Executive Agency charged by the bank of the beneficiary).

SOURCES OF FINANCING

The applicant must indicate in the application form the contribution from sources other than the EU grant. External co-financing may take the form of the beneficiary's own resources, financial contributions from third parties or income generated by the project. If, at the time of the final report and request of payment of the balance, there is evidence that there is a surplus of the income (see section on No-profit and Co-financing) over the eligible costs incurred by the project, the National Agency or Executive Agency is entitled to recover the percentage of the profit corresponding to the Union contribution to the eligible costs actually incurred by the beneficiary to carry out the project. This provision does not apply to projects requesting a grant that does not exceed EUR 60 000.

Contributions in kind are not considered as a possible source of co-financing.

STEP 4: FILL IN AND SUBMIT THE APPLICATION FORM

To request an EU grant under the European Solidarity Corps, applicants must use the forms specific for each Action and available on the websites of the European Commission, of the National Agencies or of the Executive Agency (for the contact details, see Annex III of this Guide). The applicant can be any of the organisations to be involved in the project, regardless of their role. For example, in a cross-border volunteering project, either the supporting organisation or the host organisation may apply for funds.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

ONLINE E-FORMS[46]

Applicants are required to submit their application online to the appropriate National or Executive Agency using the correct electronic form and including all requested annexes. Applications sent by post, courier service, fax or email will not be accepted.

The electronic form must be completed in one of the official languages used in participating countries. In case of Actions managed at centralised level (e.g. by the Executive Agency), applicants must fill in the form in one of the EU official languages.

For more information, consult the guidelines on how to fill in and submit an electronic form. These guidelines also provide information on what to do in case of technical problems; a link to these guidelines is available in the electronic forms. They are available through the websites of the National Agencies (specific for decentralised Actions) and Executive Agency (specific for centralised Actions).

In case of multiple submissions of the same application in the same selection round to the same National Agency or the Executive Agency, the National or Executive Agency will always consider valid the last version submitted before the deadline has expired. In case of multiple submissions of the same or very similar applications of the same applicant organisation to different Agencies, all applications will be automatically rejected (see section on non-cumulative award).

RESPECT THE DEADLINE

The application must be submitted by the deadline set for each Action. The deadlines for the submission of projects are specified for each Action in Part B "Eligibility Criteria" of this Guide.

N.B.: irrespective of the day of the deadline, the deadline for submission of electronic forms is always set at 12:00 (midday CET - Brussels time). Applicants established in countries that have a different time zone should carefully consider the time differences to avoid rejections.

[46] Available here: https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/web-esc .

WHAT HAPPENS ONCE THE APPLICATION IS SUBMITTED?

All applications received by the National Agencies or by the Executive Agency undergo an evaluation procedure.

THE EVALUATION PROCEDURE

Project proposals are assessed by the National or Executive Agency receiving the application, exclusively on the basis of the criteria described in this Guide. The assessment implies:

- a formal check to verify that the eligibility and exclusion criteria are respected;
- a quality assessment to evaluate the extent to which the participating organisations meet the selection criteria (i.e. operational and financial capacity) and the project meets the award criteria. Such quality assessment is in most cases carried out with the support of independent experts. In their assessment, experts will be supported by guidelines developed by the European Commission; these guidelines will be made available on the websites of the European Commission and of the Agencies responsible for the management of projects;
- a verification, that the proposal does not present risks of double funding. If necessary, such verification is carried out in cooperation with other Agencies or other stakeholders.

The National or Executive Agency will appoint an evaluation committee to oversee the management of the whole selection process. On the basis of the assessment carried out by experts, the evaluation committee will establish a list of projects proposed for selection.

For all actions covered by this Guide - during the evaluation process - applicants may be asked to provide additional information or to clarify the supporting documents submitted in connection with the application, provided that such information or clarification does not substantially change the proposal. Additional information and clarifications are particularly justified in case of obvious clerical errors made by the applicant .

FINAL DECISION

At the end of the evaluation procedure, the National or Executive Agency decides on the projects to be granted on the basis of:

- the ranking list proposed by the evaluation committee;
- the budget available for any given Action (or any given activity within an Action).

After the completion of the selection procedure, the application files and accompanying material are not sent back to the applicant, irrespective of the outcome of the procedure.

NOTIFICATION OF GRANT AWARD DECISIONS

The indicative calendar for the notification of selection results under each Action is indicated in the section "Project life-cycle deadlines and payment modalities" below.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE APPLICATION IS APPROVED?

GRANT AGREEMENT / DECISION

If the project is selected for an EU grant under the European Solidarity Corps:

- a grant decision - taken by the Executive Agency - is notified to the applicant of a selected project. Upon receipt/notification of the decision, the applicant becomes the beneficiary of an EU grant and can start the project[47];
- a grant agreement is signed between the National or Executive Agency selecting the project and the applicant. The applicant will receive the grant agreement, to be signed by its legal representative and return it for counter signature to the National or Executive Agency; the National or Executive Agency is the last party to sign. When the grant agreement is signed by both parties, the applicant becomes beneficiary of an EU grant and can start the

[47] For exceptions to this rule, see the section "non-retroactivity" in this part of the Guide.

project[48]. In the case of Solidarity projects, and if required by national legislation, the National Agency may require to involve any public or private body who signs the agreement on behalf of the informal group of young people.

Grant agreements take the form of mono-beneficiary agreements, with the applicant being the single beneficiary.

Models of grant agreements and grant decisions used under the European Solidarity Corps will be made available in the course of the year on the websites of the European Commission and Executive Agency.

The indicative calendar for the receipt of grant agreements and grant decisions under each Action is indicated in the section "Project life-cycle deadlines and payment modalities" below.

GRANT AMOUNT

The acceptance of an application does not constitute an undertaking to award funding equal to the amount requested by the applicant. The funding requested may be reduced on the basis of the specific financial rules applying to a given Action.

The award of a grant in a given round of selection does not establish an entitlement for subsequent rounds.

It should be noted that the grant amount foreseen by the agreement is a maximum which cannot be increased, even if the beneficiary requests a higher amount.

Funds transferred by the Executive Agency or the National Agency must be identified within the account or sub-account indicated by the beneficiary for the payment of the grant.

PAYMENT PROCEDURES

Depending on the type of Action, duration of the grant agreement / decision and the assessment of financial risk, projects supported under the European Solidarity Corps are subject to different payment procedures.

Except for the first pre-financing payment, other payments or recoveries will be made on the basis of the analysis of reports or payment requests submitted by the beneficiary (the templates of these documents will be made available in the course of the year on the websites of National Agencies and Executive Agency).

The payment procedures applied under the European Solidarity Corps are described below.

PRE-FINANCING PAYMENT

A pre-financing payment will be transferred to the beneficiary within 30 days of the date when the last of the two parties signs the grant agreement or when the grant decision is notified to the beneficiary, and where relevant, any appropriate guarantees are received (see section "financial guarantee" below). Pre-financing is intended to provide the beneficiary with a float. National Agencies or the Executive Agency may decide to split the first pre-financing payment into more instalments. They may also decide to reduce the pre-financing or not pay any pre-financing at all, if the financial capacity of the beneficiary is not deemed satisfactory.

FURTHER PRE-FINANCING PAYMENTS

Under some Actions, a second – and in some cases a third - pre-financing payment will be transferred to the beneficiary within 30 calendar days of the receipt, by the National or Executive Agency, of the further pre-financing payment requests advanced by the beneficiary or within 60 calendar days if the further pre-financing payment request is accompanied by a progress report. These further pre-financing payments may be requested when at least 70 % of the previous pre-financing payment has been used up. Where the statement on the use of the previous pre-financing payment(s) shows that less than 70 % of the previous pre-financing payment(s) has been used to cover costs of the action, the amount of the new pre-financing to be paid shall be reduced by the unused amounts of the previous pre-financing.

INTERIM (OR PROGRESS/TECHNICAL) REPORT

Under some Actions, beneficiaries will be asked to submit an interim as well as a progress/technical report informing on the state of implementation of the project and - in some cases - accompanying the request for a further pre-financing payment. The interim and the progress/technical reports must be submitted by the deadline indicated in the grant agreement or grant decision.

[48] See footnote above.

PAYMENT OR RECOVERY OF THE BALANCE

The amount of the final payment to be made to the beneficiary will be established on the basis of a final report to be submitted by the deadline indicated in the grant agreement or grant decision. If a) the events generating the grant are not implemented or are implemented in a different way than planned; or b) the eligible costs actually incurred by the beneficiary are lower than those planned at application stage, or c) the quality of the realised activities/outputs is of insufficient quality, the funding may be reduced proportionally or, where applicable, the beneficiary will be required to repay any excess amounts already received as pre-financing payment.

Under some Actions, in justified cases the National or Executive Agency may transfer 100 % of the grant awarded through the pre-financing instalments. In such cases a payment of the balance is not due. However, if - on the basis of a final report to be submitted by the beneficiary by the deadline indicated in the grant agreement - a) the events generating the grant are not implemented or are implemented in a different way than planned; or b) the eligible costs actually incurred by the beneficiary are lower than those planned at application stage, or c) the quality of the realised activities/outputs is of insufficient quality, the beneficiary will be required to repay any excess amounts already received as pre-financing payment.

As a general rule, the final payment or request for recovery of the balance will be issued within 60 calendar days of the receipt of the final report.

For more information, the detailed modalities of payment applying to each Action can be found in the section "Project life-cycle deadlines and payment modalities" below.

FINANCIAL PENALTIES

Beneficiaries of centralised actions who have been found in serious breach of their contractual obligations may be subject to financial penalties, in the terms stated in the Grant Agreement.

PROJECT LIFE-CYCLE DEADLINES AND PAYMENT MODALITIES

Please note that the indicative dates provided in the table below are given for general information only and do not constitute a legal obligation for the National Agencies and the Executive Agency. Similarly as regards the payment modalities presented below, it should be noted that they will be applied in general, but depending on the individual situation of the applicant organisation (e.g., depending on the financial capacity), different arrangements may be provided for in the grant agreement or grant decision. In case of a shortage of EU appropriations for a given budget year, the first pre-financing payment levels may be further reduced.

	Project life-cycle deadlines			**Payment modalities**		
	Indicative date of notification of award decision	**Indicative date for signing grant agreement**	**Date of final payment / request for reimbursement of the balance**	**N. of pre-financings**	**Interim (technical) report**	**% of grant provided at different stages**
Quality Label	2 months from the submission deadline	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Volunteering Projects	3 months from the submission deadline	4 months from the submission deadline	Within 60 calendar days from the receipt of the final report by NA	1	No	Prefin.: 80 % Balance: 20 %
Volunteering Partnerships framework	2 months from the submission deadline	4 months from the submission deadline	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Volunteering Partnerships annual grant request	3 months from the submission deadline	4 months from the submission deadline	Within 60 calendar days from the receipt of the final report by NA	1	Yes	Prefin.: 80 % Balance: 20 %
Volunteering Teams in High Priority Areas	4 months from the submission deadline	4 months from the submission deadline	Within 60 calendar days from the receipt of the final report by EACEA	1	No	Prefin.: 80 % Balance: 20 %
Traineeships and Jobs	3 months from the submission deadline	4 months from the submission deadline	Within 60 calendar days from the receipt of the final report by NA	1	No	Prefin.: 80 % Balance: 20 %
Solidarity projects	3 months from the submission deadline	4 months from the submission deadline	Within 60 calendar days from the receipt of the final report by NA	1	No	Prefin.: 80 % Balance: 20 %

OTHER IMPORTANT CONTRACTUAL PROVISIONS

FINANCIAL GUARANTEE

If the financial capacity is not considered satisfactory, the National or Executive Agency may require any beneficiary which has been awarded a grant exceeding EUR 60 000 to lodge a guarantee in advance in order to limit the financial risks connected with the pre-financing payment. This guarantee can be requested for up to the same amount of the pre-financing payment(s).

The purpose of such guarantee is to make a bank or financial institution stand as irrevocable collateral security or first-call guarantor of the beneficiary's obligations deriving from the grant agreement or grant decision.

This financial guarantee, in euro, shall be provided by an approved bank or financial institution established in an EU Member State. When the beneficiary is established in a non-EU country, the National or Executive Agency may agree that a bank or financial institution established in such country provides the guarantee, if it considers that the bank or financial institution offers equivalent financial security and characteristics as those offered in an EU Member State.

The guarantee may be replaced by a joint third-party guarantee, or from several third-party guarantees from the participating organisations who are parties to the same grant agreement.

The guarantee will be released after the pre-financing is gradually cleared against an interim payment or payment of the balance to the beneficiary, in accordance with the conditions laid down in the grant agreement or grant decision. In case the payment of the balance takes the form of a recovery, the guarantee will be released after the beneficiary is notified.

SUB-CONTRACTING AND AWARD OF A PROCUREMENT CONTRACT

The beneficiary may resort to subcontracting for specific technical services requiring specialised skills (relating to the legal, accounting, tax, human resources fields, IT, etc.) or implementation contracts. The costs incurred by the beneficiary for this type of services may therefore be considered as eligible costs provided they meet all the other criteria described in the grant agreement or grant decision.

Where implementation of the project requires the procurement of goods, works or services (implementation contract), beneficiaries must award the contract to the economically most advantageous offer, i.e. the bid offering the best value for money, or, as appropriate to the tender offering the lowest price, ensuring that there is no conflict of interests and that documentation is retained in case of audit.

In the event of implementation contract exceeding a value of 60 000 EUR, the National or Executive agency may impose special rules on the beneficiary, in addition to those referred to in the previous paragraph. Those special rules would be published on the websites of the National Agencies and Executive Agency.

INFORMATION ON THE GRANTS AWARDED

In line with the principle of transparency and the requirement for ex-post publicity, information on the recipients of the Union funds must be published on the website of the Commission, the Executive Agency and/or the National Agencies during the first half of the year following the closure of the financial year for which they were awarded.

The information may also be published in any other appropriate medium, including the Official Journal of the European Union.

The National Agencies and the Executive Agency will publish the following information:

- name and locality of the beneficiary;
- amount of grant awarded;
- nature and purpose of the award.

Upon a reasoned and duly substantiated request by the beneficiary, the publication shall be waived if such disclosure risks threatening the rights and freedoms of individuals concerned as protected by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union or harm the commercial interests of the beneficiaries.

As far as personal data referring to natural persons are concerned, the information published shall be removed two years after the end of the financial year in which the funds were awarded.

The same shall apply to personal data indicated in the official titles of legal persons (e.g. an association or company having as title the names of their founders).

Beneficiary organisations are not authorised to publish this type of information in relation to young people participating in European Solidarity Corps activities.

PUBLICITY

Apart from the requirements regarding the visibility of the project and for the dissemination and exploitation of its results (which are award criteria), there is an obligation of minimal publicity for each granted project.

Beneficiaries must clearly acknowledge the European Union's support in all communications or publications, in whatever form or whatever medium, including the Internet, or on the occasion of activities for which the grant is used.

This must be done according to the provisions included in the grant agreement or grant decision. If these provisions are not fully complied with, the beneficiary's grant may be reduced.

Please refer to the Dissemination Guidelines for beneficiaries in Annex I of this Guide for further requirements regarding the visibility of the project.

CHECKS AND AUDITS

The National or Executive Agency and/or the European Commission may carry out technical and financial checks and audits in relation to the use of the grant. They may also check the statutory records of the beneficiary for the purpose of periodic assessments of lump sum, unit cost or flat-rate financing. The beneficiary will undertake, with the signature of its legal representative, to provide proof that the grant has been used correctly. The European Commission, the Executive Agency, National Agencies and/or the European Court of Auditors, or a body mandated by them, may check the use made of the grant at any time up to five years, or for up to three years for grants not exceeding EUR 60 000, starting from the date of payment of the balance or execution of the recovery by the National or Executive Agency. Therefore, beneficiaries shall keep records, original supporting documents, statistical records and other documents connected with the grant during this period.

For projects managed at centralised level by the Executive Agency, different types of audit procedures may be applied according to the type of Action concerned and the size of the grant awarded (if applicable, Audit Type I for grants exceeding EUR 60 000 and lower than EUR 750 000; Audit Type II for grants of EUR 750 000 or higher). More information is available on the website of the Executive Agency.

The detailed provisions concerning checks and audits are described in the grant agreement or grant decision.

DATA PROTECTION

Any personal data included in the application form or in the grant agreement/decision shall be processed by the National or Executive Agency, or by the European Commission in accordance with:

- Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the European Union institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data. In the event of a new regulation entering into force replacing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 , the provisions of such new regulation will apply.
- In secondary order and only in so far as Regulation 45/2001 does not apply – the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR or EU Regulation 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council) or the national data protection legislation in case the GDPR does not apply (non-EU countries).

Unless marked as optional, the applicant's replies to the questions in the application form are necessary to evaluate and further process the grant application in accordance with the European Solidarity Corps Guide. Personal data will be processed solely for that purpose by the department or Unit responsible for the Union grant programme concerned (entity acting as data controller). Personal data may be transferred on a need to know basis to third parties involved in the evaluation of applications or in the grant management procedure, without prejudice of transfer to the bodies in charge of monitoring and inspection tasks in accordance with European Union law or to bodies mandated to undertake evaluations of the Programme or any of its Actions. In particular, for the purposes of safeguarding the financial interests of the Union, personal data may be transferred to internal audit services, to the European Court of Auditors, to the Financial Irregularities Panel or to the European Anti-Fraud Office and between authorising officers of the Commission and the executive agencies. The applicant shall have the right of access to his/her personal data and the right to rectify any such data. Should the applicant have any queries concerning the processing of his/her personal data, he/she shall address them to the Agency that has selected the project. In case of conflicts; the applicant also has the right of recourse at any time to the European Data Protection Supervisor. More information regarding the processing of personal data is included in the grant agreement or decision.

Concerning the processing of personal data under the European Solidarity Corps, a detailed privacy statement, including contact information, is available on the website of the Commission and Executive Agency.

Within the framework of centralised actions managed by the Executive Agency, applicants - and, if they are legal entities, persons who are members of the administrative, management or supervisory body of that applicant or who have powers of representation, decision or control with regard to that applicant, or natural or legal persons that assume unlimited liability for the debts of that applicant - are informed that, their personal data (name, given name if natural person, address, legal form and name and given name of the persons with powers of representation, decision-making or control, if legal person) may be registered in the Early Detection and Exclusion System (EDES) by the Authorising Officer of the Agency, should they be in one of the situations mentioned in the Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union. .

OPEN LICENCE AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

An open licence is a way by which the owner of a work grants permission to everyone to use the resource. There are different open licences according to the extent of the permissions granted or the limitations imposed and the beneficiaries are free to choose the specific license to apply to their work. An open licence must be associated to each resource produced.

An open licence is not a transfer of copyrights or Intellectual Property Rights (IPR). Beneficiaries will remain the copyright holders of the materials they produce and are allowed to use them as they wish. The only requirement for grant beneficiaries is to make educational resources (or other documents and media produced by the project) freely accessible through open licences. To fulfil this requirement, licenses need at least to grant use and, ideally, sharing and, adaptation rights. Beneficiaries can also commercialise their project outcomes and experience shows that open access brings visibility and may encourage interested users to buy the printed version or physical material, document or media.

RULES APPLICABLE

The Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (OJ L 193, 30.7.2018).

ANNEX I – DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION OF RESULTS - A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR BENEFICIARIES

Activities serving the dissemination and exploitation of results are a way to showcase the work that has been done as part of the European Solidarity Corps project. Sharing results, lessons learned and outcomes beyond the participating organisations will enable a wider community to benefit from a work that has received EU funding, as well as to promote the organisation's efforts towards the objectives of the European Solidarity Corps, which attaches fundamental importance to the link between supported activities and policies. Therefore each of the projects supported by the European Solidarity Corps is a step towards achieving the general objectives defined for the European Solidarity Corps in its legal base.

Dissemination activities will vary between projects, and it is important to consider what kind of dissemination activities are fitted to each participating organisation. Organisations participating in smaller projects should undertake dissemination and exploitation appropriate to the level of their activity. The extent of dissemination and exploitation activities will increase with the size and strategic importance of the project. When applying for EU funding, applicants will be asked to explain their intentions/plans for dissemination and exploitation activities, and if successful, required to carry them out.

Part 1 defines some key terms and explains what can be achieved with dissemination and exploitation of results and how these activities will contribute to the overall objectives of the project.

Part 2 outlines the requirements for European Solidarity Corps beneficiaries (participating organisations) in terms of dissemination and exploitation of results.

1. DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION OF PROJECT RESULTS: WHAT, WHY, WHO, WHEN, WHERE AND HOW.

WHAT DO DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION MEAN?

Dissemination is a planned process of providing information on the results of programmes and initiatives to key actors. It occurs as and when the result of programmes and initiatives become available. In terms of the European Solidarity Corps, this involves spreading the word about the project successes and outcomes as far as possible. Making others aware of the project will impact on other organisations in the future and will contribute to raising the profile of the organisation carrying out the project. To effectively disseminate results, an appropriate process at the beginning of the project needs to be designed. This should cover why, what, how, when, to whom and where disseminating results will take place, both during and after the funding period.

Exploitation is (a) a planned process of transferring the successful results of the programmes and initiatives to appropriate decision-makers in regulated local, regional, national or European level, on the one hand; and (b) a planned process of convincing individual end-users to adopt and/or apply the results of programmes and initiatives, on the other hand. For the European Solidarity Corps this means maximising the potential of the funded activities, so that the results are used beyond the lifetime of the project. Results should be developed in such a way that they can be tailored to the needs of others; transferred to new areas; sustained after the funding period has finished; or used to influence future policy and practice.

Dissemination and exploitation are therefore distinct but closely related to one another.

WHAT IS INTENDED BY "RESULTS OF THE ACTIVITY"?

Results are achievements of the European activity or project that received EU funding. The type of result will vary depending on the type of project. Results can be classified as either (a) outputs or (b) outcomes:

Output: a tangible product which is produced by a given project and which may be quantified; outputs can be accessible products like publications, videos, events, blog posts, social media pages or websites.

Outcome: an intangible added value achieved through the achievement of the project objectives and targets. Ordinarily, such added value defies quantification, whether it covers concrete events and actions or more abstract consequences such as increased awareness, increased skills or improved abilities, knowledge and experience gained by participants, partners or other stakeholders involved in the project.

WHAT DO IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY MEAN?

Impact is the effect that the activity carried out and its results have on people, practices, organisations and systems. Dissemination and exploitation of results plans can help to maximize the effect of the activities being developed so that they will impact on the immediate participants and partners for years to come. Benefits to other stakeholders should also be considered in order to make a bigger difference and get the most from the project.

Sustainability is the capacity of the project to continue and share its results beyond the end of the funding period. Not all parts of the project or results may be sustainable and it is important to view dissemination and exploitation as a progression that extends beyond the duration of the project, and into the future.

WHAT ARE THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION?

The first goal of dissemination and exploitation is to spread projects' results. The second goal is to contribute to the implementation and shaping of national and European policies and programmes. Finally, dissemination of project results is also supposed to raise the quality of future European Solidarity Corps activities by sharing good practices.

Beneficiaries should develop their own way of achieving the aforesaid goals. Developing ideas for dissemination and exploitation is important for every project funded by the European Solidarity Corps. However, the type and intensity of dissemination and exploitation activities should be proportional and tailored to particular needs and the type of project developed. Participating organisations should discuss the aims and objectives of the activities/plan and decide on the best activities and approaches as well as share the tasks among partners taking into account the particular specifics of the project.

While a formal dissemination and exploitation plan is not obligatory, all participating organisations are invited to communicate the learning outcomes reached by the participants. They should also encourage participants to share with others what they have gained from taking part in European Solidarity Corps activities.

Insofar as a dissemination and exploitation plan is developed, it should include measurable and realistic objectives; a detailed timetable and provide a resource planning for the activities to be undertaken. Involving target groups in activities will also help to maximise the use of the project's results. It is important to set the strategy right from the beginning as this is the main way that will foster communication with the target audiences.

PROJECT-RELATED COMMUNICATION VS. DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION OF PROJECT RESULTS

Compared to dissemination and exploitation of project results, communication is a broader concept. It includes information and promotion activities to raise awareness and enhance the visibility of the project's activities in addition to the dissemination and exploitation of the project results. However, very often it is difficult to make a clear distinction between these areas. For this reason, planning an overall strategy framework covering both fields can be a more efficient way to make the most of the available resources. Dissemination and exploitation of results should form a crucial part of any communication activities taking place during the project's lifetime.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO SHARE PROJECT RESULTS? WHAT ARE THE WIDER BENEFITS?

Taking the time to develop a comprehensive dissemination and exploitation plan will be advantageous for both the beneficiary and its partners. As well as raising the profile of the organisation, dissemination and exploitation activities can often create new opportunities to extend the project and its results or develop new partnerships for the future. Successful dissemination and exploitation may also lead to external recognition of the work carried out, adding further credit to it. Sharing the results will enable others to benefit from the activities and experiences of the European Solidarity Corps. Project results can serve as examples and inspire others by showing what is possible to achieve under this initiative.

Dissemination and exploitation of project results can help to inform future policy and practice. Dissemination and exploitation of results activities carried out by beneficiaries will support the wider aim of improving the European Union's policies and programmes. The impact of the European Solidarity Corps is measured not only by the quality of project results but also by the extent to which these results are known and used outside the project partnership. By reaching out to as many potential stakeholders as possible through effective dissemination, this will help to achieve a return on investment.

The dissemination and exploitation of project results also increases awareness of the opportunities offered by the European Solidarity Corps and highlights the European added value of activities supported by this initiative. This can contribute to a positive public perception and encourage wider participation in this new EU initiative. It is fundamental to consider the aims and objectives of the dissemination and exploitation plan. These should link to the project aims to ensure that the methods and approaches used are appropriate for the European Solidarity Corps project and its results, as well as for the identified target audiences. Dissemination and exploitation goals may be to:

- raise awareness;

- extend the impact;
- engage stakeholders and target groups;
- share solutions and know how;
- influence policy and practice;
- develop new partnerships.

WHAT CAN BE DISSEMINATED AND EXPLOITED?

The next step is to identify **what** to disseminate and exploit. The results of the project may be of diverse nature and consist of both concrete (tangible) results as well as of skills and personal experiences that both project organisers and participants to the activities have acquired (intangible results).

Tangible results may include for example:

- videos;
- information leaflets;
- websites or social media pages;
- evaluation reports;
- recognition certificates, etc.

In order to disseminate more widely experiences, processes, etc., it is recommended to document them.

Intangible results may include for example:

- knowledge and experience gained by participants;
- increased skills or achievements;
- improved cultural awareness;
- better language skills.

Intangible results are often more difficult to measure. The use of interviews, questionnaires, tests, observations or self-assessment mechanisms may help to record this type of result.

WHO ARE THE TARGET AUDIENCES?

Identifying target groups, both at different geographical levels (local, regional, national, European) and in the own field of the beneficiary (colleagues, peers, local authorities, other organisations leading the same type of activity, networks, etc.) is essential. Activities and messages have to be tailored appropriately taking into account audiences and target groups, for example:

- end-users of the project activities;
- stakeholders, experts or practitioners in the field and other interested parties;
- decision-makers at local, regional, national and European level;
- press and media;
- general public.

The project plans should be flexible enough to allow target groups and other stakeholders to become involved during the different stages of the project. This will help to ensure that the project remains on track in terms of their needs. Their participation will also highlight the potential value of your project as well as help to spread the news to other interested parties throughout Europe.

HOW TO DISSEMINATE AND EXPLOIT RESULTS?

In order to reach as many people as possible, it is advisable to translate as many communication materials and project outcomes in as many languages as possible. It is recommended to cover all languages of the partnership as well as English.

There are many different ways to disseminate and exploit results. Being creative and thinking of fresh ideas so that your European Solidarity Corps project and results really stand out will be appreciated. Beneficiaries could use:

- the European Solidarity Corps Results Platform (see below);
- project or organisational websites;
- meetings and visits to key stakeholders;
- annual European Solidarity Corps events;
- dedicated discussion opportunities such as information sessions, workshops, (online) seminars, training courses, exhibitions, demonstrations or peer reviews;
- targeted written material such as reports, articles in specialised press, newsletters, press releases, leaflets or brochures;
- audiovisual media and products such as radio, TV, YouTube, Flickr, video clips, podcasts or apps;

- social media;
- public events;
- project branding and logos;
- existing contacts and networks.

In terms of exploitation it is important to think about how results can make a difference to the project, end- users, peers or to policy makers. Exploitation mechanisms include:

- positive reputational effects for the participating organisations;
- increased awareness on a theme, target or area of work;
- increased financial support by other supporters or donors;
- increased influencing on policy and practice.

WHEN SHOULD DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION ACTIVITIES BE CARRIED OUT?

Dissemination and exploitation of results are an integral part of the European Solidarity Corps project throughout its lifetime: from the beneficiary's initial idea, during the project and even after European funding has ended.

Setting up a timetable of activities together with the partners involved and allocating appropriate budget and resources is necessary. The plan shall:

- agree realistic targets and deadlines with partners to monitor progress;
- align dissemination and exploitation activities with key stages of the project;
- offer sufficient flexibility to respond to the needs of the target group as well as wider developments in policy and practice.

Examples of activities at different stages of the project cycle are:

BEFORE the project starts

- drafting the dissemination and exploitation plan;
- definition of the expected impact and deliverables;
- consideration of how and to whom dissemination and exploitation outcomes will be disseminated.

DURING the project

- contacting relevant media e.g. at local or regional level;
- conducting regular activities such as information sessions, training, demonstrations, peer reviews;
- assessing the impact on target groups;
- involving other stakeholders in view of transferring results to end users / new areas/policies;
- uploading the project results and an update of the project description on the **European Solidarity Corps Project Results Platform**[49]**.**

AFTER the project

- continuing further dissemination (as described above);
- developing ideas for future cooperation;
- evaluating achievements and impact;
- contacting relevant media;
- contacting policy-makers if relevant;
- cooperate with the European Commission, the National Agencies and/or the Executive Agency where appropriate by providing useful inputs to its dissemination and exploitation efforts.

HOW TO ASSESS SUCCESS?

The impact assessment is an essential part of the process. It evaluates achievements and generates recommendations for future improvements. Indicators could be used to measure progress towards goals. These are signs that help to measure performance. Indicators can be both quantitative relating to numbers and percentages as well as qualitative relating to the quality of the participation and experience. Questionnaires, interviews, observations and assessments could also be used to measure the impact. Defining indicators relating to the different project activities should be foreseen at the start of the project and be part of the overall dissemination plan.

Some examples:

[49] The European Solidarity Corps Project Results Platform will be launched in January 2019. The exact address will be posted on the European Solidarity Corps Portal in due time.

- Numbers of participants involved in discussions and information sessions (workshops, seminars, peer reviews); follow-up measures;
- Production and circulation of products;
- Media coverage (articles in specialised press newsletters, press releases, interviews, etc.);
- Visibility in social media;
- Participation in public events;
- Links with existing networks and transnational partners; transfer of information and know-how;
- Impact on regional, national, EU policy measures;
- Feedback from end-users, other stakeholders, peers, policy-makers.

2. REQUIREMENTS IN TERMS OF DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION

GENERAL QUALITATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Applicants for funding under the European Solidarity Corps are required to consider dissemination and exploitation activities at the application stage, during their activity and after the activity has finished. This section gives an overview of the basic requirements laid down for the European Solidarity Corps.

Dissemination and exploitation is one of the award criteria on which the application will be assessed. For all project types, reporting on the activities carried out and to share the results inside and outside participating organisations will be requested at final stage.

VISIBILITY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND OF THE EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS

Beneficiaries shall always use the European emblem (the 'EU flag') and the name of the European Union spelled out in full in all communication and promotional material. The preferred option to communicate about EU funding through the European Solidarity Corps is to write 'Co-funded by the European Solidarity Corps of the European Union' next to the EU emblem.

Guidelines for beneficiaries, examples of acknowledgement of EU funding and translations of the text are available at: https://ec.europa.eu/youth/solidarity-corps

USE OF THE EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS PROJECT RESULTS PLATFORM

A European Solidarity Corps Project Results Platform is currently under development (and is expected to be launched in January 2019) with the aim of offering a comprehensive overview of projects funded under the European Solidarity Corps and to highlight good practice examples. The platform is envisaged to also make available outputs which are the result of the projects funded.

The European Solidarity Corps Project Results Platform will serve several different purposes:

- Transparency, as it will provide a comprehensive overview of all projects funded under the initiative (including project summaries, funding figures, URL links, etc.);
- Accountability;
- Inspiration.

ANNEX II – GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Accompanying person	the person who accompanies participants with special needs (i.e. with disabilities) or fewer opportunities in an activity, in order to ensure protection, provide support and extra assistance as well as assist in their effective learning during the experience.
Action	strand or measure of the European Solidarity Corps.
Activity	set of tasks carried out as part of a project. An activity is defined by the same location, the same time frame and the same scope.
Advance Planning Visit (APV)	planning visit to the host country ahead of a volunteering, traineeship or job activity. The purpose of the APV is to build trust, understanding and a solid partnership between organisations and people involved. Young participants with fewer opportunities can be involved in the visit to integrate them fully in the project design.
Applicant	participating organisation or group of young people that submits grant application.
(Application) deadline	final date by when the application form must be submitted to the National or Executive Agency to be considered eligible.
Beneficiary	if the project is selected, the applicant becomes beneficiary of a European Solidarity Corps grant. The beneficiary signs a grant agreement with – or is notified of a grant decision by – the National or Executive Agency that has selected the project.
Call for proposals	invitation published by or on behalf of the Commission to present, within a given deadline, a proposal for Action that corresponds to the objectives pursued and fulfils the required conditions. Calls for proposals are published in the Official Journal of the European Union (C series) and/or at relevant websites of the Commission, National or Executive Agency.
Certificate of participation	in the context of the European Solidarity Corps, a document issued to a person having completed a European Solidarity Corps activity. Such document certifies the attendance of the participant in the activity.
Clerical Error	a minor mistake or inadvertence unintentionally made in a document that changes its meaning, such as a typographical error or the unintentional addition or omission of a word, phrase, or figure.
Co-financing	the co-financing principle implies that part of the costs of a project supported by the EU must be borne by the beneficiary, or covered through external contributions other than the EU grant.
Cross-border activity	activity taking place in another country than the country where the participant is legally resident.
Dependent entities	in the frame of umbrella Quality Label applications, entities affiliated to the applicant with which they have a legal or capital link.
EQF (European Qualifications Framework)	common European reference tool that serves as a translation device between different education and training systems and their levels. It aims to improve the transparency, comparability and portability of qualifications across Europe, promoting workers' and learners' mobility and facilitating their lifelong learning, as defined in the 2008/C 111/01 Recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council.
Established	relates to an organisation or body fulfilling certain national conditions (registration, statement, publication, etc.) that allow such an organisation or body to be formally recognised by its national authority. In case of a group of young people, the legal residence of its legal representative is considered as having the equivalent effects for the purposes of eligibility to a European Solidarity Corps grant.

Europass	Europass is a portfolio of five different documents and an electronic folder aiming to contain descriptions of the entire holder's learning achievements, official qualifications, work experience, skills and competences, acquired over time. These documents are: the Europass CV (curriculum vitae), the Diploma Supplement, the Certificate Supplement, the Europass Mobility and the Language Passport. Europass also includes the European Skills Passport, a user-friendly electronic folder that helps the holder to build up a personal, modular inventory of his/her skills and qualifications. The aim of Europass is to facilitate mobility and improve job and lifelong learning prospects in Europe.
Force majeure	an unforeseeable exceptional situation or event beyond the participant's control and not attributable to error or negligence on his/her part.
Groups of young people	group of at least five young people who do not have their own legal personality under the applicable national law; however one of their representatives will be given the capacity to undertake legal obligations on their behalf. These groups of young people can be applicants for Solidarity Projects. For the purpose of simplification, they are assimilated to legal persons (organisations, institutions, etc.) in this Guide and fit within the notion of participating organisations for the Action in which they can take part. The group must be composed of at least five young people and their age should be according with the overall eligible age of the young people in the Corps (18-30).
In-country activity	activity taking place in the same country than the one where the participant is legally resident.
Informal learning	learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure which is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support; it may be unintentional from the learner's perspective.
Key competences	the basic set of knowledge, skills and attitudes which all individuals need for personal fulfilment and development, employability, social inclusion, sustainable lifestyle, successful life in peaceful societies, health-conscious life management and active citizenship, as described in Recommendation 2018/C 189/01 of the European Parliament and of the Council.
Learning outcomes	statements of what a participant knows, understands and is able to do as a result of a learning process.
Non-formal learning	learning which takes place through learning activities where some form of learning support is present, but which is not part of the formal education and training system.
Participant	young person registered in the European Solidarity Corps and involved in a project. Under Solidarity Projects, young people implementing the project are considered as participants.
Participating countries	EU Member States that have established a National Agency which participates fully in the European Solidarity Corps. The list of participating countries is described in Part A of this Guide, section "Who can participate in the European Solidarity Corps?"
Participating organisation	any organisation or group of young people involved in the implementation of a European Solidarity Corps project. Depending on their role in the project, participating organisations can be applicants or partners. If the project is granted, applicants become beneficiaries.
Partner countries	countries which do not participate fully in the European Solidarity Corps, but which may take part (as partners) in certain Actions. The list of partner countries is described in Part A of this Guide, section "Who can participate in the European Solidarity Corps?"
Partner organisation	participating organisation involved in the project but not taking the role of an applicant.
People with fewer opportunities	individuals who need additional support due to the fact that they are at a disadvantage compared to their peers because of various obstacles. A more detailed definition of people with fewer opportunities can be found in Part A of this Guide - section "Social Inclusion".

Project	a coherent set of activities which are organised in order to achieve defined objectives and results.
Qualification	a formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual achieved learning outcomes to given standards.
Quality Label	process that ensures that the organisations wishing to receive funding under an Action of the European Solidarity Corps respect a set of qualitative standards or pre-requisites defined by the European Commission for that given Action. Depending on the type of organisation and/or the country where the requesting organisation is located, the Quality Label is carried out by the Executive Agency, a National Agency or a SALTO Resource Centre. The Quality Label process is in place for organisations wishing to participate in Volunteering activities, Traineeships and Jobs.
Registered Candidate	an individual aged between 17 and 30 years who has registered in the European Solidarity Corps Portal for the purposes of expressing interest in engaging in a solidarity activity but who is not yet participating in a solidarity activity.
Solidarity activity	a volunteering activity, a traineeship, a job or a solidarity project carried out in the frame of the European Solidarity Corps.
Umbrella application	application for a Quality Label submitted on behalf of dependent entities.
Union transparency and recognition tools	instruments that help stakeholders to understand, appreciate and, as appropriate, recognise learning outcomes and qualifications throughout the Union.
Validation of non-formal and informal learning	process of confirmation by an authorised body that an individual has acquired learning outcomes measured against a relevant standard and consists of the following four distinct phases: ▪ Identification through dialogue of particular experiences of an individual; ▪ Documentation to make visible the individual's experiences; ▪ Formal assessment of these experiences; ▪ Certification of the results of the assessment which may lead to a partial or full qualification.
Youthpass	the European tool to improve the recognition of the learning outcomes of participants of projects supported by the European Solidarity Corps. Youthpass consists of: a) certificates that can be obtained by participants and b) a defined process which supports young people and organisations to reflect about the learning outcomes from a project. Youthpass is also part of a broader European Commission strategy which aims to enhance the recognition of non-formal and informal learning and of youth work in Europe and beyond.

ANNEX III - CONTACT DETAILS

European Commission - Directorate General Education & Culture (DG EAC)
https://ec.europa.eu/youth/solidarity-corps

European Commission - Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)
http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/index_en.php

National Agencies
https://ec.europa.eu/youth/sites/youth/files/library/documents/esc-na-2018.pdf