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Erasmus for Young
Entrepreneurs

Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs Implementation Manual for Intermediary Organisations (Quality Manual)

Version 9.13

Last update: February 2023

Erasmus For Young Entrepreneurs
A programme of the European Union

Version	Date	Overview of changes
9.10	February 2021	Brief summary of main changes Section *Programme benefits* (in the “important box”) A final reference was added on the fact that the **motivation of the HE should be updated on the IT tool before the start of a new match**. Section 1.1 *Promotion* There is a specification for IOs that even if they do not receive **printed banners** from the programme, they can download them from the EYE intranet to print them themselves (costs = their projects’ promotional budget). In the “important box” An addition is introduced regarding IOs to make sure they have the **visibility of EU funding** and the link to the EYE website on their websites. Section 1.2.3.3 *Assessing New Entrepreneur’s application* About **business plans**: a point was added that company presentations do not qualify as business plans. Another point on templates, where IOs may provide a template if they wish to do so, but there will not be one provided by the programme. Chapter 2 *Building relationships* A **new infographic** on the **Relationship workflow** is available. The **geographical distance** between a New Entrepreneur’s (NE) permanent residence and the Host Entrepreneur’s (HE) place must be **>50km** in order for the NE to receive the monthly financial assistance. Section 2.5.1.1 *Payment arrangements* The possible **centralisation of payments to NEs by one partner** is considered a deviation from the usual payment modalities. **Specific rules apply.** Above all the transfer of liability of the financial support costs to 3rd parties from each partner concerned to the organisation making the NE payments must be ensured and written agreement for such practice be documented. Section 3 *Preparation and follow-up of exchanges* A new infographic is introduced on the relationship execution workflow. Section 3.3.2.3 *Dealing with failed relationships*: The paragraph has been rephrased to underline the obligation of the Intermediary Organisations to **clearly communicate to all parties concerned the intention for early termination** of an exchange and to **give the entrepreneurs involved sufficient time to respond**. Section 4.1.2.1 *Handling of applications at the end of a cycle* A new point was added to clarify the cycle **allocation of applications**. This point was previously included in the FAQs of the Intranet. 4.6.1 *Roles and responsibilities of the Support Office* A reference was added to keep EP names in the subject line and LIOs in the communication.
9.11	March 2022	Section 3.4.2 Establishing and Alumni network updated and renamed to Follow up of the exchanges and aftercare services Annex 1 – Allowance for Norway and Lichtenstein added Information added on non-eligibility of participation of UK entrepreneurs as of 1.02.2023 under call SMP-COSME-2021-EYECycle 13).

9.12	3 May 2022	Annex 1 – monthly financial assistance for United Kingdom corrected from 1100 to 1000 EUR (aligned with Commission Decision of 8/03/2022 authorising the use of unit costs for the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs action under the Single Market Programme (2021-2027))
9.13	February 2023	Main change: Rules for matching entrepreneurs with Ukrainian citizenship included. These rules were decided after Russia's military aggression on Ukraine in February 2022. They apply to all projects (until further notice), thus also under the call for proposals SMP-COSME-2023-EYEUA.

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Introduction

The aim of the present Quality Manual is to act as a central source of information for Intermediary Organisations (IOs), on policies and procedures which support the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme. Its goal is to facilitate exchange of experiences, learning and networking for new EU entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs from other participating countries[1], through periods of time spent at companies of experienced entrepreneurs in another country.

This Quality Manual will be subject to regular improvements and updates to correspond to the needs of the programme. Therefore, you are requested to regularly check for updates on any new rules and procedures implemented, in order to provide accurate information to entrepreneurs and avoid any possible confusion, omissions and/or misunderstandings.

[1] The current situation of third countries participation in the COSME programme can be consulted at: https://ec.europa.eu/docsroom/documents/39579

Glossary and definitions

NE(s) — New Entrepreneur

New Entrepreneurs are defined as entrepreneurs in the early stages. This includes both nascent (i.e. 'would-be') entrepreneurs, who are firmly planning to start their own business based on a substantiated business plan, and entrepreneurs who have recently started their own business (i.e. have been in operation for not more than three years).

HE(s) — Host Entrepreneur

Host Entrepreneurs are successful and experienced entrepreneurs (owner-managers of a micro, small or medium enterprise for more than three years) or people directly involved in entrepreneurship at SME management board level on a daily basis, according to the EU definition of micro, small or medium-sized enterprise.

IO(s) — Intermediary Organisation

Intermediary Organisations are entities engaged in business support as their regular activities, which operate at national, regional or local level. IOs are selected by the European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA) following a call for proposals to establish contacts between NEs and HEs. Their role is to promote the programme at national or sub-national level, recruit entrepreneurs, propose match-making services and establish successful relationships between NEs and HEs.

NIO(s) — New entrepreneur's Intermediary Organisation

The Intermediary Organisation responsible for the new entrepreneur.

HIO(s) — Host entrepreneur's Intermediary Organisation

The Intermediary Organisation responsible for the host entrepreneur.

EP(s) — European Partnership

A European Partnership (EP) is a consortium of IOs that have signed a grant agreement with EISMEA. Each EP is composed of one Lead IO (i.e. coordinator) and other entities from different participating countries (i.e. partners).

NEP(s) — New entrepreneur's European Partnership

The European Partnership responsible for the new entrepreneur.

LNIO — Lead New entrepreneur's European Partnership

The IO appointed in the grant agreement as coordinator of the NIO EP.

HEP(s) — Host entrepreneur's European Partnership

The European Partnership responsible for the host entrepreneur.

LHIO — Lead Host entrepreneur's European Partnership

The IO appointed in the grant agreement as coordinator of the HIO EP.

EC — European Commission (Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs)

The Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme has been initiated by the European Union and managed by the Directorate-General (DG) for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs of the European Commission (DG GROW).

DG GROW holds the overall political responsibility for the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme. The financial and organisational responsibility is with the Agency. The Commission makes sure that the necessary funds are available. It raises awareness of the programme, monitors quality of the programme, ensures maintenance and further developments of IT Tool, evaluates the programme and prepares for the implementation of the programme on a larger scale, together with the EISMEA.

EISMEA - European Innovation Council and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Executive Agency

The European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA) has been set-up by the European Commission to manage on its behalf several EU programmes. As an executive agency of the European Commission, the Agency manages significant parts of actions supporting SMEs and entrepreneurship, such as COSME and SMP (Single Market Programme). It ensures that actions funded under these programmes deliver results and provide the Commission with valuable input for its policy tasks. Following the Commission decision to delegated substantial tasks of programme management , the EISMEA is responsible for the management of the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme since 2014.

SO — Support Office

The role of the Support Office is to ensure coordination and coherence of activities handled by the IOs. It helps them to develop high quality exchanges of entrepreneurs. Its main tasks are to promote the programme at EU and European level, to provide guidance and support to IOs, especially in daily operations, monitor activities of the Intermediary Organisations, manage the programme website, develop training material and foster networking/cooperation among the IOs.

Programme overview

In June 2008, the European Commission adopted the 'Small Business Act' for Europe (SBA), recognising the central importance of small and medium-sized enterprises in the EU economy. Principle I of the SBA sets out to 'create an environment in which entrepreneurs can thrive and entrepreneurship is rewarded'. As a concrete follow-up to this aim in 2008, the Commission launched the pilot project 'Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs', as an innovative response to the dual challenge of stimulating entrepreneurship and encouraging cross-border trade in Europe. By means of learning with an experienced entrepreneur in another country, **start-up entrepreneurs and would-be entrepreneurs** will gain competences and perspectives that will be invaluable during their business start-up phase. Such new entrepreneurs will use their fresh entrepreneurial spirit, their different perspective, and their knowledge of their home market and culture as a source of new ideas and a sounding board for the **host entrepreneur**.

After years of the programme, which showed promising results, Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs was turned into a more consolidated programme, under the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (CIP). In 2014, the Council and the European Parliament adopted the Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (COSME) that included the mobility of new entrepreneurs among the actions to promote entrepreneurship.

The COSME Programme (2014-2020)[2], aimed at promoting growth and at strengthening the competitiveness and sustainability of enterprises in the European Union. Starting from Cycle 13 (call for proposals SMP-COSME-2021-EYE), the programme is financed under the Single Market Programme[3] which focuses on strengthening the governance of the internal market, supporting the competitiveness of industry and in particular of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), promoting human, animal and plant health and animal welfare and establishing the framework for financing European statistics.

The general objective of the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme is to help European entrepreneurs enrich their experiences, through learning and networking, and by spending periods of time in enterprises run by experienced entrepreneurs in other countries. It furthermore aims to enhance entrepreneurship, internationalisation and competitiveness of new and established micro and small enterprises within the EU and in other participating countries.

The specific objectives of the programme are:

- ⇒ Provide on-the-job-training to new entrepreneurs in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in another country, in order to facilitate a successful start and development of their business ideas;
- ⇒ Foster exchanges of experience and information between entrepreneurs, on obstacles and challenges faced, when starting up and developing their business;
- ⇒ Enhance market access and identification of potential partners for new and established businesses in other EU and participating countries;
- ⇒ Promote networking by building on knowledge and experience from other European countries.

[2] COSME Regulation (EU) No 1287/2013 of 11 December 2013 (Official Journal of the European Union L 347/33 of 20.12.2013).
[3] Single Market Programme Regulation (EU) 2021/690 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 April 2021.

Programme benefits

Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs is about breaking barriers and crossing borders. The idea behind this exchange programme is that national borders should not curtail potential of SMEs. On the contrary, the EU's internal market is a great opportunity for SMEs. They should make use of it since it allows them to grow and create jobs. This approach is particularly valuable in times of economic crisis because a dynamic and innovative business community is a pre-requisite to recovery. The Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme contributes to fostering an entrepreneurial mindset and behaviour. It fosters development of more internationalised SMEs and creation of more new businesses in Europe — two fundamental elements which will promote sustainable economic development and will benefit all EU countries.

Above all, the programme is a **business and interpersonal exchange**, based on practical experience and joint work on concrete projects rather than plain theory.

1. Benefits for New Entrepreneurs

The programme will bring the following benefits to NEs, in order to improve their chances of success during the business start-up phase:

- Up to six months learning abroad with a successful and experienced entrepreneur in another participating country, in order to gain the relevant start-up and SME management knowledge in various areas (e.g. financial and operational management, development of innovative products and services, sales and marketing practices, and effective planning);
- Refinement of business ideas/plans;
- Unique opportunity to improve their entrepreneurial experience through work on practical, concrete projects;
- Broadening network of contacts and becoming part of a dynamic pan-European business network of successful entrepreneurs;
- Gaining knowledge about foreign markets and facilitate access to them;
- Development of potential new cross-border business opportunities and partnerships;
- Gaining insights into a different cultural and organisational setting/workplace and understanding how a company operates in another participating country;
- Possibility of finding out about:
    - European commercial law and the single European market,
    - European standardisation,
    - European support for SMEs.
- Improvement of language skills (secondary benefit);
- Participation in Alumni Network.

2. Benefits for Host Entrepreneurs

Given the fact that no financial support is provided to HEs, motivating them to participate in the programme tends to be the most challenging aspect of the project. Therefore, particular attention should be given to promoting benefits to HEs.

Potential benefits to HEs include the opportunity to:

- Work with a serious, committed and motivated NE who will contribute to their business development through innovative ideas and views;
- Gain knowledge about the NE's domestic markets — including business contacts — and opportunities to internationalise their business;
- Interact with HEs from other participating countries and become part of a dynamic pan-European business network of successful entrepreneurs;

- Improve growth potential of their company and opportunity to establish a new business partnership directly with an NE from another country;
- Increase visibility and prestige of the company through press coverage (i.e. press articles, interviews, etc.);
- Benefit from assistance provided by professional Intermediary Organisations in the search for a potential business partner and the support of the relationship with NE;
- Access new skills and innovative knowledge provided by NE that an SME often does not have the capacity to develop;
- Improvement of language skills;
- Participation in Alumni Network.

IMPORTANT:
Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs allows new entrepreneurs to have one exchange in the programme, which means that they can participate only once for the whole duration of the programme.
Host entrepreneurs, on the other hand, can participate more than once but they are not allowed to host more than one new entrepreneur at a time. After having finished one exchange, the host entrepreneur must have provided the feedback about the exchange. In addition, the motivation of the HE must be updated in the EYE IT tool before a new match can start.

1 Promotion and recruitment

1.1 Promoting the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme

The programme has been running since 2009 and is increasingly known among the public. However, it is important to continuously promote the mobility scheme in order to ensure success and further expansion, since raising awareness of the programme's existence and benefits is fundamental to recruitment of NEs and HEs and the establishment of successful exchanges.

Planning promotion

The promotional activities, coordinated by the Support Office, ensure a common visual identity for the programme via a variety of promotional material which can be used and adapted according to each country's specificities[4].

Based on the material offered to IOs, each European partnership is responsible for planning its own dissemination strategy for the programme in order to achieve its goals, as described in the proposal submitted to EISMEA.

IOs should be aware that the programme does not provide printed banners. However, it does provide banner templates in the programme's Intranet. Therefore, IOs should print their own copies. They can cover the costs through their projects' promotional budget.

The Support Office does not intervene in the promotional strategy implemented by the EPs — as they are free to organise communication and press activities at the most appropriate time in their countries and in the manner they deem most fit — but provides each IO with media kits during the year in order to prepare press campaigns.

[4] The programme title-logo, as well as other promotional material and templates can be downloaded from the programme intranet (http://www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu | section 'Members only'). Please note, however, that in the medium and long run no programme specific visuals should be used anymore.

The latest media kit can be found on the intranet under the section '**Press & Communication**'[5].

Intermediary Organisations are required to include a link to the programme's website in their public websites.

IMPORTANT:
Please note that all promotional material produced by the IOs should clearly recognise the EU-funding received by the IOs. This must be done by including the text "An initiative of the European Union" together with the EU flag. Further details on this can be found on http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/communication/services/visual_identity/pdf/use-emblem_en.pdf

There should be no misleading visual identity elements that could cause confusion on the origin of the promotional material, such as using the European Commission's logo. The European Commission's logo can be used only for documents produced by the European Commission, not the IOs.

IOs must also ensure that they always use the correct title-logo for the programme, which is the programme title. The various language version can be found in the Communications Kit on the Intranet in JPEG and PNG.

IOs are also requested to ensure that the visibility of the EU funding and the link to the EYE website is available on their organisation's website.

1.1.1 Promotional strategies

Promotional activities in the programme might often seem straightforward but experience has shown that IOs often have to put substantial amount of effort in promoting the programme and recruiting entrepreneurs in order to achieve even modest numbers of recruited entrepreneurs.

The strategic importance of a solid promotional strategy should therefore not be underestimated, especially as strong promotional activities can play a crucial role in recruiting suitable profiles and establishing successful matches. It is particularly important that IOs focus their promotional efforts on targeting the right targets entrepreneurs (i.e. "true entrepreneurs[6]") in order to reduce the risk of attracting applicants who may wish to misuse the programme.

Even though the recruitment of NEs is relatively easy (see programme benefits for NEs on page 9), the promotion towards this target group remains an important part of raising awareness about the programme.

Motivating HEs to participate in the programme, however, requires additional effort and consideration. Promotional activities should be focused on their **real needs** and on how the programme can benefit them — by highlighting the competences and skills that NE can offer to HE's business and the increased visibility for their activities (see page 10). When preparing their recruitment strategy, IOs should bear in mind the specificities of this target audience, which are different from those of NEs (i.e. age, lifestyle, behaviour, concerns, lack of time, etc.).

What works in the case of HEs?

- Direct contact — telesales campaign to businesses, visits, face-to-face meetings, info days, etc.;
- Success stories/testimonies — concrete examples of benefits gained by previous HEs;

[5] http://www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu/members/press.php.
[6] NEs and HEs looking for a genuine entrepreneurial collaboration

- Media coverage of completed exchanges (press articles, press conferences, TV and radio interviews);
- Social/professional networks (LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook) can help to find HEs;
- Offering assistance and support — as HEs do not really have time and/or a good command of English to complete the online registration form and manage the IT tool, they usually appreciate some help with administrative issues[7].

1.1.2 Promotional material available and recommended communication methods

You are strongly encouraged to use the press and communication tools[8] that the Support Office has developed.

A wide variety of dissemination methods exists and it is essential to select the one(s) which will allow you to communicate the right message(s) to the right target audience and therefore achieve your objectives. The table in Annex 3 summarises the methods recommended by the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs Support Office, EISMEA and the European Commission.

Consortia and IOs should plan sufficient budget to cover their needs of promotional material and promotional items. Leaflets, brochures and template for the banner can be downloaded from the programme's website. Promotional videos are available in the "Success Stories" section on the website.

About customisation

Leaflets (available in 23 languages) can be customised with your contact details and your logo. This will enable any potential interested entrepreneur to contact you directly. The core text of the flyer cannot be changed. For an editable version of the promotional materials, please contact the Support Office. Note that you are only allowed to add your contact details and logo, without changing the content of the materials.

IOs can develop their own promotional materials but they must be in line with the visual rules of the programme (acknowledgement of funding, correct title-logo, no misleading elements, etc.)

[7] Note that although IOs should provide assistance to potential HEs, it is the responsibility of the applicant to take care of the application and the steps involved in participating in the programme.

[8] http://www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu/members/press.php.

1.1.3 Promoting the programme via social networks

Through the proper use of social media the IOs can achieve the following objectives:
- Strengthen programme visibility
- Connect participants
- Improve matching rate.

The latest statistics from the programme show that in 2020 26.3% of NEs and 14.6% of HEs who participated in the programme had learned about it thanks to social media.

The Support Office acts as Community Manager in charge of animating, moderating and bringing relevant content to the below communities. Intermediary Organisations are encouraged to be ambassadors of the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs on social media, by connecting to the EYE main accounts (e.g. Like of the Facebook Page, join the Linked In group, follow EYE account on Twitter), posting content to the EYE accounts by tagging the relevant social media account. Trainings on the basic principles of Community Management and social media best practices will be provided to all IOs during some Network Meetings.

IOs are also invited to share relevant information on events, promotional activities, success stories, etc. with the Support Office, as the SO can share this information via the EYE social media channels.

1.1.3.1 Facebook

Facebook is the most used **social networking website** internationally. A group has been created on Facebook dedicated to people interested in the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme, either because they have been part of it or because they would like to know more about it.

IOs are strongly recommended to join the group at http://www.facebook.com/pages/Erasmus-for-Young-Entrepreneurs/109504235748017 and participate in the discussions in order to find new candidates.

Furthermore, IOs are reminded to tag the EYE Facebook group in relevant posts published by the IOs' organisational account in order to enable the Support Office to keep track of those and re-publish them to increase the outreach of those posts.

1.1.3.2 Twitter

Twitter is a micro blogging application which allows users to express thoughts or share short messages with information instantly. Apart from direct publication of news, Twitter is also connected with Facebook and LinkedIn, thus permitting automatic publication of changes made in the Facebook profile ('What's on your mind' field). These three networks are therefore interconnected, and their connection with a new blog will open further possibilities for online promotion.

Similarly to Facebook, IOs should tag the EYE Twitter handle in all relevant posts in order to interact with the EYE Twitter account and its followers.

Live tweeting from EYE related events and promotional activities is also strongly encouraged to help create an online "buzz" about the programme.

1.1.3.3 LinkedIn

LinkedIn is the world's largest **professional network**. Two sub-groups have been set up: one for IOs and one for accepted participants in the programme.

Creation of groups stimulates interaction between members and should consequently increase the number of registrations to the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme.

How to promote the programme on LinkedIn?

1. Join LinkedIn!

LinkedIn offers you the opportunity to communicate with other users in an easy and informal way. You will be able to reach new potential hosts and new entrepreneurs and share with them the experiences of the current entrepreneurs, as well as the wide range of benefits that the programme offers. You will also have the possibility to answer the most frequently asked questions, liaise with other online groups, discuss proposals and redirect potential participants to the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs public website and various Intermediary Organisations.

Join LinkedIn at: http://www.linkedin.com/groups?about=&gid=2698649&trk=anet_ug_grppro.

2. Invite your contacts to join LinkedIn

LinkedIn offers you the possibility to add contacts from Outlook, and web mails like Hotmail, Gmail, Yahoo, AOL and other address books.

3. Use the LinkedIn logo for a passive recruitment

Add the LinkedIn logo and the hyperlink to the website on the homepage of your website. This online presence will attract potential NEs and HEs.

4. Invite your NEs and HEs who completed an exchange to join LinkedIn

Invite NEs/HEs who completed an exchange to join the group, share their experience so as to attract other potential interested NEs and HEs and make them become 'ambassadors' of the programme in LinkedIn.

IMPORTANT:
Promotion is crucial as it will help you increase the number of entrepreneur registrations. It is therefore strongly recommended that you dedicate time to this important activity.

1.2 Recruitment

Each EP is free to implement its own recruitment strategy in accordance with the programme's policies and rules described below. Promotional material and media kits are provided to support your communication and recruitment activities. Every effort is made to ensure that information contained in promotional materials is up-to-date and accurate at the time of going to press. The Support Office — on the basis of a formal request — can provide you with the latest statistics about the programme.

1.2.1 Deadline for registrations

The programme is running continuously and therefore new and host entrepreneurs can apply at any time as there is no deadline.

However, you as an IO, have a deadline to recruit entrepreneurs and complete exchanges. Such deadline is the end date of your activities in the programme (which corresponds to the end date of each grant agreement). IOs then have a few further weeks to validate feedback questionnaires and make any outstanding final payments. (Note that IOs will not be able to recruit new applicants any later than 2 months before the end of their contract).

1.2.2 Participation criteria

To participate in the programme, NEs and HEs must comply with the eligibility criteria established by the programme and submit their applications via the online registration form available on the programme website www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu under the section **'Apply now'**.

Applicants not fulfilling the eligibility criteria must not be accepted in the programme, e.g. incomplete applications or missing compulsory elements (including a business plan without 2 year financial plan and break even analysis), issues with geographic eligibility, motivation that is not in line with the programme, etc.

Entrepreneurs are responsible for submitting complete, comprehensive and accurate data. The IO's responsibility is to assess applications in line with the participation criteria described in this section and make sure that their profiles meet the criteria and the minimum quality standards. When in doubt, you should request for additional proof/piece of information that you may consider needed.

IMPORTANT:
Please note that there is no legal right to participate in the programme. The European Commission reserves the right to exclude applicants that are not eligible or not in line with the aims of the programme.

1.2.2.1 Legal criteria

New Entrepreneur definition

New Entrepreneurs are defined as entrepreneurs in the early stages. This includes:

- Would-be entrepreneurs who are firmly planning to start their own business, based on a concrete project reflected in a substantiated business plan;
- New Entrepreneurs who have been running their own business for less than 3 years (cumulative) at the time of application. Note that self-employment/freelancing experience is considered as entrepreneurial experience but it should be assessed on a case by case basis, depending on the activities carried out.

Whether planned or already existing, an NE's business can be in any sector.

IMPORTANT:
Apart from the age of the company, you also have to check NEs' entrepreneurial experience in their CVs.

Example: An entrepreneur, who ran a company for 10 years, stopped it and now wants to start a new business, cannot be considered as a new entrepreneur, as the entrepreneur has already experience in running an own business. The same rule applies to NEs who have been running a business for more than three years and decide to create a new company in a different sector. The exception to this rule is the associate partners of a business (i.e. the person was member of the board but did not effectively manage the business). You should pay attention to the details they provide, i.e., their application may state that the company did not have any activity but then claim the full experience in their CV. **Application data should always match with that in the CV.**

Please also check that the NE does not confuse entrepreneurial experience (running own business) with professional experience (managing a business as an employee or working as employee) in general and thus enters the wrong data in the application form.

IMPORTANT:
The experience of NEs with regard to running their own business should be checked again when the NE is to enter in a relationship. Some NEs already had 3 years of experience at registration and have been in the database for a long time already. In the end, these entrepreneurs could be more experienced than their corresponding hosts and the relationship would therefore not make sense anymore.

Thus, an **overall absolute limit of 5 years of entrepreneurial experience** has been set for NEs for being eligible to participate in a relationship. The system will calculate the limit according to the date of registration and the years of experience in running a business declared in the profile. When the limit of 5 years has been reached, the entrepreneur's personal details will be deleted (only statistical information is being kept) from the database and the entrepreneur will receive a communication by email (a copy of which will be sent to the responsible IO).

Due to legal constraints linked to Personal data protection rules, the deletion of personal data is permanent and data cannot be recovered. In case of error, the entrepreneur will have to register again.

Should the entrepreneur wish to participate as an HE, he should register again with a different email address and fill in the corresponding profile.

Host entrepreneur definition

Host entrepreneurs are defined as **successful** and **experienced** entrepreneurs- owners of an SME or people directly involved in entrepreneurship at **SME management board level**. They must fulfil the following criteria to participate in the programme:

- Be successful and experienced: although the number of years of activity is not specifically prescribed, more than **3 years (cumulative)** of activity should be considered as a **minimum** for an HE and;

- Run a micro, small or medium-sized enterprise in one of the participating countries (see introduction) according to the EU definition of an SME (see below for more information) as owners or members of the Board (not employees)[9]. The business can be in any sector.

> **IMPORTANT:**
> Although no minimum time of professional experience is specified for HEs, more than 3 years of entrepreneurial experience (i.e. not as employee) should be considered as a minimum. You should pay attention to details they provide, since they may claim several years' experience in running a business when they have only been employees and not board members. This evaluation should be documented in the IT Tool with reference to the relevant evidence.

<u>European Union's SME definition</u>

The European Union defines SMEs as enterprises which: *'fulfil the criteria laid down in the Recommendation as summarised in the table below. Besides the staff headcount ceiling, an enterprise will also qualify as an SME if it meets either the turnover ceiling or the balance sheet ceiling, but not necessarily both'.*

Enterprise category	Head count	Turnover	Or	Balance sheet total
medium-sized	< 250	≤ €50 million		≤ €43 million
small	< 50	≤ €10 million		≤ €10 million
micro	< 10	≤ €2 million		≤ €2 million

Specific rules are applicable when calculating ceilings for enterprises which are not autonomous (partner or linked enterprises) and for publicly owned enterprises, which do not qualify as SMEs.

You will find further information about the EU's SME definition at: http://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/sme-definition_en

The SME definition document includes a model declaration that can be requested for enterprises whose qualification as SME is not clear.

<u>Minimum age definition</u>

There is no maximum age limit for new or host entrepreneurs in the programme but all participants must be minimum 18 years old in order to have the legal capacity to sign agreements and to participate.

> An indicative table of entities eligible for the programme is available in Annex 2.

1.2.2.2 Geographical criteria

1.2.2.2.1 <u>The rule</u>

Interested NEs and HEs must have their '**permanent residence**', as defined by the programme, in an **EU Member State or in any of the other participating countries** to participate in the programme and they should apply in that country.
'**Permanent residence**' is defined as:

[9] The distinction between an employee in a management position and the owner or member of the board can be made regarding their decision power with regards to the future of the business. As an example, one could wonder: "Can this person take the decision (on his own or in agreement with others) of selling the business?" If the answer is yes, the candidate can be considered as owner of the company.

- The place where the company of the applicant is registered, if the applicant has a registered company, and where the applicant is residing;
- If a company has several registered establishments in different EU Member States or other participating countries, the entrepreneur should choose the country where he/she is based as his/her permanent residence;
- The place where the applicant has spent **183 days** or more in the course of the last **12 months**, if the applicant does not have a registered company.

Participation in the programme is not based on nationality or legal residence, therefore holding a specific nationality or legal residence status does not grant or deny an applicant the right to participate in the programme. For example, EU nationals that have not been living in any of the participating countries for the above mentioned period are not eligible to participate until they once again fulfil the necessary eligibility criteria.

You should verify that all information provided in the application is consistent (e.g. contact details in the application should match information contained in the CV). Do not hesitate to verify this information against available information, e.g. on the internet, and request clarifications where necessary.

The IO selected by the entrepreneur must be located in the country of 'permanent residence' of the entrepreneur (except for cases where there is no IO in the respective country). If a new entrepreneur fulfils the above-mentioned criteria for one country but he/she is currently based in another participating country, the exchange cannot take place in that country. If this situation applies for the host entrepreneur, he/she cannot be considered eligible to be a host entrepreneur until he/she has returned to the country of permanent residence.

For entrepreneurs from Outermost Territories and OCTs, if there is no IO on their territory they should select an IO in a country they belong to or they have constitutional link with. If there is no Intermediary Organisation in that country, then NEs may register with an Intermediary Organisation located in another nearby participating country. To that end, NEs will have to provide documents related to their application in English or in a language understood by the selected IO.

Should the country of 'permanent residence' of the entrepreneur change during the application process or once they have been accepted, the entrepreneur might no longer be eligible to be registered with the respective IOs and he/she should thus change to an IO in the country where they fulfil the geographic criteria.

Please note that there is no geographic distribution of IOs inside a country and applicants are therefore not obliged to register with an intermediary organisation in their city or region. Similarly, IOs are not allowed to only accept applications from their region or country (if there is no IO in the country of the applicant). Nonetheless, it is recommended that applicants select IOs that are located closer to them in order to be able to meet with their IO in person, when necessary.

IMPORTANT:
For entrepreneurs with Ukrainian citizenship displaced due to the military aggression of Russia on Ukraine, the geographical criteria have been changed to better serve them temporarily. Starting from 24 February 2022, the **rules are as follows**:

- A Ukrainian citizen ***residing in another country than Ukraine before 24 February 2022*** has to be matched via an IO of the country of residence as specified above;
- A Ukrainian NE ***residing in Ukraine*** applies via the Ukrainian IO;
- A Ukrainian NE forced to leave her/his country who ***wants to be hosted in the country where (s)he is currently staying*** should apply via Ukrainian IOs by including his/her Ukrainian address in the application form. If needed, IOs in the country where the NE is temporarily refugee can support her/him in filling the application;
- A Ukrainian NE forced to leave her/his country ***wants to be hosted in a different country where (s)he is staying***, can choose which address (local or Ukrainian) (s)he puts in the application form and accordingly choose either the local or Ukrainian IO.

1.2.2.2.2 Third country nationals

New entrepreneurs

Interested NEs who are not nationals of an EU Member State or of any of the participating countries can participate in the programme provided that they have spent 183 days in a participating country with a residence permit or equivalent document that allows them to reside in the country, and that they have started or have the intention to start a business in the EU or any other participating country. If this condition is not fulfilled, they cannot participate in the programme.

NEs participating in an exchange must ensure that they are allowed to stay in the HE's country and should themselves take care of any procedures linked to their visa/residence permit, where needed.

Host entrepreneurs

Interested HEs who are not nationals of any of the participating countries must run a business, registered within one of the participating countries, and reside in that country in order to be eligible to participate in the programme.

1.2.2.2.3 EU outermost regions and Outermost Countries and Territories (OCTs)

Entrepreneurs coming from or travelling to an outermost region, referred to in Article 349 TFEU[10], or an OCT in the frame of the programme, will receive the maximum monthly allowance to cover the extra costs incurred. Please refer to Annex 1.

> **IMPORTANT:**
> It is important to note that in case no local contact point is available in such regions, , the selection of an IO must happen in the country that is linked to the relevant outermost region or OCT.

1.2.3 Assessment of applications

Applicants should be assessed solely on the basis of the established eligibility criteria (see point 1.2.2), regardless of gender, ethnic background, age, religion, sexual orientation or any other irrelevant distinction.

Assessment of applications is a key step in the process of establishing relationships, as it determines quality of the profiles for an exchange. You are responsible for checking quality of applications submitted and you must ensure that only quality profiles of NEs & HEs are accepted in the programme.

During the assessment, particular attention should be paid to entrepreneurs' requirements.

To ensure that there is no misuse of the programme and/or there is no case of "stolen" identity, IOs should verify the identity of the applicants by the appropriate means (copy of ID/passport, as well as in-person or via (online) interviews). All applicants should also be contacted by phone before their application is assessed and a decision regarding their participation in the programme is taken. IOs need to remind applicants that their personal IT Tool login details are strictly personal and should not be shared with any third party for any reason.

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[10] Article 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (therein Part 7 – General and Final Provisions) refers to the structural social and economic situation of Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Martinique, Réunion, Saint-Barthélemy, Saint-Martin, the Azores, Madeira and the Canary Islands (the EU's outermost regions).

IMPORTANT:
Please note that IOs are not allowed to impose additional eligibility criteria that are not specifically outlined in the programme (e.g. previous international experience, sector or field of entrepreneur's business, whether the applicant's business requires international contacts or not, etc.)

IOs are empowered by the programme to decide on the eligibility and suitability of an applicant to participate in the programme and thus whether he/she can be accepted or not. Note, however, that such decisions must be based on objective assessment and IOs must be able to objectively justify it in the event of a complaint from an entrepreneur or during a check by the EC/EISMEA/Support Office.

1.2.3.1 Responsibilities of Entrepreneurs

Responsibilities of Entrepreneurs at the time of application are as follows:

- To carefully read the supporting documents published on the programme website (User guide, Registration guides, etc.) and comply with the programme rules and procedures;
- To apply for the programme via the online registration form;
- To provide any additional information (documents/evidences) to the selected IO when requested;
- To inform the selected IO about any change that may affect their participation in the programme.
- HEs are also responsible to ensure proper working environment for the NEs during the exchange (i.e. provide suitable working space and necessary equipment and tools) and must demonstrate this at the time of applying.

1.2.3.2 Responsibilities of Intermediary Organisations

Your responsibilities as IOs are to:

- Inform NEs and HEs about the programme rules and procedures, notably the minimum quality standards defined in this Quality Manual applicable to recruited entrepreneurs and spontaneous applicants;
- Provide help and assistance during the registration process;
- Ideally meet with applicants in person or at least via video call (this could help to prevent potential fraud)
- Liaise with NEs and HEs to obtain feedback on information that is lacking in their applications;
- Respect application processing deadlines set by the programme, including payments;
- Monitor pending applications for smooth running of the process;
- Not refuse applications from NEs/HEs if they select a wrong IO but redirect them to another IO;
- Liaise with the Lead IO for advice, if needed;
- Make sure that all accepted applications are eligible, complete and accurate;
- Look proactively for appropriate matches for accepted entrepreneurs;
- Verify quality of relationships matched, including eligibility and quality of counterpart entrepreneurs;
- Inform NEs and HEs about the end of the activity date of your IO.

1.2.3.3 Assessing New Entrepreneur's application

a) Minimum quality standards

The following minimum quality standards must be respected when assessing the application of an NE:

1. Check that the participation criteria are met (see point 1.2.2)

An NE can only participate once in the programme and only with one HE.

Current occupation of an NE should not be considered as an exclusion criterion. Status can be employed, self-employed or even unemployed. However, the **NE must demonstrate a clear and serious intention to start a business**. This will be documented by a **substantiated and clear** business plan.

Note: '**Would-be**' entrepreneurs do not have any obligation to create their own company after accomplishment of an exchange.

Please refer to the indicative table on entities eligible for the programme in Annex 2.

> **IMPORTANT:**
> Once accepted, NEs and HEs are directly available for matching. In case of doubt about the eligibility of an NE or HE, please put the application **On Hold** and contact your Lead IO. In case the Lead IO is not in a position to reply, it should forward the question to the Support Office.

2. Motivation and expectations should be clearly expressed

Success of the programme will depend upon it being seen as a **business investment for both entrepreneurs**, and NOT a student learning opportunity or internship abroad. Therefore, NEs should know exactly what they want to 'get out' of the exchange at the time they register.

NEs should in particular demonstrate:

- A real commitment to invest in a learning experience that will add value to his/her business idea;
- A clearly identifiable commitment towards being an entrepreneur;
- Clear and well defined learning objectives that refer to their concrete business plan[11];
- A commitment to contribute to the development of the HE's business through innovative ideas and by making use of his/her skills and competences;
- Motivation, enthusiasm, seriousness, creativity and initiative.

NEs should furthermore be able and willing to raise additional funds needed to cover costs of their stay abroad that exceed the EU's grant.

> **IMPORTANT:** Improper assessments compromise success of future relationships and hamper your work and the work of other IOs. Therefore, it is in everybody's best interest to ensure quality assessments. Please document your assessment as much as possible in the IT Tool for future reference.

[11] and not only general objectives e.g.' to learn about managing a small business'.

3. A sound personal and vocational background

Emphasis should be placed on NE's **qualifications, competences, interpersonal skills and willingness to be an entrepreneur** rather than on a minimum level of education, as the programme is about matching skills and personalities. Being a successful entrepreneur does not require an academic degree.

The Europass CV[12] format is preferable, but **not compulsory**. **CVs can be submitted in any official language of the EU**; however, **English** is preferable as it is understood by almost all users (HEs/NEs and IOs) of the online database and consequently facilitates matchmaking and consecutive approval.[13]

IMPORTANT: Please check permanent residency in NE´s CV and profile in order to verify whether you are the correctly selected IO. The CV should outline the NE's entrepreneurial experience and job position with concrete dates and locations. You should also check the position of the NE in the company, if the NE is newly established entrepreneur, to ensure he/she is the owner-manager (or co-owner-manager). These issues are of utmost importance as they are key eligibility criteria.

4. A well formulated business idea

Business plan

A business plan is a document that describes the product or service to be offered and summarises the operational, sales and financial objectives of one's business. It also contains detailed schemes and budgets which show how to achieve such objectives.

NEs who apply are requested to submit a **full business plan** and a **summary** of it.

- The **summary** of the business plan can be submitted in any EU official language; however **English** is strongly preferred as it will be read by all accepted users of the online database. The business plan summary should be included in the application form ('Short overview of your plans to start a business'). NEs are invited to draft the summary in a way that avoids misuse and potential damage to them. **It must clearly describe the products/services to be offered** and not be used as a summary for the NE's aims in the programme. Please note that as HEs and other IOs cannot see the NE's business plan, this section is the only way to provide interested HEs with some idea regarding the NE's business;
- The **full business plan** is a confidential document that will only be accessible to the selected New Entrepreneur, the Intermediary Organisation (NIO) and their lead partner, the Support Office, the Commission and the EISMEA. The document will never be visible to the HE and the counterpart IO. It should be submitted in an official language of the EU that the NIO understands.

The **full business plan must at least contain**:

- A clear description of the product or service to be offered;
- A market analysis that includes definition and assessment of the target market. It should also include competitors analysis as well as NE's marketing and sales plan;
- A financial plan including break-down of estimated expenses and income in the following 2 years and a break-even analysis.

[12] https://europa.eu/europass/en

[13] IOs should take into account that documents submitted in languages other than English, French or German might add delays to the possible approval procedure.

Therefore company presentations or elevator pitch that already exist or similar formats without the above mentioned content do not qualify as business plans.

> **IMPORTANT:** The business plan is a compulsory document that forms part of the application profile. Applications submitted with a Business Plan that does not contain the minimum information required cannot be accepted. Being a confidential document, it is the NIO's responsibility to ensure that the business plan is included in the profile and is of sufficient quality.

The business plan is required to assess whether the applicant seriously intends to start a business in the near future. It does not have to be lengthy but it needs to be a comprehensive document that covers all the required elements and demonstrates that the NE has invested a significant effort in converting his/her ideas into a practical project. The viability of the business plan itself does not need to be assessed, but the document should contain enough information to permit viability assessment by a potential investor.

The programme does not provide a business plan template. Any IOs wishing to provide one should indicate that it is not an official template by the EYE programme. It will be up to the IOs to check if the document is of sufficient quality and fulfils the basic requirements, namely that it demonstrates that the NE is firmly planning to start his/her own business or has started his/her own business within the last 3 years and that the business idea is well thought through.

> **IMPORTANT:** NIOs are responsible for confidential treatment of the business plan submitted by NEs. If required, NEs can ask their IO to sign a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) or any similar confidentiality agreement that they consider pertinent.

5. Ability to work in a foreign language

Entrepreneurs are allowed to submit their application in any of the official EU languages, providing that this language is also spoken and understood by their selected IO.

Yet, the ability of an NE and an HE to communicate properly is crucial to the success of a relationship and it is therefore vital to ensure that accepted entrepreneurs master the necessary foreign language(s).

Given that no language training is provided as part of the programme and that language skills are one of the main criteria for matching, it is important to ensure that NEs and HEs can comfortably work in the foreign languages they select in the application form (i.e. they do not have difficulties to understand, speak, read and — if needed — write in the language(s)).

Although there are no specific language level requirements at this point, it is recommended that NEs have a proficient English or master a second language (at least B2 level) in addition to their mother tongue.

> **IMPORTANT:** English is not mandatory as long as the respective NIO and HE speak the same language as the NE.
>
> Note that even if the HE speaks the NE's mother tongue, the NE's experience abroad might turn out to be an unsuccessful one if the NE cannot communicate with other members of the team at the HE's office or in the daily life in the HE's country.

1.2.3.4 Selection of an Intermediary Organisation

As part of their registration, NEs and HEs have to choose an Intermediary Organisation (IO) that is officially appointed by the EISMEA to handle applications, establish exchanges and provide guidance and support[14].

Other important elements

In addition to the above mentioned minimum quality standards, the following elements, which do not need any quality check, are important for the matchmaking exercise and need to be taken into consideration:

- Exchange period, sector of interest and geographical preferences are 3 crucial factors that will determine matching. The more flexible an NE is with the exchange parameters, the better the chance he/she will have to find a good match;
- Work and business experience: it is not compulsory for NEs to have professional experience, but it is obviously an advantage. This information is useful for HEs looking for a specific profile;
- Personality of NE: the success of an exchange also depends on interpersonal exchanges between an NE and an HE. Having a look at the hobbies of an NE in the CV or a personal interview may give you an idea of his/her personality and see if it could suit a HE.

A **registration guide for new entrepreneurs**[15] has been developed by the Support Office to help them during the registration procedure. You are strongly encouraged to recommend your NEs to carefully read this guide as it provides useful information on the type and level of details that should be submitted.

The registration guide is available on the public website under the section ‘How to participate’ and on the intranet under section ‘Document Library’.

1.2.3.5 Assessing Host Entrepreneur applications

a) Minimum quality standards

Please find below the minimum quality standards you should take into account when assessing the application from an HE:

1. Check that eligibility criteria are met (see point 1.2.2)

Only an owner-manager of a company or a person directly involved in entrepreneurship at SME management board level is eligible to the programme as an HE. Employees are therefore not eligible, whatever their position. In case of doubt, it is recommended to double-check the position of an HE in the company[16]. As the application is done on a personal basis (and not on a company basis) and commits the entrepreneur personally, the application cannot be delegated to an employee (e.g. secretary, assistant, or other).

As a general rule, HEs who have less than 3 years cumulative experience as entrepreneurs cannot be considered eligible.

Please refer to the indicative table of entities eligible for the programme in Annex 2.

[14] A list of IOs is available at http://www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu/page.php?cid=05.
[15] https://www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu/upload/NE%20registration%20guide%20-%20FINAL.pdf

[16] Please see note 7.

Please note that the host entrepreneur's contact details have to be individual (i.e. individual work email, direct phone number and address) and not that of another person.

2. Motivation and expectations should be clearly expressed

Interested HEs should explain their individual interest in participating in the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme and what they can offer to an NE. More specifically, they should demonstrate that:

- They have experience in running successfully a business and an entrepreneurial track record;
- They are engaged in an activity that will give an NE relevant learning opportunities;
- They want to share their entrepreneurial experience and act as a mentor: they should specify how they will work with NE towards developing his/her entrepreneurial skills and know-how. This is **<u>a personal commitment that cannot be delegated</u>**.

HEs should concisely describe activities that they would expect from an NE and indicate if any specific skills, including language skills, are required from NE to perform a particular task — giving the latter the opportunity to decide whether to explore a potential relationship further. Furthermore, a brief description of the HE's business should also be provided within the application.

Examples of NEs activities during the exchange:

- Market research and developing new business opportunities;
- Project development, innovation and R&D;
- Taking a fresh look at existing business operations;
- Understanding SME finance;
- Branding, sales and marketing of company;
- Work on concrete projects in one or more of the above-mentioned areas;
- Shadowing the HE.

In any case, a reasonable amount of time (at least 5 hours per week on average) should be spent working on NE's project. This should be explicitly indicated in the Commitment (see point 2.3.2 for further information).

3. Brief curriculum vitae

A brief CV specifying the HE's entrepreneurial experience and job position is required, with clear dates and location for each experience. It should contain at least a description of the product/service offered, years in active business as well as a description of previous experience as an entrepreneur.

CVs can be submitted in any official language of the Participating Countries. However, it is likely that English is understood by most users of the online catalogue that contains all accepted applications and, consequently, might be the most appropriate language for allowing IOs to perform matchmaking.

IMPORTANT: A company description is not a CV. Entrepreneurial experience of the HE, whether in the present company or in a previous one, and other relevant personal characteristics are very important. Entrepreneurial experience and job position of the HE should be clearly stated. Nevertheless, information about key features of HE's company may help the potential NE to decide on the choice of HE. The IO must double-check that the submitted CV corresponds to the person applying (e.g. by checking the HE's company's website) – this should help to avoid any fraud and 'stolen' identities.

4. Selection of Intermediary Organisation

HEs should select an IO that is active in their country or region of residence (the country where the HE has a registered company and is living- see Geographical Criteria). **The NIO must always be different from the HIO.**

a) Other important elements

In addition to the above minimum quality standards, there are other elements which do not need any quality check but are, nevertheless, important for matchmaking. These need to be taken into consideration and are comprised of:

- HE's preferred countries of origin regarding the NE;
- Time availability and preferred dates for the exchange: this data is crucial for the HE;
- Additional important information reported by HEs in their application that could make their offer more attractive (e.g. accommodation, insurance, etc.).

b) Assistance

HEs will often be very active entrepreneurs with a tight schedule and little time for extensive formalities. Therefore, HIOs are strongly encouraged to assist HEs in the registration process to the greatest extent possible, without taking over the HE's responsibilities in the programme. HEs might also require further assistance from their respective IOs when searching for an appropriate business partner. Again, advice and guidance are crucial for the success of matchmaking.

A **registration guide for host entrepreneurs**[17] has been developed by the Support Office to help them during the registration process. IOs are encouraged to recommend to their HEs to carefully read this guide in order to have all the required information at hand before starting the registration process.

The registration guide is available on the public website under the section 'How to participate' and on the intranet under the section 'Document Library'.

It is important to make an accurate assessment of potential HEs because the success of an exchange is, to a large extent, determined by the motivation and seriousness of HEs. In case of doubt, you are advised to put the application **On Hold** and ask HEs for improvements of their application or additional evidence.

> **IMPORTANT:** If the eligibility of an NE/HE is not clear, IOs should seek advice from their Lead IOs. If the doubt persists, Lead IOs should email the Support Office (support@erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu) and explain the situation with all necessary information.

1.2.4 Exclusion criteria

The criteria for exclusion shall be as follows:

- NEs and HEs do not comply with the eligibility criteria described above;
- NEs who are trying to misuse financial assistance for various reasons[18];
- HEs who are looking for free labour force or pure internships;

[17] https://www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu/upload/HE%20registration%20guide%20-%20Updated%20February%202020.pdf

[18] E.g. to extend an existing internship or after study stay in another country, to carry out a franchising training at the franchisor's premises, etc.

- Weak/poor applications which can obviously not be improved;
- NEs and HEs who have a previous or planned business/professional relationship or a relation that does not require an Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs stay to be established. E.g. HE is or will be a co-owner or investor in the NE's business; NE's business idea is to set up a branch of the HE's business in his/her home country; NE has won a scholarship or stay at the HE's office through another programme, NE and HE are related (family members, partners/spouses, family members of partners, etc.)
- Exchanges and applications where there is a conflict of interest. Conflict of interest is considered any situation that has the potential to undermine the impartiality of the entrepreneur or IO involved because of the possibility of a clash between the actor's self-interest and his/her role and responsibilities in the programme as new/host entrepreneur or intermediary organisation- for example, IO staff participating as entrepreneurs, matches between entrepreneurs who have a personal relation, etc.

1.2.5 Processing applications

The European Commission has developed an online database to enable NEs and HEs to submit applications, search for a business partner, perform matchmakings, and follow exchanges. The online database of entrepreneurs is only accessible with a login and a password that every IO, NE and HE receives upon creation of their ECAS (European Commission Authentication Service).

<u>IOs' staff can access the online database only after their Lead IO has inserted their contact details into the system.</u>

NEs and HEs interested in participating in the programme shall apply via the online registration form available on the programme website (www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu) under the section '**Apply now**'.

Registrations must be fully completed, submitted and confirmed by applicants by logging in at least once before being automatically sent to the selected IOs for validation.

To confirm their applications, NEs/HEs have to click on the link in the email confirmation message that they receive immediately after submitting their form. After clicking on this link, registered applicants will first have to be accepted by their respective IO, in order to be able to participate in the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme and access the Erasmus IT Management Tool (online database).

The confirmed applications are stored in the database (i.e. as status '**Applied**') and must be processed by the responsible IOs. Applications that have been submitted but have not been confirmed can usually be found in the Non-Completed section of the IT Tool (under **HE/NE management**'), which signifies that the applicant has not logged in at least once.

IOs have to monitor the incoming applications from NEs and HEs that are registered with their organisation since the system does not automatically notify the IO of a new registration by default, unless IOs specifically request this (see IT Tool user manual p.70).

1.2.5.1 Procedure and deadlines

IOs are responsible for checking the quality of applications and to either accept, following an interview with the applicant, or put them on hold. The application status should be adjusted by the responsible IO accordingly.

In order to monitor incoming applications and process them, IOs have to go to the '**HE/NE management**' section in the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs IT Management Tool and select the '**Follow up applications**' option.

IMPORTANT: In the interest of all IOs and entrepreneurs, it is crucial to respect reasonable deadlines for processing applications and relationships. This will avoid unnecessary and discouraging delays in the matching procedure. Overruns of delays are clearly highlighted in the IT Tool as a reminder. These delays and overdue actions are also carefully monitored by the SO.

Repeated and unfounded delays will be considered as failure of a substantial obligation under the terms of the grant agreement, which might be considered as poor implementation or might lead to termination of participation of a beneficiary or termination of grant agreement according to the grant agreement.

1Infographic: Application Workflow

Note:
The M# codes in the diagrams under section “Building Relationships” refer to the text of the related email messages. These messages are displayed in Appendix 3 of the IT Tool Manual.

a) *Application status: ‘Applied’*

Processing deadline: 2 weeks
Actors: NIO/HIO

All submitted applications automatically receive the status **‘Applied’**. At this stage, NEs/HEs do not have access to the online catalogue of profiles to search for a business partner. This status only means that the application has been received. It does not imply that the entrepreneur is accepted to the programme.

IOs should within a **maximum of 2 weeks** upon receipt of application, establish contact with the applicant, perform an initial check (i.e. evaluate, spot mistakes / gaps and make contact with the applicant) and take action accordingly.

Possible actions at this stage are:

1. Applicant fulfils all programme requirements and should be granted access to the online catalogue, once the IO has carried out an interview with the applicant → change application status to ‘**Accepted**’;
2. Information is unclear or clarifications are needed → change application status to ‘**On Hold’** and clarify the necessary elements through a phone interview or over email**;**
3. The application has incomplete fields, lacks the CV or the Business Plan → change application status to ‘**Back to Applicant’** and request the necessary changes/clarifications from the applicant.
4. Selected IO is not in a position to accept entrepreneur[19] or IO is terminating its contract → change application status to ‘**Back to Applicant’** and advise applicant to apply with another IO or change the IO of the applicant yourself.
5. If an application is ineligible, inappropriate or irrelevant (e.g. the entrepreneur registered with this programme by mistake) → change application status to ‘**Refused'**.

NEs/HEs will be automatically informed by email about any change of their application status but IOs must always contact the entrepreneurs to explain the relevant action that has been taken.

b) *Application status: ‘On Hold’*

Processing deadline: 6 weeks
Actors: NE/HE

An application should be put **‘On Hold**’ if the profile is valuable but relevant information is still missing or unclear. Although NEs/HEs will be notified by an automatic email about the change of their status, IOs should nevertheless contact NEs/HEs directly by phone or email explaining the reasons for the '**On Hold**' status. IOs should also organise an interview with the applicant to understand better the application and their motivation for participation.

An application may stay ‘**On Hold**’ for a **maximum of 6 weeks**. Three actions are possible at this stage:

1. If the missing information is provided on time and fulfils the requirements of the programme, the applicant will be granted access to the online catalogue or registered entrepreneurs and the Search/Match tool→ change the status of the application to ‘**Accepted’**;

[19] E.g. because of geographical criteria (entrepreneur living in a different country as the IO), budgetary reasons (no more budget available for NEs) or end of activity of IO in the period requested for exchange. Any of these reasons should be conveyed to the entrepreneur and where possible a specific IO should be recommended.

2. If the missing information is not provided on time despite several reminders, but the applicant still has the possibility to eventually become eligible if he can provide proper evidence (e.g. the business plan), then it should be sent back to the applicant. This will free the IO from obligation to deal with the case at this point in time → change the status of the application to '**Back to Applicant**' (this should only be done after the profile has been in status On Hold);
3. If the missing information is supplied and shows that the candidate is not eligible, or the applicant does not seem sufficiently qualified, the application should be refused → change the status of the application to '**Refused**'.

In case of early expression of interest and registration (e.g. the business plan is not ready, current business and travel commitments delay participation), IOs should invite the applicant to register later, after all documents have been completed or the HE/NE has more time. The application should be given the status '**Back to Applicant**' and IOs should state within the field '**remark**' that the NE/HE should complete his/her application.

c) Application status: 'Accepted'

Processing deadline: N/A
Actors: NIO/HIO

An application should be accepted if the candidate fulfils the eligibility criteria and the application meets the minimum quality standards. This status gives the entrepreneur access to the Erasmus IT Management Tool.

Accepted applicants are automatically notified by email that their application to the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme has been accepted, and that they can now use the Erasmus IT Management Tool for searching & matchmaking purposes. This automatic email contains a link to the IT Tool user's guide.

It is important to note that after they have been accepted NEs/HEs can only update and/or modify their profile through their IO. Should the NIO/HIO wish that the entrepreneurs make the changes themselves, the IO can still put the NE/HE **'On hold'** to enable the entrepreneurs to do so. Nonetheless, IOs should ensure that applications are accurate when they are '**Accepted'**.

Furthermore, an accepted applicant might need to be re-evaluated once he/she has been accepted if there has been a change in their circumstances that affects their eligibility (change in country of residence, no longer owner-manager of business, etc.).

d) Application status: 'Refused'

Processing deadline: N/A
Actors: NIO/HIO

In principle, applications should be refused only if candidates do not fulfil the eligibility criteria and/or the minimum quality standards. Where information is missing, application should be put '**On Hold**', and if the requested information is not submitted in a reasonable amount of time, the application should be sent '**Back to Applicant**'. Applicants who use financial assistance inappropriately, such as to subsidise travel, and applications that do not meet programme objectives must be refused.

A standard email is automatically sent out to NEs/HEs from support@erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu address notifying them that their application has been refused and inviting them to contact the IO in order to find out the reasons for the refusal. It is therefore important to send a separate email explaining the reasons for the refusal.

The European Commission and the Agency expect a respectful and professional behaviour towards applicants. The assessments should be clearly based on **objective criteria**.

Intermediary Organisations specialised in a specific sector or target group (e.g. women entrepreneurs) are not allowed to refuse applications of entrepreneurs from other sectors or categories just on this ground. If an IO does not have enough skills to deal with a specific application, then it should offer to the applicant to reassign them to another IO.

Furthermore, when an application has been submitted by error or contains incorrect or irrelevant data or upon applicants' request, you should equally change its status to **'Refused'**.

This status must not be given to NEs/HEs who have selected a wrong IO (for example, applicant from another participant country). "**Back to Applicant**" should be used instead.

Entrepreneurs that are not interested anymore (even temporarily) in the programme should be flagged as 'Withdrawn', unless they specifically request that their data are deleted. The deletion will be undertaken in line with the Privacy Statement.[20]

e) Application status: 'Back to Applicant'

Processing deadline: N/A
Actors: NE/HE

With the status '**Back to Applicant**' the IOs return the application to the entrepreneur. This may be done

- because the IO will soon become inactive;
- because the applicant has not responded in due time to the request for additional information;
- because the entrepreneur has not submitted a proper business plan or other clarifications in due time.
- because the applicant has decided to postpone his/her participation, while still being in status Applied

Note: Entrepreneurs given '**Back to Applicant**' status just after applying are NOT allowed to have access to the Erasmus IT Management Tool. They will have limited access to the tool if they receive this status after being accepted.

1.2.5.2 Recommendations

<u>Use of interviews</u>

Interviews should always be used as a second step of assessing a profile, after first reviewing the online application. This can be done by telephone, via Skype or through a face-to-face interview. New Entrepreneurs cannot refuse to come for an interview when this is deemed necessary by the IO.

Such interviews will not only allow IOs to check the information provided in the application, assess candidate's motivation and needs, and add important missing data but they will also provide IOs with an additional insight into the candidates' profiles, which will play a key role during the matching and relationship-building processes. Interviews are thus considered a confirmed best practice.

Equally, the interviews, either face to face or online, will help verifying the identity of the entrepreneur.

<u>Track the 'non-completed applications'</u>

[20] https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/erasmusentrepreneurs/resources/help/Privacy%20Statement%20Erasmus.pdf

IOs have the possibility of tracking entrepreneurs who submitted their application but did not confirm it by clicking the link in the confirmation message sent to them upon registration (feature '**non completed applications**' in the IT Management Tool). Sometimes applicants do not understand that they have to react to this email to complete their application procedure.

If a person remains in this list for more than a few days, it is good practice that IOs contact him/her by phone or by email to prompt him/her to check his/her inbox. The application will then automatically be moved to the follow-up list for monitoring and approval purposes. Also, if an IO receives a call from an entrepreneur, who claims he/she has submitted his/her application but the IO doesn't find it in the inbox, the IO has the possibility of checking this list of **non-completed applications**.

Reserve an entrepreneur
IOs have the possibility to reserve their own accepted NEs/HEs. This option will temporarily prevent other IOs from proposing exchanges to them. Such entrepreneurs will nevertheless be available to all IOs but only for search purposes. The reservation period is for a maximum of 2 weeks. It can only be applied once for each entrepreneur

'Assessment' text box

IOs must complete the **'Assessment'** text box with a short summary about the particular strengths of the candidate and any other information that justifies the status that has been allocated to an application. This is particularly important for providing the EC, EISMEA and SO with additional information in the case of a random check of an application or a match. The text should therefore not be vague and it is not to be used as a conversation with the entrepreneur.
Please note that the text provided in the Assessment box is only included in the automatic email to the applicant when it has be provided for the On Hold and Back To Applicant statuses.

For refused applications, applicants will be asked to contact their IO for a detailed explanation of the decision so IOs are expected to inform the applicant before refusing the application.

'Remark' text box

IOs should indicate, within the '**Remark**' text box, any information that might be useful for internal processing of application (e.g. reasons for putting the application '**On Hold**'). Such information is visible to users from your own IO only but not visible to the applicant or to other IOs.

1.2.6 Deletion of registrations

NEs and HEs have the right to withdraw their registration from the programme within the framework of the restrictions stated in the Privacy Policy Statement.[21]They need to confirm their request by sending an email to their IO who will ask the Support Office to handle their request.

For auditing purposes, and in accordance with data protection rules and the Privacy Policy Statement, entrepreneurs that have participated in a relationship cannot be deleted from the database until the corresponding audit period has elapsed (up to 10 years after the end of their last relationship)

1.2.7 Monitoring of activity and validation of continued interest of entrepreneurs

It is important for programme performance that the database of entrepreneurs is complete and up-to-date. It can be very disappointing for entrepreneurs to propose relationships that never get an answer, either because counterparts are no longer interested in participating in the programme or are not available for various reasons.

[21] https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/erasmusentrepreneurs/resources/help/Privacy%20Statement%20Erasmus.pdf

IOs must therefore maintain the portfolio of their entrepreneurs' profiles updated and ensure that entrepreneurs are still interested in the programme.

The IT tool includes a system of flags which helps IOs understand the availability of entrepreneurs in the database and the activity of their own entrepreneurs.

This system includes an activity monitoring option based on the last login date. Entrepreneurs that have not logged in for the last 6 months will be flagged 'low activity' (orange). The corresponding IOs will then be alerted and prompted to validate the interest of their entrepreneurs to participate in the programme. If no action is taken in the following 4 weeks, then the entrepreneurs are flagged 'inactive' (red) and they will lose their access to the catalogue.

Entrepreneurs that have not logged in for more than a year will be automatically anonymized, which is an irreversible process.

Procedures for validation of interest of entrepreneurs and the possible actions to be taken are described in detail in the IT Tool Manual.

1.2.8 Data protection

It is forbidden to disclose any kind of personal data (e.g. contact details, CVs, business plans, etc.) of the registered entrepreneurs to third parties without explicit agreement from the relevant NEs and HEs.

Intermediary Organisations should ensure that they comply with all European and national data protection rules[22].

[22] Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation)

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2 Building relationships

2. Infographic: Building Relationships

The programme defines relationships as a temporary exchange between an NE and an HE — each belonging to a different participating country. Such a relationship is meant to be a period of contact and collaboration founded upon mutual interests and benefits. An eligible relationship will involve a stay of the NE with the HE for a period of time between one and six months. The total length of stay may be spread over a longer overall period of not more than 12 months.[23] This should provide both NE and HE enough flexibility to manage their time and resources.

HEs and NEs have to be based in two different participating countries, except the "specific rules" governing matches with involvement of Ukrainian citizens (see above). NEs are entitled to receive financial assistance for their exchange abroad as long as the distance between their permanent residence address and the HE's address are at least 50 km apart in a straight line. Matches that don't meet this criterion will be permitted but will not be paid. The 50km criterion will not apply to matches involving Ukrainians that are matched within their host country (rules see section *Geographical Criteria*)

IT User Manuals, both for IOs and for NEs/HEs, provide detailed instructions and guidelines for building relationships. They are available under the 'Help' section of the IT Management Tool.

The matchmaking process may be time consuming and may take several months. Therefore, it is essential that you take this delay into account when initiating an exchange (especially regarding the planned start date) and that you inform your NEs and HEs in order to avoid any possible disappointment, postponement or cancellation of business relationships.

2.1 The IT Management Tool — online catalogue

Accepted applications are shown in the online catalogue which allows all IOs to search for matches. Approved NEs and HEs can also search in the online database for appropriate partners and make suggestions to their IO or propose matches directly to their counterpart.

The catalogue is not public. It can only be accessed by IOs, accepted HEs and accepted NEs.

Please note that the Commission, EISMEA and the Support Office are able to see all profile information provided by NEs and HEs including the CV, Business Plan and any supporting documents.

HEs have the possibility of choosing the degree of visibility of their data in the online catalogue when registering as per below. HEs should select option 2 or 3, if they do not wish to be contacted directly by NEs.

Important: If the HE selects option 3, he/she will not appear in the catalogue at all and will also not have any access to the catalogue (i.e. Search/Match option) themselves! In such cases only the HIO will be able to propose matches for the HE.

If the HE selects option 2, he/she will still have access to the catalogue and will be visible for other entrepreneurs but his/her contacts will be replaced with the contact details of the HIO, so all contact will be established via the IO.

[23] Within this time span, the relationship may be divided into a number of time slots (minimum 1 week of five workdays per slot), during which the actual visit by NE to HE takes place (maximum duration: six months).

Visibility Options

HEs are required to specify how their details and credentials should appear when people consult the Catalogue and perform searches and matches in the Erasmus IT Tool. 3 options are available:

*– **Option 1:** the HE's full details and credentials will be visible to all users consulting the his profile.*

*– **Option 2**: the HE's general information is available, but the contact details (including postal address, email, phone and fax numbers) and CV will be hidden from users consulting the HE's profile. Interested users will be required to contact the HE's IO if they want to know more about the HE. The figure below shows the standard text that will show on the HE's profile if this option is selected.*

IDENTIFICATION	
Name :	**Ms BROOKE Ashley**
Contact details	The contact details have been discarded upon the entrepreneur's request. For more information, please contact his (her) IO.
IO :	Fundación Universidad Empresa de la Región de Murcia - Campus Universitario de Espinardo - Edificio ENAE - 30100 ES
IO contact :	Marta Lanzos
Number of employees :	40
SKYPE ID	
Skype id :	abrooke541
MOTIVATION	
Motivations to the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme :	I got my system to work in a LAN SIP phones work and the softphone (x-lite) works as well on X-lite, I got the videocalls to work PERO the text chat doesn't work for lack of support from FreePBX. This is why I want to participate because of Elastix, from what I hear pwede ang text chat sa elastix. I should switch system from FreePBX to Elastix upon the recommendation ni Guru Pester
Experience in running a business (number of years) :	5
CV :	CV have been discarded upon the entrepreneur's request.

3*Note: Name of the entrepreneur is fictional*

*– **Option 3:** the HE's information will be hidden from users consulting his profile. Interested users will be required to contact the HE's IO to know more about the HE. Once the HE is in a Draft relationship, his/her full details will become visible to all parties involved (i.e., NE/HE, NIO/HIO, NEP/HEP*

2.2 Search and match

The process of successfully matching NEs and HEs is a key element of the mobility scheme.

Searching and matching is the process whereby information submitted by an NE in the catalogue is compared to information provided by an HE (and vice-versa) in order to find the closest possible match for an exchange.

A suitable business partner for NEs and HEs can be found in a number of different ways by:

1. Direct search in the online catalogue using the following available search criteria: sector (primary and secondary), country (of origin and target), languages (mother tongue and other working languages) and duration of exchange;

2. Using the matchmaking tool to propose matches based on criteria in the application profiles;
3. Pre-existing matches, i.e. HE and NE have already agreed on a relationship before registering- please verify, however, that there is no-prior collaboration (see 1.2.4 Exclusion Criteria);
4. Specific searches by directly contacting other IOs in the desired target country;
5. Entrepreneurs themselves searching the online catalogue for possible partners and proposing matches directly via the online tool;
6. Automatic suggestions sent by the system.

Entrepreneurs can also be encouraged to look for suitable counterparts outside the online database (e.g. personal contacts, LinkedIn, etc.).

The 'Search/Match' section in the IT Management Tool allows IOs to:

- Review lists and details of accepted NEs and HEs associated to their own IO (or to any IO under their European Partnership if the IO is the Lead IO);
- Perform score-based matching in order to instantly find the most suitable business partner for an NE or HE;
- Search NEs and HEs from other IOs in the catalogue, by using free text search or changing the preselected criteria for matching.

Please refer to the IT Users' Manual for a detailed description of the search function and the matching process.

2.2.1 Matchmaking tool

The IT Management Tool allows score based matching in order to instantly find the closest fitting counterparts for a potential exchange. Matching scores are calculated based on similarity percentages between the answers provided by an NE to key questions in the application form and the answers submitted by HEs present in the catalogue (and vice-versa). Please see Annex 4 for the elements for automatic matching that are taken into consideration by the IT Tool.

2.2.2 Recommendations

IOs play a crucial role in the matchmaking process and bear equal responsibility for the outcomes. It is therefore required that you carefully assess the profiles of potential counterparts for your entrepreneurs (i.e. check motivations, objectives, eligibility, etc.) and further discuss with your NEs and HEs their expectations about the exchange in order to propose relevant matching based on **mutual interests and benefits**.

It should not be forgotten that the process is about **matching people**. IOs must therefore encourage NEs and HEs to speak to each other before confirming their relationship. This can be done via emails, by phone (interview) or by any other suitable means.

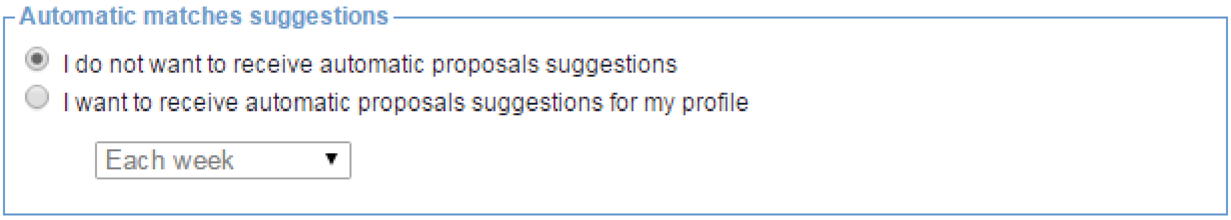
HEs are looking for motivated NEs with clear objectives. Both parties must be conscious that they will not only 'receive' but also 'give'. They should be ready to contribute to the other entrepreneur's business.

2.2.3 'Suggestion of the week'

Every Friday afternoon, the IT tool scans the list of available entrepreneurs automatically and searches for the best current match, i.e. 'match of the week', for those entrepreneurs who have indicated that they wish to receive automatic suggestions (this can be requested via the 

. Icon at the top right of all pages in the IT Tool).

Entrepreneurs have the option to receive such automatic suggestions via email once a week, once every two weeks (the default value), once a month or to deactivate the function altogether. Please note that this feature is available for entrepreneurs ONLY (not for IOs).



The system scans the catalogue and searches for the best possible match using the automatic matching algorithm criteria defined by the user in his/her user profile in the same way as the automatic search functions.

Automatic suggestions respect the following rules:

1. Each eligible entrepreneur will receive only one suggestion per round.
2. The system never proposes the same automatic suggestion again.
3. The system avoids sending a suggestion to a pair of entrepreneurs for whom a proposal already exists in the database.
4. The system only suggests available entrepreneurs who:
    - are accepted and not yet involved in any of the stages of building a relationship;
    - have selected privacy option 1 or 2;
    - are 'fully active' (green flag) (see 1.2.7 validation of low active or inactive applications);
    - have less than 5 'proposals' = real relationships in proposal status plus automatic suggestions (active or passive).

The email notification contains a text that invites the entrepreneur to consult the profile. If the entrepreneur is interested in the profile and wants to launch a proposal he/she can do so by logging into the IT tool and following the indicated web-link.

The feature does not make proposals automatically. Entrepreneurs only receive a suggestion profile and must login into the application thereafter to make a proposal after verification of the profile.

For this feature to work properly, it is important that the preferences for matching are correctly defined. For example, if the most important criterion is "Keywords" (access via the User profile icon) but there are no keywords defined in the profile, the automatic suggestion will not be of interest to the entrepreneur. **If your entrepreneurs are receiving suggestions that do not match their preferences, please revise the preferences with the entrepreneur.**

2.3 Initiating relationships

The entire process of building a relationship can start after a suitable profile has been identified during the search phase. It is comprised of the following 2 important steps:

- **Proposing a relationship**
- **Drafting the Commitment**
- **Approving the Commitment (see 2.2.3 Approving the Commitment)**

One should bear in mind that the process of proposing a relationship, drafting the Commitment and approving the relationship may take up to **2 months**, therefore relationships should be planned well in advance to the foreseen starting date**.** The deadline set for each action should be respected by all parties as any delay in the relationship building process may cause a cancellation of relationship or a postponement of exchange. Therefore, IOs and Lead IOs are requested to regularly monitor any incoming relationships which need their approval and take action in due time.

The IT Management Tool will automatically highlight relationships that have exceeded the deadline in **'Orange'**. Those that have significantly exceeded deadline and require urgent action will be highlighted in **'Pink'**. These delays and overdue actions are also carefully monitored by the SO through a dedicated function in the IT Tool.

Please note that IOs have the option to stop/cancel a relationship at any stage during the relationship building (statuses ""Draft", "Ready for Approval", "EP Approval") process.

2.3.1 Proposing a relationship

Relationship status: 'Proposal'
Processing deadline: 14 days
Actors: NE/HE/HIO

A relationship between two entrepreneurs wishing to start an exchange can be proposed by the entrepreneurs themselves, using the '**Start relation proposal**' feature that is available to them in the Erasmus IT Management Tool. Entrepreneurs can propose **up to 5 relationships** at the same time. Only a cancellation of a proposed relationship will allow entrepreneurs to make a new proposal.

Alternatively, IOs may take the initiative of proposing relationships between some of their own entrepreneurs and other counterpart entrepreneurs with a matching profile via the Search/Match tool. Newly proposed relationships are instantly notified to both partners by email, with direct links to the details of the proposed relationship and options to adopt or discard the proposal.

If the proposal is initiated by an IO, then approval of both NE and HE is required to establish the relationship. However, if the proposal is initiated by an entrepreneur, then only the approval of the counterpart NE or HE is required.

HIOs may accept relationships that have been proposed to their HEs if the latter have conferred on them the right to act on their behalf via the IT Tool.

A reminder via email will be sent to the entrepreneur who has not reacted after **two weeks** (i.e. approval or rejection of proposal). The proposed relationship will be automatically cancelled if NE and HE do not accept it after **4 weeks**. All remaining proposals will also be cancelled once one of the proposed matches has been accepted by entrepreneurs.

Direct contact between NE and HE (on the phone, via Skype or email) is **strongly recommended** before confirming the final match. Experience has shown that this will decrease the risk of unsuccessful relationships.

Accepted NEs who have completed an exchange or who are already involved in a relationship will not be available in the online catalogue thereafter.

2.3.2 Drafting the Commitment

Relationship status: 'Draft'
Processing deadline: 21 days
Actors: NIO

A relationship reaches '**Draft'** status whenever a relationship proposal is endorsed by two entrepreneurs. At this stage, all parties involved (NE, HE and the two responsible IOs) must agree on an **Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs Commitment**, and establish the objective(s) of the exchange, the activity plan, the responsibilities, the expected outcomes, the duration of the stay and the planned start and end dates, etc. The text is uploaded by the NIO and has to be based on the inputs from the NE and the HE.

It is very important to make sure that all relevant elements are covered in this document, as this will be the basis for the cooperation between the 2 entrepreneurs over the following months. The text must clearly outline the individual objectives of the NE and the HE for the specific collaboration, how the entrepreneurial collaboration will take place, the activity plan that outlines the tasks and responsibilities of each of the entrepreneurs (weekly or monthly breakdown) and the specific (tangible) expected outcomes for each of the entrepreneurs. The Commitment should be specific to the relationship and avoid general statements (such as the objective of 'improving managerial skills' or outcomes such as 'better knowledge of how to run a business').

Please note that the commitment acts as the official agreement between the NE and the HE, therefore it is in the interest of both entrepreneurs to ensure that it is as detailed and specific as possible in order to help them fulfil their expectation for the exchange. A thorough commitment allows to track the progress of the match but also to ensure that the entrepreneurs each deliver what they have agreed.

Experience shows that a better prepared Commitment document gives rise to fewer problems at Commitment execution. Vague and generic commitments, on the other hand, usually lead to unsuccessful exchanges.

The IO responsible for an NE (NIO) is the one formally in charge of drafting the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs Commitment but the text should be done in collaboration with all parties involved, including the two entrepreneurs and the counterpart IO. Where possible, LIOs should also be advised to comment on the commitment before it has been uploaded in order to avoid having the text sent back to Draft at a later stage.

The drafting of the Commitment is a crucial step in relationship building as it will regulate the relationship between the NE and the HE. IOs should pay special attention to the eligibility of entrepreneurs (see chapters 1.2.1 and 1.2.2) and the content of the exchanges (i.e. objectives, activities, expected outcomes, etc.) that they intend to match. By uploading the commitment, the NIO states that they confirm the eligibility of the match and the entrepreneurs, and that they approve the content of the commitment.

In particular, the following formal items should be verified:

- Length of stay: minimum 1 month and maximum 6 months. When split, each slot should be for a minimum of 1 week and must be completed within 12 months;
- Dates of stay should be within the duration of the NIO's activity;
- Entrepreneurs should have their permanent residence in two different Participating Countries.

IOs should also pay attention to possible conflicts of interest, e.g. former or current employees staying at their employer's premises, pseudo-franchising situations or purely educational exchanges. These are only examples and other situations may arise which should be handled on a case-by-case basis.

2.3.3 Approving the Commitment

Relationship status: 'Ready for approval' and 'EP approval' (consecutively)
Processing deadline: 7 days each
Actors: NE/HE/HIO/HEP/NEP

When an NIO has finished drafting the Commitment, it is first submitted for approval to the 2 entrepreneurs and the IO (status '**Ready for approval**'), and then to the Lead IO of the European partnerships that is involved in the financial assistance (status '**EP approval**') of the relationship. By agreeing upon this document, the respective NE, HE and both IOs confirm that they will abide by the obligations of the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs Commitment.

Drafting and signing of the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs Commitment is done through the IT Management Tool. No signed paper copy is needed. Please refer to the IT Users' Manual for more information.

In the event that IOs decide to provide a paper/PDF copy of the agreement, the names of the legal representatives of both IOs will appear in the Commitment. This is independent of who 'signs' in the system (which is an internal organisational issue of each IO). The principle should be that only the person who can issue a legally binding act should appear in the Commitment (not the contact person).

Please note that during the approval of the HIO and the two LIOs, all IOs involved should double-check that both entrepreneurs are eligible (check CV, motivation, etc.) and that the match is also eligible (ensure that there is no prior collaboration, that the NE is not already abroad, etc). By giving their approval, the different parties confirm that they have verified all elements and that they approve the match and the entrepreneurs.

Eligibility criteria of a relationship:

1. NEs and HEs are accepted as entrepreneurs only when they comply with the admission criteria referred to in heading 1.2.2 Participation criteria;
2. **As a basic rule, NE** and **HE** must reside in **two different participating countries** (whatever their citizenship) – temporary exceptions possible for entrepreneurs with Ukrainian citizenship
3. The relationship must include an active **NIO** and an active **HIO** from **two different participating countries -** temporary exceptions in case of matching displaced Ukrainians. Entrepreneurs should reside in the country of their respective IO unless exceptional circumstances apply. IOs may be part of the same European Partnership or not;
4. The exchange must finish before the activity end date of both IOs;
5. There is no conflict of interest between the NE and the HE (e.g. franchisor-franchisee, HE investor or partner in NE´s business, etc.) or between any of them and their corresponding IOs;
6. The relationship is an entrepreneur-to-entrepreneur relationship, not an internship or placement with focus on business learning and not general learning (e.g. commitment should focus on learning how to run an architectural practice and not how to be an architect in general);
7. The match is not in breach with the points listed in section 1.2.4 Exclusion Criteria, especially with regards to NEs and HEs who have a pre-existing/planned professional relationship or a relation that does not require an Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs stay to be established/poses conflict of interest. E.g. HE is or will be a co-owner or investor in the NE's business; NE's business idea is to set up a branch of the HE's business in his/her home country; NE has won a scholarship or stay at the HE's office through another programme, NE and HE are related (family members, partners/spouses, family members of partners, etc.)

2.4 Confirming relationships

2.4.1 *Random checks by the European Commission/EISMEA/SO*

Relationship status: EC Approval
Processing deadline: 14 days
Actors: EC/EISMEA
All relationships already approved by the corresponding EPs will immediately receive the status ‘Ready for training’. A number of matches are randomly selected for a check by the European Commission/EISMEA, which is done via the IT Tool.

The European Commission/EISMEA will monitor the eligibility and quality of the matched relationships only on a sample basis. Based on the available data, IOs are responsible for ensuring eligibility of each participating entrepreneur and the relationship between them.

Relationships which are clearly ineligible, according to the data facilitated by the involved IOs, will not be considered eligible for funding.

IMPORTANT: NEs should not travel to the HE's premises before the relationship has reached the status "Ready to start". No costs incurred in the event that the NE has already travelled abroad will be eligible under the programme until the NE has signed their financial agreement with the NIO, the match has reached Stay Ready to Start and official start date has been reached.

Please note that at the EC Approval stage the relationship could be sent back to Draft or cancelled by EC/EISMEA, if deemed ineligible, and the NE will have to bear any financial costs incurred if they have travelled abroad already.

Furthermore, if the NE and HE begin collaborating before the match has been approved by all parties (including EC/EISMEA), this might be considered a prior collaboration and the match might thus be ineligible.

2.5 Agreement for Financial Support to the new entrepreneur

2.5.1 *Agreement for Financial Support to the new entrepreneur*

Grant agreements foresee payment of **monthly lump sums** to the new entrepreneurs. Such monthly lump sums per country are defined in Annex 1.

A lump sum is defined as a global amount deemed to cover expenses, such as travel, accommodation and subsistence linked with travel and stay abroad. This amount is paid without any further justification of costs incurred (i.e. entrepreneurs do not have to provide proof for their expenses or justify the amount spent).

However, NIOs should gather sufficient evidence that the relationship has taken place abroad (e.g. rent contract, boarding passes, letter from HE).

⚠ In case of relationships of **Ukrainian citizens** hosted in the country of their residence after 24 February 2022, a declaration signed by the NE and the HE on the duration of the stay must be provided. This is suggested because it might prove very difficult to obtain meaningful proof of expenditure confirming the NE’s participation in the exchange.

Entrepreneurs with disabilities and entrepreneurs coming from or going to outermost regions of the European Union or overseas territories benefit from the maximum monthly allowance to compensate for the extra costs linked to their specific situation.

The maximum financial support is only applicable for entrepreneurs with a disability, which requires an additional financial support- for example, an entrepreneur who requires to have a carer with them or an entrepreneur who has an increased cost for the transport as they need to transfer their

2.5.1.1 Payment arrangements

The NIO should make an advance payment to the NE being the equivalent of 1 month of the financial assistance foreseen prior to the start of the stay (this is also why IOs are advised against a starting date that is too close to the approval of the match).

Further advance payments should be made at least on a monthly basis allowing the NEs to cover their expenses during the stay. The balance of **maximum 1 month equivalent** should be paid within 30 days of submission of the corresponding feedback questionnaires by both entrepreneurs and of the evidence that the exchange has taken place.

In order to cover the contingency of a failed relationship due to the fault of the NE (please refer to section *3.3.2.3. Dealing with failed relationships*) or of a relationship being found ineligible for reasons out of the control of the NIO (i.e. a HE which turns out to be ineligible after the relationship has started or other similar circumstances), the Commission/EISMEA undertake to consider the amount of the advanced payment paid prior to the starting of the stay as eligible cost provided that:

- The NIO can show that they have undertaken the necessary steps to ensure the eligibility of the entrepreneurs and the quality of the match during the relationship building process;
- The NIO has followed up on the progress of the relationship, in collaboration with the HIO, and has reacted timely to the problems that might have arisen;
- The NIO proves unable to recover the money from the NE if the situation requires such a recovery, despite investing significant effort to try to recover the money (IO has done so via emails sent, phone calls, and signed for (“*recommendé*”) letters); and
- The HIO in collaboration and agreement with the NIO has stopped the relationship in due time after the event that leads to the termination of the stay is known.

Please refer also to point 3.3.2.3 Reimbursement of expenditure.

Note that the final amount of financial assistance depends on the actual dates of the exchange, as entered by the HIO at the end of the exchange. All IOs should therefore double-check that the HIO has entered the correct dates. The HIO, on the other hand, should always double-check the actual dates with the NIO, NE and HE before ending the match.

As a means of deviation from the above payment modalities, projects can also **centralise the payment to NEs by one partner** of the consortium, usually the consortium leader. In such case, the whole budget for new entrepreneurs needs to be accounted in the budget of that organisation.

In addition, if the financial agreements between the IOs and the new entrepreneurs are not signed by the organisation doing the payments to new entrepreneurs, the following practice must be respected:
a *written agreement between each Partner and the organisation doing all payments to NEs must clearly specify the transfer of liability of the financial support costs to 3rd parties from each partner concerned to the organisation making the NE payments*. It is highly recommended that such practice is included in the consortium agreement that must be signed by all partners. Consultation of the contracting authority is also recommended.

2.5.2 Other agreements

IOs must ensure that NEs and HEs are aware that they may need to sign other agreements considered important, such as those related to confidentiality, intellectual property/industrial products, etc. NEs and HEs are free to sign such bilateral arrangements, but they must not contradict the clauses of the Commitment or of the grant agreement.
NIOs are responsible for confidential treatment of the business plan submitted by NEs. (NOTE: No other IO than the NIO and the LNIO can see the business plan.)

If required, NEs can ask their IO to sign a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) or any similar confidentiality agreement that they consider pertinent. Yet, it is to the IO's discretion to decide whether to sign it or not.

Please note that no template for such agreements is provided by the programme and IOs are advised to use the template usually used by their organisation in such situations.

The IO should furthermore discuss with the NE the reasons behind requesting such an agreement. If the NE is, for example, applying for a patent and they need to have such a document signed by all actors, who might have access to the document (including EC, EISMEA and SO), it is advisable that the NE waits until the patent application process has been closed and then they apply for the programme.

3 Preparation and follow-up of exchanges

4Relationship execution workflow

3.1 Preparing the exchange

3.1.1 Pre-departure induction course for NEs

Relationship status: 'Ready for training'
Processing deadline: 14 days
Actor: NIO

Before going abroad, NEs should participate in a pre-departure induction course which will include information on the mobility scheme and important EU related business subjects, such as the internal market, European law issues (particularly regarding business and contract law) and support services, including the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) and SOLVIT.

Each European partnership/IO is responsible for developing its own information kit and guidelines to be provided to NEs (i.e. format and content). Once a relationship has been approved by the European Partnership and checked by the Commission/EISMEA, if necessary, NIO should organise and provide a training session for the NE according to the methodology defined by its consortium and include general information on EU related topics.

Participating entrepreneurs, particularly NEs, need to be informed on how the EU internal market functions, as well as about the many remaining barriers to buying and selling across borders that they may encounter. A set of very practical online information sheets available to NIOs contains information on key aspects of the single market[24], how it is supposed to function and case studies on obstacles encountered and how to address them. These can be used during the induction sessions by NEs throughout their stay abroad.

Training should contain at least the following topics:

Financial rules

- NEs should be informed about the financial assistance (lump sums), possibilities for an extension of the exchange based on a written amendment (not applicable in the cases when the match is already 6 months), and the reimbursement procedure.
- The financial agreement between IO and NE must be explained and signed.

Programme rules

- NEs should be informed that they can request an extension of their exchange (subject to conditions detailed in point 3.2.1).
- They should be informed about the complaint procedure.
- They should be informed about the reporting procedure.
- They should be informed on what would happen in case of failed or early termination of the stay abroad (see point 3.3.2.3 "Reimbursement of expenditure").
- They should be informed of their responsibilities during the exchange.
- They should be informed about the HE´s responsibilities during the exchange.
- They should be provided with a welcome pack which will include practical information about the host country, accommodation, contact details of the HIO, SO, insurance, etc.
- They should be encouraged to send their success story and participate in an Alumni Network.
- **NEs can only participate once.**

IMPORTANT: NEs must arrange a suitable accident and health insurance (or a comprehensive travel insurance) that will cover them during their exchange abroad, as the programme cannot provide any assistance in the case of accident or sickness.
In case IOs intend to cover such insurance costs from the project budget, the EISMEA must be informed and it must be well justified.

[24] http://www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu/page.php?cid=10

3.1.2 Ready-to-start Stay

Relationship status: 'Ready-to-start Stay'
Processing deadline: 14 days
Actor: HIO

HIO should enter the real start date of the exchange into the IT Management Tool only after the NE has attended the training. A temporary future start date can be set and adjusted later if it turns out to be different from the actual start date of the stay.

During this stage the HIO must also inform the HE of his/her responsibilities in the programme, as well as the complaint and problem-solving procedures. It must be underlined to the HE that they are obliged to spend time directly collaborating with the NE and that it is required at the end of the exchange to fill in the online feedback questionnaire (failing to do so would exclude them from having another exchange).

Furthermore, the HE and the NE should be informed that they are required to inform the NIO and HIO of any changes in the match, whether with regards to the dates of the exchange or changes to the collaboration/activity plan.

3.2 Stay in host country

Relationship status: 'Stay Ongoing'
Processing deadline: 14 days
Actors: HIO

3.2.1 Duration of stay abroad

The minimum duration of stay abroad is one month and the maximum duration is six months. Please note that the amount is calculated on the basis of the actual days inserted in the commitment/ongoing match. The guiding principle, however, should be based on the amount of the financial support- that is to say that a 6 months exchange should never have a total financial support that exceeds 6 times the monthly lump sum for the country of the exchange.

However, for planning ease, IOs can base the planned dates on an average of 30 days per month BUT the final amount paid should be in line with the final amount indicated in the EP Performance section of the IT Tool.

Fragmented stay

NE and HE may agree that the stay abroad should be completed in multiple periods of at least one week each. However, it must be completed within an overall time span of twelve months from the first day of the exchange and within the activity period of both IOs.

A week is defined as five consecutive working days.

Changing duration of an exchange

In all cases where the actual duration is different from the planned one, the responsible IOs are requested to keep the same type of evidence.

Extension of a relationship after approval is possible fulfilling the following conditions: the relationship must be still on-going the initial financial contribution will be increased and properly encoded in the EYE IT tool, and all actors (NIO, HIO, NEP and HEP) remain the same[25].

[25] A relationship should correspond to a specific grant agreement for NIO/NEP and HIO/HEP.

Also in the case of an **extension** the maximum duration of 6 months remains valid. The responsible IO(s) are requested to keep evidence of such corrections (e.g. keep a written justification of the changes on file, etc.) and of written amendments made to the agreement between NIO and NE that reflect any increase of financial support (where applicable) and duration of stay abroad. These should be signed by the relevant parties. An extension of a relationship without additional financial allowance should be avoided. That being said, an extended business cooperation beyond the duration of the relationship is, of course, welcome but will happen outside the EYE programme.

Also the reverse case might happen. An on-going relationship can be **shortened** upon request of the NE and HE and in agreement with the responsible IOs, respecting the above specified conditions.

The information in the IT Management Tool, as far as the planned dates in the commitment, remains unchanged. The HIO must update the actual exchange dates of the relationship, once in Stay Ongoing, in order for it to reflect the real stay period. The HIO should also mention in the comment box that the relationship has been either extended or shortened.

Please note that the NE and the HE are obliged to immediately inform the IOs of any developments that might have an impact on the stay or the relationship between the two entrepreneurs.

3.2.2 On-site support and monitoring of relationships

Host Intermediary Organisations act as the local contact for incoming NEs during their stay. It is expected that HIOs offer local assistance to visiting NEs during their stay with HEs and regularly monitor in liaison with NIOs that the exchange takes place smoothly.

NIO should therefore provide the NE before his/her departure with the contact details of the HIO and staff members who will be responsible for the relationship during his/her stay abroad.

Responsibilities of HIO during the stay abroad

- The HIO should ensure that it has sufficient up-to-date information about the relationship (i.e. objective(s) of the stay, activity plan, expected outcomes, etc.) and, when possible, a meeting between HE, NE and HIO should be held at the beginning of the stay;
- Right at the beginning of the stay, the HIO should, via a meeting or phone call, contact the NE to introduce him/her to the organisation, the staff in charge of the relationship and the support services available to him/her during the stay; Before or upon arrival, the NE should receive a «**Welcome Pack**» prepared by the HIO, which should include information about the host country (cultural information) and also on how to address practical questions (housing, transport, insurance, etc.);Example of Welcome Pack contents:
  - Information about host country, region and city;
  - Information about HIO and available support services;
  - Map of city/region;
  - Accommodation;
  - Administrative steps required before and after leaving country;
  - Health insurance;
  - Accident insurance;
  - Transport;
  - Useful telephone numbers;
  - Internet access;
  - Financial provisions;

  - Emergencies (police, hospital(s), card stop, etc.);
  - Useful addresses (post offices, tourist information office, doctors, language training centres, etc.);
  - Books, booklets, leaflets etc.;
  - Web pages.
- The HIO should inform the HE and NE about the need to alert both NIO and HIO in case of problems that might hinder progress or satisfactory completion of the exchange and about the consequences of a failed relationship.
- The HIO must monitor the exchange together with NIO and liaise with the NIO regarding the progress of the match, particularly in the event of problems.
- The HIO is required to verify the exact dates of the exchange with the NE, HE and NIO before taking any actions on the IT Tool, especially closing the relationship. Please note that once the match has moved from Stay Ongoing to Waiting Feedback, the IOs will no longer be able to make any changes to the stay dates entered and this might affect the payment of the new entrepreneur.

Suggestion: The IO might ask the NE and HE to complete a brief intermediary activity report, halfway through the exchange. Care should, nonetheless, be taken not to burden entrepreneurs too much.

Responsibilities of NIO during stay abroad

- Disburse funding to the NE as appropriate and in line with Programme requirements, on the basis of agreed activities, milestones and reporting;
- Evaluate with each NE their personal and professional development achieved;
- Inform the NE about complaint procedures and consequences of a failed relationship.
- Monitor the exchange together with HIO and liaise with the HIO regarding the progress of the match, particularly in the event of problems.

IOs are jointly responsible to follow up the exchange. The NE and HE should be contacted regularly during the stay to check progress of the exchange. A regular phone call or email to both NE and HE is recommended (every week at the beginning of the exchange and less frequently thereafter). IOs should agree on modalities of such monitoring to avoid overlaps. It is furthermore recommended that HIOs visit NEs/HEs during the exchange period.

Responsibilities of NE during stay abroad

- Comply with the compulsory rules and regulations the host entrepreneur is subject to;
- Respect the code of conduct and confidentiality rules of the host entrepreneur;
- Communicate with Intermediary Organisations about any problem or changes regarding the placement;
- Comply with all arrangements negotiated for his or her stay in order to achieve the stated objectives. In particular, execute the agreed planned activities and do his or her best to make the stay a success (a certain flexibility and willingness to adapt will be necessary due to cultural differences);
- Submit a report in the specified format at the end of the stay.

Responsibilities of HE during the exchange

- Comply with all arrangements negotiated for the stay in order to achieve the stated objectives. In particular, execute agreed planned activities, stimulate improvement of the NE´s project and do his or her best to make the stay a success (a certain flexibility and willingness to adapt will be necessary due to cultural differences);
- Agree with the NE about tasks and responsibilities that match his or her knowledge, skills, competences and objectives and ensure that appropriate equipment and support are available and that the NE's work/learning objectives are achieved;
- Foster the NE's understanding of entrepreneurship and how to start-up a business;
- Provide practical support if required;
- Submit the online feedback questionnaire at the end of stay. HEs who do not fulfil this requirement cannot be allowed to host again.

Whenever possible, NIOs are particularly encouraged to stay in touch with the NE after the end of the stay. Ideally, the NIO should provide comments with regard to any visible improvements concerning the NE's business idea/entrepreneurial skills following the exchange. This would be of great value for subsequent evaluation of the programme.

3.3 Finalising the exchange

3.3.1 Evaluation of exchange by entrepreneurs

Relationship status: 'Waiting for feedback'
Processing deadline: 14 days
Actors: NE/HE

After completion of the period abroad, the NE and HE are expected to submit an online final activity report about the exchange. As soon as the HIO has entered the end date of the stay in the IT Management Tool (after they have been double-checked with all parties involved), the relationship reaches the step '**Waiting for feedback**' and the two entrepreneurs involved in the exchange are automatically invited by email to fill in an online final activity report (feedback questionnaire) in the IT Management Tool (available under the section My Relationships->Edit). The questionnaire can be found on the intranet, section 'Document Library' under "Programme Documents".

HIOs are responsible for entering the actual end date of stay into the system. This action will trigger the feedback procedure. HIOs should verify the actual date on which the exchange finished with the HE and ensure that such information is correct (avoid introduction of the planned end date without further verification).

The aim of the questionnaire is to evaluate whether the relationship was successful or not and measure the satisfaction level of the exchange and the programme in general.

Entrepreneurs have **two weeks** to complete the feedback questionnaire. The two IOs involved in the relationship are responsible for requesting timely submission of the final activity report by their entrepreneur. IOs can monitor this via the IT Management Tool. The letters « NE/HE » in red for that relationship in the 'Actors' column means that nobody has completed the survey yet. « NE » or « HE » becomes green when a report has been submitted.

The final activity report should be completed by NEs and HEs themselves. In case, the HE is unable to fill in the feedback questionnaire in due time, and provided that the HIO can demonstrate that they have taken action to have the feedback questionnaire completed without positive results, the

HIO can request to the Support Office that the HE's feedback is by-passed (exceptional cases only). This will allow the relationship to reach the status "Completed".

This procedure should however not be used is there are doubts about the success of the relationship that might put in question the payment to the NE (please refer to points 3.3.2.1 and 3.3.2.3).

Once both feedback questionnaires have been submitted, the final activity report is accessible to the responsible IO for validation.

3.3.2 Validation of exchange

Relationship status: 'Feedback validation'
Processing deadline: 7 days
Actors: NIO/HIO

IOs responsible for the exchange are supposed to review the answers provided by their entrepreneur and evaluate whether or not the relationship was successful. This procedure is carried out via the IT Management Tool (step 'Feedback validation') and IO has **seven days** to assess its entrepreneur's final activity report. If the evaluation is complete, then the IO validates the entrepreneur's report and the exchange dossier is closed.

Sometimes, IOs may think that some information provided by its entrepreneur is unclear or not detailed enough. They then have the option to return the survey to the entrepreneur, prompting him/her to provide more details or to clarify some points as necessary. The entrepreneur is automatically notified by email in such cases.

Please note that the HE should not start a new relationship before his/her previous match has been evaluated!

3.3.2.1 Evaluation criteria

IOs must evaluate whether or not the relationship was successful.

A **successful relationship** is defined by the European Commission as a relationship between an NE and HE that has been established with the help of two IO(s) provided that such relationship:

- Has been communicated to the European Commission/EISMEA in accordance with the rules applicable to the programme;
- Has been implemented in accordance with the commitments agreed upon in writing in the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs Commitment by HE, NE and the IOs involved;
- Lasted for the agreed period of time; this does not necessarily mean the initially planned period.
- Was assessed as successful by the two entrepreneurs in their individual feedback.

A report from only one side (i.e. from HE or from NE) is not enough to prove that the relationship was successful. If just one entrepreneur has well justified reasons/arguments which allow him/her to conclude that the relationship did not respect the commitments agreed upon by the participating partners (i.e. HE; NE; IO), then it is more likely that such a relationship will be considered as unsuccessful. It should, however, be noted that declaring a relationship unsuccessful does not necessarily mean that the efforts and costs related to this relationship are ineligible from a programme management point of view.

3.3.2.2 Early completion of an exchange

In principle, the NE should stay for the full term of the exchange, as specified in the agreement for financial support that he/she signed with the IO. Leaving the host's city/country is considered a breach of the rules, unless the NE has prior agreement from their IO.

However, there might be an exception to this rule, namely if the HE and NE mutually agree that the relationship can be shorter than initially agreed. In such a case, justification must be provided that the relationship was nevertheless successful. This means that, in their reports, both NE and HE must explain the reasons for early termination of the exchange and conclude that the stay abroad was nevertheless a success.

The programme requests a minimum stay of 1 month. In case of unforeseen events, if an NE has to return home before the end of the 1 month period and furthermore if NE and HE reports are positive, then the relationship can be considered as successful provided that the reduction below the minimum time spent abroad is well justified.

Reimbursement of expenditure

In case of an early completion of an exchange, which is nevertheless **successful**, NE is entitled to receive financial assistance only for the time he/she actually stayed abroad. In such cases provisions of chapter 2.5 shall become applicable.

3.3.2.3 Dealing with failed relationships

A failed relationship is defined as a relationship between an NE and an HE that did not fulfil the commitments agreed to by the HE, NE and the IOs, involved in the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs Commitment. For instance, the work carried out was unrelated to the entrepreneurial field, daily working hours were too long (10-12h), or objectives were not respected.

However, a relationship is not considered as failed when:

- The NE and HE mutually agree that the relationship can be shorter than initially agreed and are both satisfied with the exchange;
- The relationship breaks due to force majeure.

Note that the **NE can only participate once in the programme** but if a match has failed due to the HE breaking the rules of the programme or the terms of the agreed commitment, the European Commission and EISMEA may consider granting a second exchange for the NE.

If this is the case, the total length of the two exchanges must not exceed 6 months. Yet, such cases should be considered an exception.

Furthermore, if the NE has remained with the HE for the full duration of the exchange or has only voiced issues with the match after some time of the exchange, and not immediately when they occurred, the exchange will not be considered failed.

Should Intermediary Organisations involved in a match intend to terminate an exchange early (on the basis of information received from entrepreneurs), their intention must be clearly communicated to all parties concerned, including the entrepreneurs concerned, in writing (and by other means, if possible). The entrepreneurs concerned must be given the possibility to comment respecting a clearly communicated deadline for that. Following the receipt of comments, if any, the decision by the IOs for early termination must be taken in a timely manner.

Reimbursement of expenditure

The NIO and HIO should assess the validity of the reasons given by the entrepreneurs for early termination of an exchange because of the relationship **failure**.

The NE will have to reimburse any amounts received if the relationship failed because the NE did not respect his/her obligations under the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs Commitment.

If the relationship failed because the HE did not respect his/her obligations under the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs Commitment, no reimbursement will be claimed from the NE and the amount corresponding to the length of the actual stay will be paid. The HIO can, on the basis of the failed RLT, decide to terminate the participation of the host entrepreneur, if the HE has shown a breach of the programme's rules (e.g. misuse of NE; HE not present for the exchange; not providing reasonable working environment, etc.)

When responsibility for the unsuccessful relationship cannot be attributed to either the NE or HE, then the decision to reimburse the new entrepreneur should be taken by the European Commission/EISMEA.

If the relationship has to be cancelled within the first month of stay, **for reasons of force majeure or reasons outside the control of the NE**[26], the actual expenses incurred by the NE and supported by the corresponding invoices will be reimbursed up to the limit of the first monthly allowance. In these cases, the entrepreneur might, upon approval by EC/EISMEA, be included again in the database for a future matching. If this is the case, the total length of the two exchanges must not exceed 6 months. Yet, such cases should be considered as exceptions and only upon approval by EC/EISMEA.

3.3.3 Exchange completed

The relationship reaches the step "**completed"** in the IT Management Tool after the final activity reports of the two entrepreneurs have been validated by the HIO and NIO, and the exchange dossier is closed.

HEs who in their final activity report stated that they would like to host a new entrepreneur again, become available for future exchanges in the online catalogue. NEs, however, can only participate once in the programme.

3.4 Maximising long-term benefits of the exchange

3.4.1 Making the most of your success stories

Once an IO has finished coordinating a successful relationship, the exchange can be promoted to give visibility to the participating entrepreneurs and encourage others to join the programme.

The Support Office has developed a **Success Story Kit** in order to help Intermediary Organisations write about their successful exchanges. The kit contains the following documents:

- Guidelines on how to write an appealing success story;
- A press release template to outline the success story;
- Tips and tricks on how to maximise the promotional value of the successful relationship (e.g. advertising a story to journalists, using 'ambassadors' at events, etc.).

The Success Story Kit is available on the intranet, under the section 'Document Library'[27].

[26] i.e. non availability of the HE after the NE arrival, serious illness or death of a relative of any of the entrepreneurs,…
[27] http://www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu/members/library.php?cat=89.

Furthermore, the programme website offers IOs the opportunity to promote their fruitful exchanges. Intermediary Organisations can submit success stories and testimonials of entrepreneurs by using the **online forms** available on the intranet, under the section 'success stories and testimonials'[28].

Please follow the suggested guidelines before submitting your story: http://www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu/members/library.php?cat=89.

We recommend that both IOs collaborate to write a high quality success story for publication on the programme's website.

The more stories you have as an Intermediary Organisation, the more entrepreneurs will want to join you.

3.4.2 Follow-up of the exchange and aftercare services

a) *Aftercare services*

Immediately after the end of the exchange, IOs must also ensure a basic level of aftercare services, which must at least include:

- Promotion of the EYE alumni network
- Awareness raising on important EU-related business subjects, such as the Single Market and European law issues (in particular regarding business and contract law), and on other European initiatives in support of entrepreneurs and SMEs, such as the Enterprise Europe Network, the European clusters, SOLVIT, Your Europe portal, Access2Markets portal, etc.
- Especially to Ukrainian participants - Awareness raising on special activities supporting Ukrainian businesses, such as the Enterprise Europe Network Supply Chain Resilience platform, The EU Clusters Support Ukraine Forum, the EU-Ukraine Solidarity Lanes Business Matchmaking Platform, the European Innovation Council specific funding instrument for Ukrainian start-ups, etc.[29]
- Awareness raising on relevant national, regional and local business support schemes and initiatives, including specific support to Ukrainian businesses (if any).
- Signposting to the closest local Enterprise Europe Network contact point in case the NE or the HE needs further assistance regarding access to finance, access to markets, registration of IP rights, advice on sustainable or digital solutions, technology uptake, etc.

This list of aftercare services is not exhaustive. IOs are free to propose additional services depending on their expertise.

b) *EYE Alumni Network*

Another important part of the aftercare services is the EYE Alumni Network. Building awareness, communicating the benefits of the programme and creating customer loyalty takes time. The EYE Alumni Network will considerably increase the visibility of the Programme and position it as a high quality professional European exchange programme, as well as provide ongoing value to the participating entrepreneurs. The Support Office has launched an Alumni Network that is accessible from the EYE website and is open to all former participants of the Programme[30]. IOs are requested to promote the Alumni Network and to invite their former participants to join this Network and utilize the services offered. IOs should also provide the Support Office with information on activities and events relevant to the Alumni Network that can be published in the dedicated page of the EYE website.

c) *Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs certificates*

[28] http://www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu/members/stories.php.
[29] For more information, please visit EU solidarity with Ukraine | European Commission and Enterprise Europe Network | Help to Ukraine
[30] https://www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu/alumni/

The Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs certificate officially attests successful participation of an NE or HE in the programme.

Conditions of use

- The certificate should be given by the responsible IO to an NE on successful completion of stay abroad, following positive feedback from the HE. The responsible IO should likewise issue a certificate to the HE upon successful completion of stay abroad, after a positive feedback from the NE;
- The certificate should be printed in colour, signed, stamped and dated by the responsible IO;
- The certificate text may be translated but should never be altered;
- The certificate should contain the relationship number;
- Each certificate template should leave sufficient space for the partner's own logo.

Suggestions

IOs may organise an award ceremony once a year to bring together all NEs and HEs from the region, thus raising the profile of both the IO and the local Alumni Network.

A press breakfast can also be organised directly after completion of the relationship to present the success story and to award both HE and NE with certificates.

Where can you find the certificates?

Certificates can be downloaded from the programme intranet, section 'Press & Communications'[31].

[31] http://www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu/members/press.php?section=2&cat=42.

4 General Programme Rules and Procedures

4.1 Programme development and lifecycles

4.1.1 Programme cycles

The programme is organised in cycles which correspond to the periodic calls for proposals.

4.1.2 End of activities and IO transition

Each European partnership only belongs to one specific cycle. Participating IOs can be part of several cycles within the same or different EPs, as long as they are selected in the corresponding call for proposals. During overlapping periods, IOs can organise exchanges between themselves irrespective of the cycle they belong to or which partnership.

However, at the end of each cycle, the following rules will apply to IOs terminating their contract.

Two months prior to end of the activity period (end of grant agreements), the IOs involved in the cycle will become invisible, which means that:

1. Their contact details will disappear from the public website, section 'Your local contact point'[32];
2. New applicants therefore cannot select them when applying;
3. Their registered NEs/HEs are automatically notified by email to inform them that they have to select another IO that is still active in the programme, if their exchange is foreseen beyond their own IO activity date. The procedure to follow for an IO change is described in the registration guide for new entrepreneurs[33] and for host entrepreneurs[34].

IOs will only have limited access to the IT tool at the end of the activity period. They will be able to manage their ongoing relationships but will have no access to the catalogue.

IOs participating in subsequent cycles will have no access restrictions in the transition period.

Furthermore, the following procedures have been set up for handling applications and relationships.

4.1.2.1 Handling of applications at the end of a cycle

1) Non-processed applications in 'Applied' status

No new applications can be accepted unless IOs from a cycle can ensure NEs/HEs placements during the remaining contract period (1 or 2 months maximum). The applications will remain in **'Applied'** status until NEs/HEs change their IO.

2) Applications 'On Hold' and 'Accepted'

- The '**On Hold**' applications should be set to '**Back to Applicant'** so that the NE/HE can find another IO and the entrepreneurs should be informed. Such new IO will perform its own assessment.

[32] http://www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu/page.php?cid=05&pid=018&ctr=IT.
[33] http://www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu/upload/Registration%20guide_new%20entrepreneurs.pdf
[34] http://www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu/upload/Registration%20guide_host%20entrepreneurs.pdf

- For '**Accepted**' applications, **the leaving IO should attempt to find another IO** that is ready to accept the applications. New IOs **<u>must not accept</u>** the NE/HE without reassessment and update of the profile. The entrepreneurs must be informed of this move.
- Should the leaving IO not be able to find another IO, the application will be flagged as '**Floating**' at the end of the activity of the IO and reassigned, where possible, to another IO by the Support Office.
- Applications in status '**Accepted**' that have not been transferred will be flagged as '**Floating**' and reassigned, where possible, to another IO by the Support Office which will then have to accept the entrepreneur.
- Please note that registrations belonging to one cycle cannot be allocated to another active cycle for technical reasons. This will not impede the work of IOs who have registrations from previous cycles which became inactive.

4.1.2.2 Handling of relationships

As previously mentioned, no matching can be organised by IOs if the stay period goes beyond their activity period (end date of grant agreement, usually 31 January of the year when the contract ends). The IT Management Tool does an automatic check and only accepts relationships that finish before the end date of the NIO grant agreement.

1) Relationships already validated by the Commission
Ongoing relationships should be finished before the activity end date (end of the grant agreement). After that date, and until the IOs submit their final report, the IO will still be able to manage those relationships in order to validate feedbacks and move them to the status '**Completed**'.

2) Relationships in the building phase
Building relationships is still possible as long as the end of stay date falls before the activity end date. Management of such relationships is the same as for ongoing relationships.

Note that relationships that are not beyond EP Approval on 31 January will be cancelled (see p.14 in IT Tool Manual).

3) Relationships in the execution phase

IOs should not forget to monitor and follow up relationships that are under the status '**Feedback Validation**'. These require action from the respective IO. IOs should also submit their best success stories.

<u>Important remarks:</u>

IOs will not be notified by email when their NEs/HEs have changed their IO. It will therefore be normal for their applications to disappear from the IOs monitoring screen in the IT tool.

It is currently not possible for NEs or HEs involved in a relationship to change their IO. The current relationship should be cancelled (if the stay has not started yet) or completed (including feedback validation) in order to change IO.

HEs will be able to change their IO only when the relationship(s) that they are involved in is in status "Completed".

NEs that have participated in a relationship cannot participate in the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme again and therefore no change of IO is needed.

4.2 Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs network

4.2.1 European Partnership definition

Intermediary Organisations (IOs) are organised into European partnerships (EPs) which are composed of one or more IOs from one or more EU Member States or participating countries. Each partnership cooperates with its counterparts across Europe to facilitate relationships between NEs and HEs. A relationship organised between two IOs in the same EP is called 'intra-consortium' and a relationship organised between IOs from different EPs is called 'inter-consortium'. Each EP has its own target of established relationships.

IOs are responsible for promoting the programme at national/regional/local level and furthermore for recruiting NEs and HEs, assessing their applications and searching for appropriate matches. They also offer assistance and guidance to entrepreneurs, manage agreements and the Commitment and evaluate relationships as successful or not, following criteria established by the European Commission.

4.2.2 European Partnership coordinators' responsibilities

Every EP has a Lead IO, which acts as the coordinator of the consortium. The Lead IO must appoint a coordinator (one contact person), who will be the main link with the IOs, the Support Office and the European Commission/EISMEA.

The role of the lead partner is decisive for the performance of every partnership, as the LIO is not only the main representative of the partnership and the lead actor on all aspects related to the project management, but they are also the lynchpin that is meant to bring the partners together.

Lead IOs are responsible for providing guidance and support to their IOs. They must also ensure that the programme is well coordinated and that the six-monthly progress reports are accurate and submitted on time in Funding and Tenders Grant Management System.

Since the EP coordinators are the main communications channel towards the others, it is important that they convey information effectively and communicate in a clear and transparent manner.

EP coordinators responsibilities also include:

- Attending Network and Lead IO Meetings;
- Organising a 'get-acquainted meeting'/kick-off meeting for their EP (could be at the fringes of a Network Meeting but you are advised to organise it as a separate event outside of hours for the Network Meeting);
- Preparing EP strategies;
- Reporting problems to the Support Office, EISMEA and, when appropriate, EC;
- Providing EP six-monthly progress reports.

Lead IOs expect a close collaboration from their partners in the consortium.

4.2.3 Cooperation among IOs

In addition to promotion, cooperation among IOs is also a crucial element to ensure successful exchanges and consequently to increase the chances of each IO to reach its relationship quota.

Network meetings are organised, especially to give IOs the opportunity to exchange views and collect relevant feedback and information. Workshops on different themes also offer IOs the opportunity to share their experiences.

The Support Office helps and encourages IOs to meet each other by organising networking sessions during the Network Meetings. Participation to the Network Meetings is mandatory.[35]

Please note that IOs are expected to communicate and liaise with each other- when there are problems or issues you should always contact the relevant IO/LIO first, then the LIO (in the case of issues with another IO) and only then the Support Office.

4.2.4 Non-performing IOs and termination of participation

Under certain conditions, an EP has the right to request termination of participation of one or several of the IOs under its responsibility in the grant agreement (e.g. in the case of proven non-performance). In such a case, the Lead IO is requested to seek prior authorisation of the termination by the EISMEA and it must ensure that the Support Office is aware of the change. EPs must ensure that no NE or HE is involved in a relationship with the IO or, in such cases, ensure that the NE or HE is taken over by another IO. Applicants should be re-directed to other IOs too.

In line with the provisions of the grant agreement, the EISMEA has the right to terminate participation of an IO or to terminate the grant agreement with the whole consortium.

For further details, please refer to the respective article of the grant agreement. Also see chapter 4.3.2 for withdrawal procedures.

4.3 Procedures for administrative changes

4.3.1 Changes to primary contact and IO staff in the EYE IT Tool

4.3.1.1 Change of primary contact

Each IO must nominate a primary contact, who will be the person that gets in touch with NEs, HEs and the Support Office.

In the IT Tool:
Each IO must nominate a primary contact, who will be the main person to get in touch with for the NEs, HEs and the Support Office. For the project coordinator this is the main person responsible for a project. As such, they can submit requests, reports and notifications to the EC/EISMEA on behalf of the consortium.

His/her contact details appear in the programme website under the section “Your local contact point”, in the management tool under the section “IO Mgt” and in the directory for intermediate organisations.

Any change related to the primary contact should be sent to the Support Office in order to have the name updated in the IT Tool and the website.

The LIO should communicate the change of staff to all partners and should ensure that a new set of IT Tool credentials have been created. (Note: Only the LIO can create new credentials for IO staff!)

In the eGrants Management Portal:
As regards the electronic management of grant agreements signed with the EISMEA, the primary contact is called Project Legal Signatory (PLSIGN). It is the person that has the right to sign grant agreements and amendments, as legal representative on behalf of the organisation. Changes of the PLSIGN should be made via the Funding and Tenders Portal ("my organisation" area).

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[35] One partner per beneficiary is foreseen. Exceptions might be granted in duly justified cases only.

Please inform the EISMEA Project Officer about either of the above (envisaged) changes.

4.3.1.2 Change of IO staff

'**IO staff**' refers to the team running the programme in your organisation. Any new staff or change must be communicated to your Lead IO as soon as possible. The lead IO will then create him/her an account in the IT management tool so that he/she can access the application and handle his/her work properly.

If a member of the staff is replaced or has left your organisation, your organization or your LIO needs to deactivate the IT Tool account for this person via the "IO Staff Mgt" screen (simply click on the green tick to turn it into a red cross).

Accounts of members of staff who are no longer involved in the project shouldn't continue to be used by any other members of staff, as every individual should have their personal credentials. Furthermore, IO staff who have not had their accounts deactivated will remain visible in the Who's Who section on the EYE Intranet and will also appear in the IO Staff Directory.

Please inform the EISMEA Project Officer about the (envisaged) changes.

4.3.1 Amendments to the grant agreements

Throughout the project implementation there might be a need to amend the grant agreement signed with EISMEA. There are some cases where an amendment to the grant agreement will be required and there are cases where this will not be necessary.

All official notifications, requests for amendments etc. such as change of legal name, official address or authorised representative are processed in the Funding and Tenders Portal.

Please refer to the guidelines presented at:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home *(My Personal Area)*

Please use the information accessible via the Online Guidance and Manuals in the Funding and Tender Opportunities Portal.

In case of doubt, please contact your Project Officer in EISMEA.

4.3.1.1 Withdrawal of IO from EP

Any request for withdrawal of IOs from a EP has to be officially launched by the EP's Lead IO (coordinator) in accordance with the procedures defined in the eGrants Management Portal. Before such formal amendment request is launched, the consortium should contact the contracting authority EISMEA.

The corresponding update in the EYE IT Management Tool can only be completed following acceptance by the EISMEA and the successfully amended grant agreement.

4.3.1.2 New IO joining an EP

If duly justified, EPs can add new partners to the EP if the increase of partners is in line with the call for proposals requirements and the grant agreement provisions.

Any such request has to be officially submitted by the EP's Lead IO (coordinator) to the EISMEA for approval in accordance with the procedures defined in the Funding and Tender Opportunities Portal. Before such formal amendment request is launched, the consortium should contact the contracting authority EISMEA.

4.3.1.3 Changes to the budget

For changes to the budget, please refer to the grant agreement.

As a general rule, budget shifts between partners as well as between cost categories for the same partner are possible if duly justified. As a general rule, reducing the budget for "financial support to third parties (= new entrepreneurs)" is not authorized.

Any envisaged budget shift needs to be approved by the contracting authority EISMEA.

4.3.1.4 Changes to Annex I

The maximum monthly allowances per country as defined in Annex 1 to this Manual remain valid throughout the entire implementation period of an EYE project.

No changes can be envisaged except if the EISMEA launched an amendment request regarding the change of the unit costs defined in Annex 1 as this would have automatically an impact on the Annex 2a of the grant agreement and the budget of an EYE project.

The corresponding updates in the IT Management Tool can only be completed following acceptance by the European Commission/EISMEA.

4.4 Solving problems and conflicts

4.4.1 Complaints from NEs/HEs

NEs/HEs involved in the programme have the right to make a complaint to express their dissatisfaction (e.g. rejection of their application, problems with relationships, etc.).

IOs are expected to sort out the problem directly with the entrepreneur in a relatively short period of time, without any unjustified delay. IOs dealing with complaints are encouraged, whenever practical, to meet with the NE/HE to ensure a mutual understanding of the issue.

If, for any reason, the problem encountered cannot be solved via these means informally, NEs/HEs should formally contact the Support Office, which will try to find equitable and fair solutions with the parties involved. The European Commission/EISMEA will only be involved in case of major difficulties.

Entrepreneurs are expected to send an email to the Support Office and describe the problem and the outcome(s) they are seeking in an email. The conclusion of the case will be communicated by email to the entrepreneur, with a copy to the IO, within a reasonable period of time.

4.4.2 Problem solving procedure for IOs

(1) <u>IOs should always try to resolve issues by consulting the Quality Manual and the IT tool manual first.</u> If the problem involves another IO/EP as well, there should be a good communication flow and collaboration between the two IOs involved.

If it is a technical issue related to registrations, please **<u>do not</u>** ask the applicant(s) to create a new registration, unless instructed to do so by the Support Office and the IT team.

(2) Problem statements should be sent to the Lead IO of your European partnership. If the problem also involves another IO/EP, the LIOs should get in touch with each other to try and solve the issue.

(3) **If the Lead IO cannot provide a solution** after they have attempted to solve the issue, the problem should be transmitted by the LIO to the Support Office or EISMEA, depending on the nature of the problem.

(a) If the problem concerns **contractual aspects of the programme**, then the Lead IO will send an email to the EISMEA Project Officer

(b) If it is a **general or technical problem**, **or questions related to the daily implementation of the programme** (promotion, recruitment, assessment of applications and matches), **the Lead IO** will send an email to the Support Office at **support@erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu**;

– The request stating **a technical problem** should contain the following points (if relevant):

- NE/HE email address used for registration.
- Application status (if the NE/HE is **not** involved in a relationship).
- Relationship ID and status (if the NE/HE **is** involved in a relationship).
- Web browser used.
- Brief description of the problem.
- Screen shot.

The request will be forwarded, if necessary, by the Support Office to the IT technical support of the Commission. The problem will be solved with minimum delay.

If the case requires inputs from the European Commission or EISMEA, the Support Office will liaise with the EC and EISMEA, and will provide the EP with their feedback as soon as it has been received.

REMARKS:

(1) IOs should not contact the Support Office or EISMEA directly. Only LIOs should communicate with these actors on behalf of the EP.

By going through the LIO, IOs might often find that the answer is already known to their EP and will thus be able to solve the issue quicker. Furthermore, this ensures that the LIO is aware of the problems or questions raised by their partners.

By providing a solution to the LIO, the Support Office also ensures that the lead partner has knowledge that they can then share with the rest of their partners.

(2) In emails to the Support Office, LIOs must always include the name of their EP and a brief description of the problem. Example:

SEED2 (NE/HE) (Name) (Problem) OR SEED2 (Rlt no.) Problem

(3) IOs and entrepreneurs are **not** allowed to directly contact the technical support of the Commission (IT team), all contact has to go via the Support Office.

(4) Please note that technical issues might sometimes be linked to external causes that are out of control of the IT team (PC configuration, company’s firewall settings, etc.).

4.5 Core programme documents and meetings

4.5.1 Progress reports

According to the call for proposals, IOs are **obliged** to regularly report about their activities and any difficulties encountered. This is usually done via the progress reports as well as the periodic reports according to the schedule set in the Grant Agreement and its annexes. Additional reporting might be requested in case it is considered necessary to monitor closely the performance of projects and in order to provide suitable support.

Procedure

All reports must be submitted via the Funding and Tender Opportunities Portal.

Each IO must prepare its input to the progress report in English and send it to their Lead IO a reasonable time before the deadline for submission to EISMEA. Modalities are to be agreed between the partners of the consortia.

The Lead IO is responsible for consolidating the input received from its partners and uploading the report on the Funding and Tenders Portal by the submission date. The progress report is considered a deliverable under each project's Continuous Reporting.

Content of the reports

The progress report should contain information on tasks fulfilled and results obtained, obstacles/challenges faced during the reporting period and measures taken to overcome such difficulties, promotional activities carried out and good practices and successes achieved that are transferable. The reports should be **concise and straight to the point**. They should also include a table of effort spent in the project, per partner and per work package.

The progress report template,[36] which can be found on the intranet 'Document library', should be used for all reports. The template for the report is NOT available on the Funding and Tender Opportunities Portal, but upon request from the EISMEA EYE team (eismea-eye-team@ec.europa.eu). **The report must be submitted according to the compliance deadlines mentioned below.**

The schedule of submission deadlines also is specified in the grant agreement 'Deliverables'.

Follow-up of reports and adjustments

Follow-up and proposed adjustments will be available via the eGrants Management Portal.

4.5.2 Documents to be retained

Documents of financial relevance shall be kept according to the requirements of the grant agreement, in particular according to the corresponding article of the grant agreement. Special attention shall be paid to receipts, contracts and time sheets of staff working on the project. Useful information is provided in the Financial Guidelines.

4.5.3 Periodic reports (Final and interim)

The beneficiaries must provide reports to request payments, in accordance with the schedule and modalities set out in the grant agreement. The template for the technical reports will be made available in due time prior to the report submission date.

[36] http://www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu/members/library.php?cat=47.

EPs must submit a comprehensive periodic report to the EISMEA, within the timeframe stipulated in the respective grant agreement. The report should describe the work undertaken, use of resources, obstacles encountered and solutions envisaged, and make recommendations on how to improve the mobility scheme in the future. According to the grant agreement, the report should be submitted in English. The periodic report must be submitted via the Funding and Tender Opportunities Portal.

4.6 Guidance and support

4.6.1 Roles and responsibilities of the Support Office

The role of the Support Office is to:

- Provide guidance and assistance to all IOs;
- Coordinate the activities of EPs and cooperate closely with them;
- Ensure cooperation between new and experienced IOs;
- Contribute to the overall coherence and consistency of the work done by IOs;
- Safeguard the quality of the programme;
- Ensure quality of work and performance of IOs (for instance through continuous monitoring);
- Raise awareness of the programme across the EU and in other participating countries.

In addition to the above mentioned roles, the Support Office is also responsible for organising several Network Meetings per programme cycle, in collaboration with the European Commission and EISMEA. Such meetings usually last 1.5 days and their aim is to gather all IOs to convey up-to-date information on the programme, to provide an opportunity for networking and to encourage communication, sharing of experience and best practices. **IOs are expected to participate in these Network Meetings**.

Network Meetings can be organised in Brussels or in any of the participating countries.

How to communicate with the Support Office?

- Helpdesk: IOs can contact the Support Office team via their LIO by phone Mo-Fri 09h00-13h00 CET on +3222820873 or by email (support@erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu).
- LIO, in the communication, should include the name of the EP in the subject line.
- Frequently asked questions (FAQs): Up-to-date questions and answers are posted on the intranet (http://www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu/members/). All IO staff should consult this regularly updated section before contacting the Support Office.

Sharing information and best practices with other IOs is strongly encouraged. IOs that have created guidelines, tool kits, translated documents, etc. may send such materials to the Support Office, which will publish them on the intranet.

4.6.2 Roles and responsibilities of the European Commission

The Commission shall bear the overall political and financial responsibility for the programme. It makes sure that the necessary funds are available. Its other roles are to raise awareness of the programme, to provide guidance and to ensure quality and performance of the programme. It also oversees the development and use of the IT Tool.

4.6.3 Roles and responsibilities of the EISMEA

The EISMEA has been entrusted with large parts of the programme management starting with the 2014 call for proposals. The EISMEA shall thus manage future grant agreements with the new EPs. For new beneficiaries, the EISMEA will be the main contact point, besides the Support Office. The EISMEA also monitors the work of the Support Office. The EISMEA will liaise on a regular basis with the European Commission regarding the implementation of the programme.

Annex 1 – Applicable to SMP grant agreements

This list is valid throughout the duration of the implementation of the projects selected (as indicated in the relevant annex of the grant agreement). This list might be modified during the implementation of the projects, in exceptional cases.

Monthly financial assistance paid by IOs to NEs	
Country of stay	**Amount per month while staying in this country/ €**
Albania	530
Armenia	610
Austria	900
Belgium	830
Bosnia-Herzegovina	560
Bulgaria	560
Croatia	720
Cyprus	780
Czech Republic	610
Denmark	1100
Estonia	670
Finland	950
France	900
Germany	830
Greece	780
Hungary	670
Iceland	900
Ireland	1000
Italy	900
Kosovo*	560
Latvia	610
Liechtenstein	1100
Lithuania	560
Luxembourg	830
Malta	720
Moldova	530
Montenegro	560
Netherlands	830
North Macedonia	560
Norway	1100
Poland	610
Portugal	780
Romania	560
Serbia	560
Slovakia	610
Slovenia	720
Spain	830
Sweden	950
Türkiye	750
Ukraine	530
United Kingdom[37]	1000

[37] No matches involving UK entrepreneurs or entrepreneurs from UK Overseas territories possible as of EU grants financed under the Single Market Programme (implemented as of 1.02.2023)

Entrepreneurs from/to: Outermost Regions of the EU (referred to in Article 349 TFEU) and Outermost Countries and Territories (referred to in Article 198 TFEU)**	1100
Entrepreneurs with disabilities (regardless of the country of stay)	1100

*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.
**Except those belonging to the United Kingdom.

Annex 2

Table of entities eligible to participate as new or host entrepreneur

Specific type of businesses	Eligibility	Explanations
Family business	Yes	A family member, who has taken over the family business or who is planning to do so, may participate in the programme as NE. Even though the business may have existed for more than 3 years, the new entrepreneur was not heading the family business per se, and is thus eligible for the programme as long as he/she meets the other eligibility criteria set by the programme. This falls in line with the Small Business Act for Europe, which considers Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs as a key opportunity 'to create an environment within which entrepreneurs and family businesses can thrive and entrepreneurship is rewarded'.
Business transfers	Yes if it is the first experience as NE	Entrepreneurs that take over an existing business are eligible to participate as NEs, provided that it is their first experience as an entrepreneur. The time the person has been an entrepreneur is to be considered, rather than the time of existence of the business.
Professionals and consultants	Yes	According to the EU's SME definition, self-employed people are in principle considered to be an SME. Independent professionals can participate in the programme provided that the eligible criteria for NEs or HEs are fulfilled.
Cooperatives	Yes if NE/HE manages the cooperative	Founders of a cooperative may be considered as NEs if they are going to manage the cooperative and fulfil all criteria of the NE definition. Only experienced managers of the cooperative can become HEs.
Associations	Yes on two conditions	According to the European definition of an SME, an association is considered as an SME provided that: • The association is regularly engaged in an economic activity*; • Meets the other requirements of the SME definition (less than 250 employees and turnover/balance sheet limits). An entrepreneur managing an association which meets the above two criteria is eligible to participate in the programme as an HE or NE. *'Regularly involved in an economic activity' means that the association should have regular, ongoing operations that require carrying out of all or most functions that comprise management of a company (planning, financing, sales/marketing, some form of operations). If the association operates only part of the year or has no full-time employed staff then it would not fulfil this criterion. Note: Training activities are considered as economic (even if not commercial). Therefore, training organisations or centres are eligible.
Incubators	Yes	Entrepreneurs running their own incubator can participate in the programme. However, they must fulfil all criteria of the HE or NE definition.
Franchise	Yes but not with the same franchise family	Franchise entrepreneurs are considered as entrepreneurs and covered by the EU's SME definition. However, IOs must be careful when assessing such applications and during the matching process. If they create relationships between a franchisor and a franchisee that come from the same 'franchising family', then such a relationship is certainly a borderline case since there is a state of dependence between the franchisor and the franchisee. It is in the nature of things that the franchisor may not be able to transfer the

		kind of management skills which are required for operating an individual business and will rather focus on internal procedures and guidelines. Therefore, such a mobility activity falls into the category of an internship (usually provided by the franchisor or its local subsidiary, and in most cases paid) and therefore cannot be co-financed by Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs. That is why the European Commission recommends that IOs should not exclude franchises but be vigilant and prevent the programme from becoming a tool that allows franchisors to sell their branding and offer training to their future franchisees with support from the EU. However, you may for example propose a franchisee (in a country that is not the NEs residence country) operating in a similar field to act as an HE.
NGOs/non-profit organisations	Yes if fulfilling two conditions	NGOs are in principle covered by the EU's SME definition. Entrepreneurs running NGOs, non-profit organisations, foundations, cooperatives, etc. can participate in the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs exchange programme provided that they fulfil the following conditions: 1. They are 'regularly engaged in an economic activity'*. 2. The mobility project in which such bodies are involved within the framework of Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs must show significant elements of entrepreneurship. *'<u>Regularly engaged in an economic activity</u>' means that the host entrepreneur's enterprise should have regular, ongoing operations that require the performance of all or most of the management functions of a company (planning, financing, sales/marketing), and some form of operations (which might be for example sales/marketing if that is the core of the business, etc.). If the organisation operates only part of the year or has no full-time employed staff then it would not fulfil this criterion.
SMEs part of a multinational group	No	Being part of a multinational group of companies generally disqualifies the entrepreneur from becoming an HE, as the SME definition requires that the SME is not controlled by a non-SME company. Even though the manager is running a small business, his considerations might be influenced by the corporate owners, which is normally of little help to a new entrepreneur starting his independent business.
Chamber of Commerce and Industries (not acting as IO)	Yes but not recommended	If the Chamber of Commerce fulfils the criteria set out in the SME definition and is operating under private law, then the Chamber would be eligible to become an HE. However, we strongly recommend reflecting whether a stay at a Chamber of Commerce — given the scope of such an organisation — can fulfil the expectations of the NE and allow the NE to acquire essential entrepreneurial skills.
Job on the side	Yes if fulfilling two conditions	The entrepreneur running a business for more than 3 years as a job on the side is eligible as an NE provided that: 1. He/she is willing to make such side activity a full-time employment (i.e. he/she is about to quit his/her job and dedicate only to this company); 2. There is a substantial difference in the way the activity is carried out. If the NE just goes from part-time to full time and, apart from doubling the number of clients and doubling the revenue, there is no real change; this would be too little to justify the need for an Erasmus for Young Entrepreneur learning experience. There needs to be a qualitatively new ambition. The responsible IO has the task to assess that it is the case.

Annex 3

List of existing promotional material and recommended communication methods

Intranet	The list of promotional materials is available in the section "Press and communications" in the intranet (IOs' corner). IOs also have access to an interactive online forum that enables them discuss topics, share- information, best practices, as well as search extra consortium cooperation. The online forum is an excellent opportunity to seek proactively advices or answers to challenges faced on a regular basis.
Certificates for NEs/HEs	Certificates have been developed to certify and reward NEs and HEs' participation in the programme. The certificates particularly aims to recognise the HE's key role and valuable contribution in supporting and mentoring an NE in the programme.
Leaflet/ User Guide	Leaflets are available in 23 languages. High resolution files of all the language versions of the leaflets are available on the intranet and public website for printing. They are however not customable. Such communication material is highly recommended as it can be circulated electronically and easily handed out to NEs/HEs during meetings. The User Guide provides detailed information of the programme to potential candidates.
Phone calls / visits	Direct contacts with potential NEs/HEs through phone calls and visits remain the most effective way of recruiting them.
Media kit containing the following documents: − **Press release template;** − **Fact sheet;** − **Tips & tricks on how to deal with the press;** − **Latest statistics.**	A press release is a formal announcement of an important news item, etc. to the press (e.g. official launch of the programme, accomplishment of successful relationships). It is important to address the right media to get press coverage. Factsheet: a one-page document containing key information on the programme. Tips & tricks: this guide provides information on how to deal with the press.
Newsletters	Use your own newsletters to announce the programme and to promote successful relationships by including interviews or quotes of NEs/HEs. The Support Office sends a bimonthly e-newsletter to inform IOs about the latest developments of the programme and to present good practices.
Press articles	Every opportunity should be taken to get articles about the programme published. This will contribute to increasing its reputation. Make sure that your articles/press releases are posted on your website and send a copy of the relevant publications to the Support Office for publication on the programme website.
Promotional pack (posters/ stickers/pens/folders/note pads)	Each IO is expected to print the promotional material available on the programme website. Use this material during your events.
Roll-up stand ("Banner")	Roll-ups should be printed by the individual IOs on the basis of the template provided in the Intranet.
Press breakfasts/conferences	Press breakfasts or conferences can be organised at local or national level to launch the programme in your region or announce successful relationships and get visibility in the media. Such events can be used to award labels and certificates to HEs and NEs.
Press/Radio/TV interview	Press and radio interviews increase programme credibility and enhance visibility of HEs & NEs in the media. This method is highly appreciated by HEs as it can draw attention to their companies.

Award ceremonies	Award ceremonies can be organised to bring together all NEs and HEs from your region in order to distribute certificates. These will raise the profile of both the IO and the Alumni Network.
Programme website (www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu)	The Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs website represents the most effective communication tool.
Programme presentations/info days	Presenting the programme to NEs/HEs during meetings is an excellent opportunity for recruitment as you are in direct contact with them. Use this channel to motivate and convince them to participate in the programme.
Promotional videos of the programme	Available through the EYE website.
Progress reports	Each EP has to provide progress reports on activities carried out within its consortium during the previous six months. Reporting should generally provide relevant information. IOs who developed useful documents (e.g. guidelines, methods, toolkits for NEs) might want to share them with other IOs. If so, ask the Support Office to upload them on the intranet of the programme.
Success stories	Use success stories to boost media attention. The public likes hearing about concrete human experiences to which they can relate to and journalists are looking for interesting real-life stories.
Web based campaign	Invite your successful NEs/HEs to register with the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs groups on LinkedIn and Facebook and raise programme awareness among business professional networks.
Workshops	Workshops are small interactive events held to achieve a specific objective. A workshop could be used to get feedback from NEs/HEs. Use this tool to introduce the programme and convince NEs/HEs to register in the programme.

Annex 4

The IT Management Tool allows score based matching in order to instantly find the closest fitting counterparts for a potential exchange. Matching scores are calculated based on similarity percentages between the answers provided by an NE to key questions in the application form and the answers submitted by HEs present in the catalogue (and vice-versa).

The online system takes into account the following elements for matching:

Communication language
This criterion is of utmost importance for a successful exchange since NEs and HEs should be able to communicate properly. In the registration form, HEs and NEs specify their mother tongue and up to 4 other languages that they have no difficulty to understand, speak or write.

Match factors are:

- 100 % if the NE and HE have specified the same mother tongue;
- 90 % if the mother tongue specified by the NE matches one of the other languages that the HE specified as being comfortable to work in;
- 90 % if one of the languages that the NE specified as being comfortable to work in matches the HE's mother tongue;
- 80 % if one of the languages that the NE specified as being comfortable to work in matches one of the languages that the HE specified as being comfortable to work in;
- 40 % if there is no match.

Requested language abilities
In addition to spoken languages, HEs can define up to 3 languages that NEs should speak if the work or project proposed requires some specific languages skills (e.g. foreign market research).

Match factors are:

- 100 % if the NE's mother tongue matches one of the languages required by the HE;
- 100 % if one of the languages that the NE specified as being comfortable to work in matches one of the languages required by the HE;
- 0 % if neither the NE's mother tongue nor other languages that he/she masters matches any of the languages required by the HE.

Expected duration
NEs and HEs define their expected duration of stay in months when registering. The figure must be between 1 and 6 months.

Match factors are:

- 100 % if both have the same duration;
- 90 % if there is 1 month difference;
- 70 % if the difference is 2 months;
- 50 % if the difference is 3 months;
- 20 % if the difference is more than 3 months.

If the duration of the stay has to be changed, then the Commitment and the planned start and end dates do not have to be changed as the actual dates of the stay abroad and the amount of financial support can be inserted manually later on. The responsible IO(s) are requested to keep evidence of any corrections (e.g. keep a note with the file, etc.).

Sector(s) of activity
In the registration form, HEs and NEs should select up to 5 sectors out of a list of approximately 30 for their business activity. One of them should be designated as primary and the other 4 as secondary.

Match factors are:

- 100 % if both the HE and NE selected the same primary;
- 90 % if selection corresponds to primary/secondary or secondary/secondary;
- 80 % if there is any other match;
- 40 % if there is no match.

Country
In the registration form, HEs and NEs should specify their country of origin and up to 4 target countries for NEs (the first of these is primary) or up to 4 source countries for HEs (the first of these is primary).

Match factors are:

- 100 % if the HE's country is primary target **AND** the NE's country is primary source, and vice-versa;
- 90 % if the HE's country is primary target **OR** the NE's country is primary source, whilst the country of residence is primary for the other;
- 80 % if both the HE's country and the NE's country are in the list of the counterpart entrepreneur;
- 70 % if either the HE's or the NE's country is in the list of the counterpart entrepreneur;
- 40 % if there is no match.

Annex 5

List of useful websites, links and documents

Websites

Programme website: www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu
Members only (Intranet for IOs): http://www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu/members/
IT Management Tool: https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/erasmusentrepreneurs/
DG GROW: http://ec.europa.eu/growth/
EISMEA: https://eismea.ec.europa.eu/index_en

Documents

Programme guide for new and host entrepreneurs can be found here: http://www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu/page.php?cid=20

Examples of the online feedback questionnaires for the NEs and the HEs http://www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu/members/library.php?cat=97

IT User Manual for Intermediary Organisations:
https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/erasmusentrepreneurs/resources/help/Erasmus%20IT%20Management%20Tool%20User%20Manual%20-%20for%20IOs.pdf

IT User Manual for Host and New Entrepreneurs:
https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/erasmusentrepreneurs/resources/help/Erasmus%20IT%20Management%20Tool%20User%20Manual%20-%20for%20HEs%20and%20NEs.pdf

IT User Manual for the eGrants Management Portal
https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/support/manuals

Where can I find more information?

Further information can be obtained from:

Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs Support Office
EUROCHAMBRES
Avenue des Arts 19 AD
1000 BRUSSELS
BELGIUM
Tel: 0032 2 282 0873
www.eurochambres.eu

Email: **support@erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu**

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