

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON THE COORDINATED CALL

A. INTRODUCTION

The Frequently Asked Questions are intended to help you understand the requirements and necessary procedures for applying TLN Mobility's Coordinated Call for Disadvantaged Youth and Young Adults in your region or Member State. They are mostly addressed to regional and national **ESF Managing Authorities and ESF Implementing Bodies** as the responsible agencies for programming and implementing ESF programmes in Europe. For further information on a particular question, please also consult the TLN Mobility **Manual of Guidance** ([weblink](#)).

If you are a **project operator** and you are interested participating in or implementing a mobility schemes under the ESF, please seek further advice from the ESF Managing Authority or ESF Implementing Body in your country or region. A list of ESF Managing Authorities can be obtained from the EU Commission - DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion [website](#).

It has to be pointed out however that not every country/region with an ESF Operational Programme is participating in the TLN Mobility Coordinated Call/running a transnational mobility scheme. Please check out the relevant section of this website for those who are currently doing so ([weblink](#)).

B. GENERAL QUESTIONS

Why do we need a Coordinated Call on transnational mobility within the ESF?

the Coordinated Call helps Member States/regions to cooperate trans-nationally in using the European Social Fund for mobility. Because each country/region defines its own ESF programmes under their respective ESF Operational Programme, and can only finance activities for the benefit of its respective citizens, sending people between countries and regions requires coordination. Coordination can only be achieved on a voluntary basis. The Coordinated Call therefore defines an agreed set of minimum requirements for transnational mobility for disadvantaged youth and young adults so that Member States/regions and project operators will know what to expect from one another. It is a new approach under ESF and hence offers key learning points for future transnational collaboration within the ESF.

As a regional/national ESF Managing Authority (MA) or ESF Implementing Body, how can I use or participate in the Coordinated Call and how can I join TLN Mobility?

The Coordinated Call and the accompanying Manual of Guidance provide a comprehensive framework for the design and implementation of transnational mobility measures on a regional or national level. The prerequisite for becoming a member of the “Coordinated Call family” is to allocate a certain amount of ESF-budget to transnational mobility. The Coordinated Call and the Manual of Guidance can then be used as a guide in designing your corresponding regional or national ESF programme of mobility. By participating in the activities of TLN Mobility, you can seek advice from other MAs and share experience with peer colleagues. In addition, your regional or national project operators will be able to access information about potential transnational mobility partners in the different TLN Member States and regions.

To declare your interest becoming a member of TLN Mobility, please send an email to tln-mobility@bmas.bund.de.

What is the legal basis for the Coordinated Call?

The legal basis is ESF Regulation 1304/2013 and Structural Funds Regulation 1303/2013 which deal with the sustainable integration of young people, especially from disadvantaged backgrounds, into the labour market and which specifies that Member States “shall support transnational cooperation with the aim of promoting mutual learning, thereby increasing the effectiveness of policies supported by the ESF (...).”

Who developed the Coordinated Call?

The Coordinated Call was developed by a network of 15 ESF Managing Authorities and Implementing Bodies in Europe over a two-year period, supported with funds from the European Commission. It is based on the practical experience of policymakers and practitioners within the ESF and other European mobility programmes. The Coordinated Call is open for all ESF Managing Authorities and Implementing Bodies in Europe.

What is the difference of supporting transnational mobility through the ESF as compared to ERASMUS+?

As defined in the Coordinated Call, ESF mobility schemes launched under this Call are addressed towards young people aged 18 to 30 years who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs), and who are considered vulnerable with regard to their chances of entering education, vocational training and employment. The joint rationale of

the TLN Mobility members in developing this Coordinated Call was to open up the possibility of mobility to this particular group of young people which had not been considered as much as a potential target group that could benefit from mobility in terms of improving their chances on the labour market in other existing EU programmes so far.

In light of the diverse background and potentially more intensive support needs of participants, the Coordinated Call states that mobility schemes financed with the ESF should include support for project operators to cover all phases of participant participation, including participant recruitment, preparation, the stay abroad stage and the follow-up. For further details please see Chapters 2 and 4 of the Coordinated Call and the Manual of Guidance.

Do Managing Authorities/Implementing Bodies have to stick to the criteria in the Coordinated Call?

Yes. The criteria have been designed as minimum requirements to ensure high quality in transnational mobility measures. Managing Authorities/Implementing Bodies should take them as a basis and “translate” them into their own particular contexts. It is possible for additional requirements to be specified if deemed necessary.

What is the difference between the Coordinated Call document and the Manual of Guidance?

The Coordinated Call describes the mandatory criteria that all Managing Authorities/Implementing Bodies must comply with. It has been designed to be as streamlined as possible to avoid creating unnecessary administration while helping to guarantee the quality of transnational mobility for the participants.

The Manual of Guidance provides advice and additional recommendations to help Managing Authorities and Implementing Bodies interpret the Coordinated Call and put it into action.

The two documents have been designed to be read together.

I am a project operator with experience in running transnational mobility measures. How can I apply to the Coordinated Call?

The Coordinated Call serves as a guideline for ESF Managing Authorities in other EU Member States and regions who intend to finance transnational mobility measures through their national or regional ESF in the 2014-2020 funding period. The Coordinated Call will be implemented by these national or regional Managing Authorities and ESF Implementing Bodies by designing and launching respective regional or national ESF transnational mobility calls for projects. Project operators can only apply to these regional or national ESF mobility

calls that may be launched in their home region or country. There will be no central call for projects under the Coordinated Call.

Therefore, if, as private project operator, you are interested in applying and/or receiving more information on potential transnational ESF mobility measures in your region or Member State, please contact your respective ESF Managing Authority. A list of ESF Managing Authorities can be obtained from the EU Commission - DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion website <http://ec.europa.eu/esf/home.jsp?langId=en>).

Within the ESF OP, where do I allocate transnational mobility programmes?

Transnational mobility for disadvantaged youth and young adults can be allocated to the thematic objective *a. promoting sustainable quality employment and supporting labour mobility*, *b. promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination*, or to a special priority axis on transnationality. It is up to each Managing Authority to decide based on the respective regional and national priorities and circumstances.

The following set of questions refers to different sections of the Coordinated Call and the Manual of Guidance. Further information is provided in the two documents themselves.

C. QUESTIONS ON INDIVIDUAL ASPECTS OF THE COORDINATED CALL

1. TARGET GROUP

Isn't it very challenging to undertake transnational mobility for people from disadvantaged backgrounds?

Providing a high-quality experience abroad for people from this target group requires more substantial preparation and support than for people from non-disadvantaged backgrounds. However, the rewards for these participants can equally be significant. Experience from the German frontrunner initiative "IdA-Integration through Exchange" in the ESF funding period 2007-2013 shows that 62% of the young people from disadvantaged backgrounds who participated in an mobility measure under IdA managed to enter into employment, education or further training six month after participation. This is particularly noteworthy as 76% of participants had experienced spells of unemployment with an average duration of 12 months before participation in the programme; and 40% had gone through a lower secondary education or less.

In order to continue to learn from experience, practitioners and policymakers continue to accumulate experience in how to carry out this type of stay abroad efficiently and effectively. This experience will be shared through the TLN Mobility network.

The Coordinated Call describes a range of potential groups to focus on in transnational mobility programmes under the ESF. Does TLN Mobility provide any guidance or recommendation on which target group(s) to choose?

The choice of the target group(s) to be addressed through the regional or national ESF mobility programmes depends very much on the respective situation on the regional and national labour-market context concerned. Transnational mobility schemes should be designed in coherence with regional and/or national employment strategies and with a view to the future possibilities for youngsters to enter employment, education or further training. Other national or regional support schemes or programmes should also be considered in order to avoid duplication and to maximise impact of this specific measure.

Why is a minimum age limit of 18 set for participants? Is it possible to have younger participants?

If participants are aged under 18, the requirements placed upon sending and hosting organisations are increased significantly. Sending organisations need to obtain the consent of parents, and during their stay abroad participants require mentoring and support 24 hours a day. For these reasons a minimum age has been placed on participants. Participants need to be 18 when they sign the participation agreement.

2. Project set-up and management

Does the Coordinated Call define any general requirements in terms of certifications project operators shall provide when applying for funding?

No. However, project operators need to be able to demonstrate that they have the competences to deal with the target group and the complexities of undertaking work placements abroad. Individual countries/regions will have different ways in which they recognise and/or accredit the quality of organisations that might be involved in these activities and Managing Authorities may wish to take these into account when selecting projects.

As well as sending participants abroad, should I make it mandatory for project operators in my country also have to receive participants from abroad?

Within the framework of this Coordinated Call, it is not mandatory for project operators receiving funding to also host participants from abroad. However, it is **highly desirable** that sending organisations are also willing to act as hosts since this helps to build a strong network of organisations who have a thorough knowledge of all aspects of transnational mobility for this target group. Managing Authorities may wish to reflect this in the award criteria they set for project selection.

Is funding available for both sending and hosting organisations?

Project operators who would like to send participants abroad can apply for funding on a basis of a respective regional or national ESF mobility call. They are considered as project applicants and serve as the signatory for the grant agreement/ contract with their regional or national ESF Managing Authority; also on behalf of their transnational partners. Due to the fact that, according to the ESF regulations, project outcomes must be for the benefit of the programme area of the respective country and citizens, project operators who only wish to act as hosts but do not intend to send participants abroad cannot apply for funding from their regional or national ESF mobility programme.

If a project operator decides to act as a host, it can recover certain costs related to the execution of project activities for hosting from their sending partner organisation. However, this has to be part of its sending partners' funding arrangement with their respective ESF Managing Authority. Project operators cannot apply or seek funding for expenses related to a planned hosting activity directly from an ESF Managing Authority or Implementing Body in a different country.

Do projects need to have a particular structure?

Yes. All projects under the Coordinated Call must consist of the following four phases of project implementation: participant recruitment; participant preparation; stay abroad; follow-up. For further details on these phases, please see Chapter 4 of the Coordinated Call and the Manual of Guidance.

What type of skills and knowledge should project staff possess?

It is strongly recommended for Managing Authorities to list a minimum set of staff skills in their respective Calls and to reflect these in the award criteria for the selection of project proposals. Experience with the target group and also experience with finding work placements are key elements of a successful project implementation. Page 30 of the Manual of Guidance suggests further types of skills that are needed.

Concerning the proof of staff skills, it is recommended in the Manual of Guidance that Managing Authorities should include a requirement for projects to demonstrate that staff have certain skills and knowledge, and for these to be reflected in award criteria for the selection of projects. It is up to Managing Authorities to decide how possession of skills can be proved, although this is likely to be through certificates and the demonstration of experience in similar projects.

3. PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT AND PREPARATION

What are the key elements that projects must include in participant recruitment and preparation?

In the design of their regional and national mobility calls, Managing Authorities should ensure that projects demonstrate in their application that they take the steps set out in the Coordinated Call to stimulate people from disadvantaged backgrounds to participate and that they also have in place appropriate methods for participant selection. Project operators should commit to provide each participant with a learning/development plan, to baseline each participant's competences and to ensure that appropriate mentoring is provided before, during and after a participant's stay abroad. They should also provide a structured proposal for a programme of activities to prepare participants in terms of their intercultural, linguistic, professional/vocational and practical needs.

4. THE STAY ABROAD

When drafting the regional or national call, what aspects on data protection must be considered?

During project implementation, it is important that sending project operators provide hosting organisations with any information that may help participants to maximise the benefits of their stay abroad. This will of course include information about educational and work-related history, and skills and knowledge participants may possess, but it may also be important to share information about personal or medical issues (e.g. drug or alcohol issues). Mobility calls should therefore make reference to account data protection legislation when sharing information and make sure project operators obtain the permission of participants wherever necessary.

Should project applicants be asked to provide a mentor - either by the sending or by the hosting organization - during a participant's stay abroad?

Organising mentorship during a participant stay abroad will depend on the target group. With some groups it will be preferable for mentors to accompany participants from the sending country/region and to stay with them throughout their stay abroad. However, this is often not feasible and there are advantages in mentors coming from the hosting organisations since they will be more familiar with local circumstances etc.

Regardless of who provides the mentoring, a mentor from the sending organisation should, at the very least, accompany participants during their first days abroad, and there should be coordination between the sending and hosting organisations for the benefit of participants.

Managing Authorities may wish to reflect such considerations in the award criteria they set for project selection.

How do we ensure the suitability of the companies that will be selected for the participants?

It is the responsibility of project operators to ensure that companies are suitable for participants. Managing Authorities may wish to specify in their award criteria that project operators need to demonstrate they have in place convincing procedures and partners that help them to select suitable companies. This might include evidence in the form of track record of successful placements and organisations in the partnership with strong links to the labour market. For further details see also section 5.1.2 of the Manual of Guidance.

5. FOLLOW-UP

What activities should projects undertake after a participant has returned from her/his stay abroad?

The Coordinated Call specifies that each participant must be provided with a phase of support after their stay abroad that provides them with support and guidance, and an implementation plan. Projects must also work out and record each participant's progress and prepare employers to provide employment for them when they return home.

Managing Authorities should consider this when designing the regional or national call and make costs required for activities in this phase eligible for project operators to apply for.

6. IMPLEMENTATION STRUCTURES

Should applicants for projects already present a transnational partner in place?

Managing Authorities/implementing Bodies can accept project proposals from both established partnerships and applicants who still need to find a transnational partner. It is up to the Managing Authority to decide the most suitable procedure with regard to their regional and national context. As part of the support offered by TLN Mobility, a partner search database and forum have been established to help project operators from the TLN partner countries and regions to find suitable partners.

As a Managing Authority, which aspects should I consider in defining the criteria related to the setting up of a transnational partnership?

The Coordinated Call specifies that transnational partnerships must have at least one transnational partner from another Member State. Managing Authorities may decide to allow applicants to have more than one partner but it is recommended in the Manual of Guidance (section 5.3) that there is a limit of three transnational partners to help keep administration manageable. The Coordinated Call also sets out criteria relating to the project agreement between sending and hosting organisations (section 4.1.2) which have a bearing on possible criteria related to the transnational partnership. In this regard Managing Authorities may wish to consider at project selection stage the extent to which project operators have given regards to issues such as the following (non-exhaustive list): the types of partners involved (can they meet all the needs of participants?); clarity on roles and responsibilities in the partnership; the ways in which partners intend to maintain good communications; and the overall quality of the relationship between partners.

7. COST ISSUES

Where can I find an overview of the range of costs to be taken into account in transnational mobility?

You can consult section 6 of the Manual of Guidance which provides details on the types of costs that might need to be taken into account.

Should costs related to project preparation be made eligible?

Yes, this is strongly recommended. The Coordinated Call lists a range of costs related to project preparation and partner finding that should be made eligible. However, it is up to individual Managing Authorities to determine precisely which costs are eligible under their calls.

Why should I build in simplified cost options in the regional or national mobility programme?

The use of simplified cost options has been established as part of the current ESF programming period in order to reduce the administrative burden on project operators. In transnational mobility, the use of simplified cost options is strongly recommended, especially for costs that incur outside the programme country. This will help to make programme administration as effective and efficient as possible.

Do I have to use simplified cost options?

No, it is up to each Managing Authority to decide on whether simplified cost options are used, taking into account national or regional regulations and priorities for ESF-funded activities. However, the use of simplified cost options is highly recommended owing to the challenge of real cost accounting for costs outside the programme country.

What are the different steps that I have to take if I want to use simplified cost options in my regional or national mobility programme?

When developing simplified cost options Managing Authorities will have to consider both European as well national/regional regulations. Therefore, at the beginning of the process, as a first step, national/regional budget law and the regulations of the EU COM for the new ESF funding period should be assessed with regard to the development of simplified cost options (see "[Guidance on Simplified Cost Options](#)").

On the basis of these regulations, in a second step, it should be determined for which type of costs accounting should be realised on the basis of simplified cost options. Then, type of costs, range of expenses covered and the amount will have to be defined for each of the simplified cost option intended to be used.

Finally (based on individual national and regional regulations), other national and regional Authorities (such as e.g. Ministries of Finance and Court of Auditors) will have to be involved.

Which type of simplified cost option should I use and how do I know it will be acceptable for audit purposes?

The rules regarding simplified cost options are decided by national/regional authorities. The choice of option will depend on a number of factors mostly determined by individual regional and national regulations. Detailed guidance and joint recommendations are provided in the Manual of Guidance (Chapter 6). It is important that the option used can be justified in terms of the calculation method applied. You should therefore develop and keep on record a detailed justification for why you have chosen a particular option. For further guidance on the acceptance from an audit perspective, please consult your respective regional and national institutions, EU DG EMPL and the EU COM document "[Guidance on Simplified Cost Options \(SCOs\)](#)".