



European Solidarity Corps Quality Label

GUIDELINES FOR BUDGET ALLOCATION

Call 2024

This document outlines guidelines based on the rules for budget allocation to Quality Label lead organisations, in line with the frameworks established in the European Solidarity Corps (ESC) Programme Guide. The process presented here is applicable for both programmes, with due consideration to key differences relating to the nature of actions, duration of projects and number of rounds.

As specified in the Programme Guides, at budget allocation stage there is no quality assessment. All eligible grant requests should receive funding. The awarded grant amount per applicant will depend on a number of elements:

- the total budget available for allocation
- the estimated budget required to implement the requested activities
- the minimum and maximum grant amounts established for all applicants
- the following allocation components: qualitative performance, policy priorities and thematic areas addressed by the activities applied for

The NAs are required to publish the rules of allocation on their websites before the relevant deadline for applications. The NAs may translate the information provided in this document, as appropriate.

1. TOTAL BUDGET AVAILABLE FOR ALLOCATION

The NAs will publish the total budget available for allocation¹, as approved by EAC in the NA Work Programme.

Total budget available for allocation for ESC	1,422,006.00 EUR
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In the event when additional funds become available, a second deadline for ESC51 may be opened by the NA. In this instance, applicants who were awarded funding in the first deadline of 20 February 2024 will not be allowed to apply for additional funding in the second deadline.

Specific amounts per Programme will be reserved for budget categories based on reimbursement of real costs (exceptional costs). Beneficiaries can make requests for this type of costs during the implementation of the grant agreement, by submitting a written request to the National Agency. In case of need, the National Agency may further increase these specific reserved amounts. For ESC, if part of these reserved funds is left unused, the National Agency may distribute it in a second round.

The rest of the available budget will be apportioned between the following applicable allocation components as follows²:

Minimum grants amount	At least 828,203.00 EUR
Qualitative performance, policy priorities and thematic areas	At least 568,803.00 EUR
Exceptional costs reserve	At least 25,000.00 EUR

¹ If additional funding becomes available, the National Agency may increase the available budget.

² Exceptionally, the specified amounts may be lowered if the budget required for exceptional costs is higher than originally foreseen; if all applicants have already been allocated the requested amounts according to the rules set out in this document; or if a minor correction is required due to rounding rules.

2. ESTIMATING THE BUDGET REQUIRED TO IMPLEMENT THE REQUESTED ACTIVITIES

The National Agency will calculate the budget required to implement activities requested by each applicant, on the basis of unit costs defined in the Programme Guide and historical data on grant amounts for similar activities.

An estimation cannot be performed for all actual costs that are highly dependent on each specific case, namely exceptional costs. Requests for this type of costs will be assessed based on the description, justification and estimated amount provided by the applicant as part of the application.

In all cases, the awarded grant shall not be higher than the estimated budget required to implement all activities requested by the applicant. As an exception, exceptional costs will not count towards the maximum awarded grant amount.

3. BUDGET ALLOCATION RULES

If the total budget available for allocation is not sufficient to provide each applicant with the budget required to implement their requested activities, then a competitive allocation will take place as described below. However, if the total available budget is sufficient to fully address requests of all applicants, then the budget allocation rules described in this section will not apply.

The budget allocation will take place in multiple phases. In each phase, the available budget will be divided between eligible applicants based on their score on the relevant criterion. Applicants that receive the full budget required to implement their requested activities (or that reach their maximum grant amount) will not participate in further allocations. Available funds will be allocated to applicants based on the corresponding allocation rules. All allocated amounts will be rounded to the nearest whole Euro.

3.1 SETTING THE MINIMUM GRANT AMOUNT

The National Agency established the minimum grant at 25,000.00 EUR taking into account funds required for an average volunteering project based on unit costs established in the 2024 ESC Programme Guide.

A minimum grant will be provided to each applicant at the beginning of the allocation process. The purpose of the minimum grant is to allow all organisations to implement a sufficient number of activities and progress towards the objectives set in their Activity Plan.

Grant requests which are estimated to be lower than minimum grant amount will be fully awarded.

If sufficient funds are available, the National Agency may increase the minimum grant amount after the submission deadline. This information will be published on the NA website.

The NAs advise applicants that, in view of future calls, they should make sure to request an appropriate number of activities according to what they are able to implement. Failing to use the awarded funds during the implementation of the grant agreement can lead to low past performance and therefore a lower grant amount in future calls.

3.2 SETTING THE MAXIMUM GRANT AMOUNT

The maximum grant is established at 120,000.00 EUR based on the review of grant requests by ESC51 projects between 2021 and 2023.

The National Agency may also further limit the awarded grant amount for applicants under observation in accordance with the specific decision on establishment of observation measures.

The National Agency may also limit the grant amount awarded to applicants who deviate considerably from the annual targets set in their Activity Plans.

In all cases, the awarded grant amount shall not be higher than the estimated budget required to implement all activities requested by the applicant. As an exception, exceptional costs will not count towards the limits set by the rules on maximum grant amount.

3.3 QUALITATIVE PERFORMANCE, POLICY PRIORITIES AND THEMATIC AREAS

The National Agency will allocate the budget according to the assessment of the qualitative performance and the policy priorities and thematic areas addressed by the activities applied for. The purpose of this assessment is to ensure that the budget is allocated to applicants that deliver good quality activities, while also enhancing them to gradually progress towards the objectives of their Activity Plan.

The NA will calculate per applicant a score by taking into account the parameters below. The NAs are free to define the exact weighting for each before publishing the information on their websites.

- the evaluation score of the applicant's Quality Label application (30% of the score)
- the policy priorities score, calculated based on the number of policy priorities that the applicant will tackle through each activity (10% of the score). The proportion of young people with fewer opportunities taking part in activities has to be factored for in this calculation. This ensures that the inclusive dimension of the programme is reflected in the budget allocation criteria.
- average or the arithmetic mean of the progress report score (ESC50) and the beneficiary final report evaluation score of the last completed accredited project (ESC51), if available (60% of the score). If neither progress report nor final report are available, the NA may give more weight to the evaluation score of the applicant's Quality Label application.

The total score for qualitative performance, policy priorities and thematic areas will be calculated per activity and averaged per project.

After this assessment, the budget will be divided among the applicants in proportion to their total score. The calculation will take into account the total estimated budget required to implement the requested activities³, the minimum and the maximum grant amounts available. This ensures that the calculated grant amount is proportional to the size of the budget requested by each applicant.

3.4 GEOGRAPHICAL BALANCE (ERASMUS+ ONLY, OPTIONALLY)

The available budget for ensuring the geographical balance will be divided among the applicants in proportion to their geographical balance score.

The NA must define a methodology applicable in their country, based on the principle of equal participation opportunities in the Programme. To ensure that an impartial approach is used, quantitative indicators must be used and applicable geographical areas must be clearly defined in a way that allows applicants to know which area their organisation belongs to. The methodology may take into consideration factors such as: past number of participants from each region, past grants to applicants in each region, GDP per capita etc.

4. TOTAL AWARDED GRANT AMOUNT AND TARGETS FOR DELIVERY

For each applicant, the total awarded grant amount will be the sum of amounts they have received in each allocation phase. If any requests for exceptional costs have been approved by the National Agency, these amounts will be added to the total awarded grant amount.

Before issuing a grant agreement, the National Agency will calculate appropriate targets for delivery. If the applicant has been awarded the full budget required to implement their requested activities, then the activities requested in the application will become the targets for delivery.

If the awarded grant amount is lower than the full budget required to implement the requested activities, then the targets will also be lowered proportionally to ensure that the applicant is able to deliver them.

The National Agency has to ensure that the awarded grant amount corresponds to the number of units. In any case, at least one participant in each activity type requested by the applicant shall be maintained.

Beneficiaries are able to implement the target activities with a wide flexibility, while remaining within the scope of their approved Activity Plan and Programme Guide rules. Delivery of agreed activities and targets will be evaluated at the final report stage.

³ Excluding the scores that would equal zero for a specific applicant.

