

How Erasmus+ can contribute to the DES Statement of Strategy 2016-2018

Léargas, National Agency for Erasmus+



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Introduction

Following a call by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) for submissions to a consultation process in the development of a new strategy for 2016-2018—in line with the [Programme for a Partnership Government](#)—this document provides an overview of Erasmus+ and a description of the ways in which the programme might be used in Ireland in the coming years to contribute to the successful implementation in Ireland of the programme for government in the eight priority areas that have been set for the education sector.

Léargas

In 1986, Léargas was established to support international exchange and collaboration in the youth sector, mainly through the medium of European Commission-funded education and training programmes.

In the succeeding years, Léargas broadened its range from the youth sector to include formal and non-formal education and training. Léargas has recently managed the Lifelong Learning and Youth in Action programmes and currently manages Erasmus+ in the following fields/sectors:

- Adult Education
- School Education
- Vocational Education and Training
- Youth and Community work.

[Erasmus+ in the Higher Education sector is managed by the HEA.]

Léargas is a not-for-profit organisation (CHY 8317), wholly owned by the Department of Education and Skills, and its Board is appointed by the Minister. The National Centre for Guidance in Education operates under the aegis of Léargas.

For more information, see www.leargas.ie and the [Léargas Strategy Statement 2015-2017](#).

Erasmus+

A 'global' programme

With the introduction of the Erasmus+ programme in 2014, the European Commission integrated seven pre-existing programmes (including the Lifelong Learning Programme and the Youth in Action programme) into one standardised 'global' programme to address intercultural competency in the fields of Education, Training and Youth. Erasmus+ will run until 2020 in all the EU member states plus the EFTA countries (Liechtenstein, Norway, Iceland), Turkey and Macedonia. The total budget for the programme will be **€14.7 billion** and it's estimated that **four million Europeans** will benefit from the programme during its lifecycle. This could be by working, studying, volunteering, training, or job shadowing in another country, or by availing of improvements in education and training brought about through exchange of expertise across Europe.

Programme objectives

To bring about a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy by 2020 for all of Europe's citizens, the ultimate aims of Erasmus+ are to:

- modernise teaching and learning across Europe
- improve key competences and skills
- increase cooperation within and between the education and employment sectors

To achieve these aims, Erasmus+ provides funding to public or private organisations active in the fields of adult education, higher education, school education, sport, vocational education and training, and youth work to carry out projects that encourage European exchange, co-operation and learning.

In more detail, the objectives of the Erasmus+ programme are:

1. To foster participation in learning mobility to improve the level of key competences and skills.
2. To foster the cross-sectoral dimension of transnational and international co-operation between organisations, the co-operation between the world of education, training and youth sector and the world of work, as well as quality improvement, co-operation, innovation and internationalisation at the level of educational institutions and in youth work.
3. To enhance the international dimension of education, training and youth activities and the role of youth workers and organisations as support structures for young people by encouraging mobility and co-operation projects with Partner Countries.
4. To foster participation of people with special needs or fewer opportunities in the programme.
5. To foster improvement of the teaching and learning of languages, promotion of the Union's broad linguistic diversity and intellectual awareness.
6. To complement policy reforms at local, regional and national level and support the development of knowledge and evidence-based youth policy as well as the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, notably through enhanced policy co-operation.
7. To provide efficient, effective and compliant programme management.

Programme structure

Structurally, Erasmus+ is divided according to two categories: the sector/field that the project will target (adult education, school education, vocational education and training, youth work, etc.), and the type of project proposed.

There are three main project types, known in Erasmus+ parlance as ‘Key Actions’:

<p>KA 1: Learning mobility of individuals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ <i>Staff mobility, in particular for teachers, trainers, school leaders and youth workers</i> ⇒ <i>Mobility for students in higher education and in vocational education and training</i> ⇒ <i>Youth volunteering and youth exchanges</i> ⇒ Master degree scheme ⇒ Mobility for higher education for EU and non-EU beneficiaries 	<p>KA2: Cooperation for innovation and exchange of good practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ <i>Strategic Partnerships between education, training and/or youth organisations and other relevant actors</i> ⇒ IT-Platforms including <i>EYP</i>, <i>eTwinning</i> and <i>EPAL</i> ⇒ Large-scale partnerships between education and training establishments and business: Knowledge Alliances and Sector Skills alliances ⇒ Cooperation with Partner Countries 	<p>KA 3: Support for policy reform</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Open method of Coordination ⇒ EU tools: <i>dissemination and exploitation</i> ⇒ <i>Policy dialogue with stakeholders, non-EU countries and international organisations</i> ⇒ Large scale prospective initiatives
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Activities highlighted in *red italic* are managed in Ireland by Léargas.

Key Action 1

Key Action 1, or KA1, is for projects that focus on ‘Learning mobility of individuals’. ‘Mobility’ here simply means the act of physically moving from one country to another, so this action is for any project where the principal activity is learners or staff travelling to another country for a period of learning or professional experience.

Key Action 2

Key Action 2 (KA2) is for projects where the main activity is ‘Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices’. Léargas manages the ‘Strategic Partnerships’ element of this action, which involves organisations in different counties working together on projects in areas of joint interest. These projects can be small or large scale, and involve organisations from the same or different sectors. However all projects should support the ‘development, transfer and/or implementation of innovative practices as well as the implementation of joint initiatives promoting cooperation, peer learning and exchanges of experience at European level’¹.

Note that under Key Action 2, there are also large-scale partnerships—Knowledge Alliances and Sector Skills Alliances—which are managed centrally in Brussels by the Executive Agency.

Key Action 3

The relevant activity that’s managed by Léargas under Key Action 3 (KA3), ‘Support for policy reform’, is open only to the youth sector and is for projects that support dialogue between young

¹ See the [Erasmus+ Programme Guide](#)

people and policy makers. Unlike the other Key Actions, which require the participation of partners from other countries, KA3 projects can take place at national as well as transnational level.

In addition, large-scale initiatives, managed centrally in Brussels, are open to organisations interested in supporting policy reform targeted at the achievement of the goals of the European policy agendas, for example, Europe 2020 and ET2020.

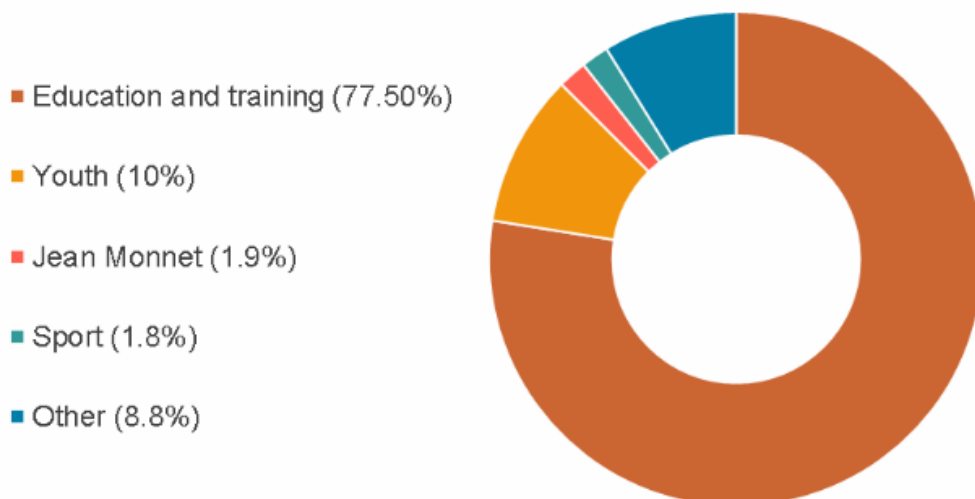
Transnational Cooperation Activities

Erasmus+ funds a series of training events and seminars arranged by National Agencies such as Léargas to encourage collaboration and sharing of best practice within Erasmus+.

Programme funding

Erasmus+ will provide **€14.7b** funding over the seven years it runs, from 2014 to 2020; over 77% of this funding will be allocated to education and training:

Erasmus+ budget 14.7 billion euros

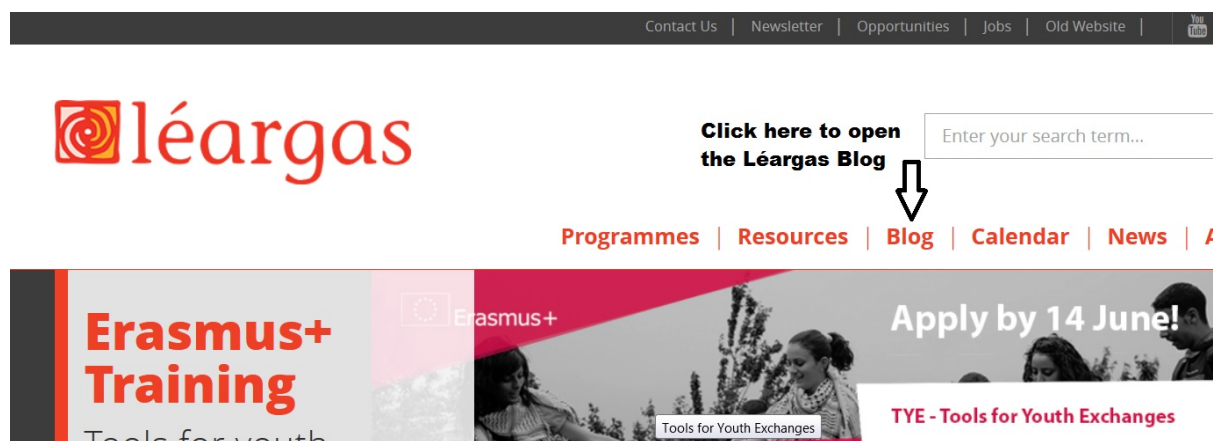


In all, it's expected that close to **€170 million** can come into Ireland over the lifetime of the programme. There is potential also for further funding to be awarded to those who participate in Knowledge Alliances and Sector Skills Alliances.

In 2015, there were **316 Léargas-managed Erasmus+ projects active in Ireland**, which had received a total of **€18.5m**.

Contribution of Erasmus+ to Education objectives

This section very briefly outlines how the different Key Actions in Erasmus+ can provide benefits to those who work in education in Ireland and enable them to contribute to the implementation of the DES and the government's priority objectives in the coming years. We also include here links to some examples on our website of how the relevant funding works on a practical level. If you're reading this in print rather than online, just navigate to the Léargas blog on our website for the full set of blog posts that include the examples given below.



Key Action 1

Who and how

Teachers/trainers/youth workers/key staff can use KA1 funding to explore practice, develop skills, be introduced to new methodologies, and exchange practice.

Trainees/apprentices can get the opportunity to practice skills in a realistic work setting in another country while also developing language skills etc.

Young people can get the opportunity to take part in activities and exchanges with their peers; volunteers can work in other European countries.

Relevance to which priorities

Funding under this action can support developments in: **1, Prioritising Early Years; 2, Tackling Disadvantage; 4, Promoting Excellence and Innovation in Schools; 5, Promoting Creativity and Entrepreneurial Capacity in Students; 7, Special Needs Education; 8, Meeting the Skills Needs of the Future.**

Examples

[Adult Education - Professional Development \(ETBs\)](#)

[School Education – Whole school benefits from Erasmus+](#)

[School Education - Professional Development: Monitoring and Evaluation](#)

[VET – European Placements integrated in IoT course](#)

[VET – Innovation and new skills](#)

Key Action 2

Who and how

Strategic Partnerships (managed by Léargas)

Schools, adult education organisations, training institutes and Institutes of Technology, youth and community groups and agencies such as SOLAS, the ETBs, Regional Skills Fora, and enterprises can all take part in Strategic Partnerships to share experience or policy perspectives or to develop new approaches or methodologies. (For a full list of relevant school authorities that can take part, check the [Erasmus+ Eligible List of School Authorities](#) on the Léargas website.)

Projects can be of one-, two-, or three-years duration with funding of up to €450,000 depending on scope and duration. Strategic Partnerships can be (and are encouraged to be) cross-sectoral.

[Note that this Key Action also supports Sector Skills Alliances (managed in Brussels) which, amongst other objectives, aims to tackle vocational skills gaps by: identifying sector-specific labour market needs and demand for new skills with regard to one or more occupational profiles (demand side); and enhancing the responsiveness of initial and continuing VET systems to sector-specific labour market needs (supply side).]

Relevance to which priorities

Funding under this action can support developments in: **1, Prioritising Early Years; 2, Tackling Disadvantage; 4, Promoting Excellence and Innovation in Schools; 5, Promoting Creativity and Entrepreneurial Capacity in Students; 7, Special Needs Education; 8, Meeting the Skills Needs of the Future.**

Examples

[Adult Education - training curriculum to promote social inclusion, gender equality and inclusion](#)

[School Education – Using ICT in Teaching Literacy in Primary Schools](#)

[VET – Digital Skills - Coderdojos](#)

[Youth – Citizenship, Creativity](#)

Key Action 3

Who and how

Structured Dialogue (managed by Léargas)

Structured Dialogue projects encourage active participation in democratic life and give young people and youth organisations a direct say in the policy-making process. They develop young people's capacity to engage with civil society and increase their knowledge through peer learning. Projects also provide an evidence base to inform policy choices in the youth field.

Relevance to which priorities

Funding under this action can support developments in: **2, Tackling Disadvantage; 5, Promoting Creativity and Entrepreneurial Capacity in Students**

Example

[Youth – Young Voices](#)

[Note that Key Action 3 also includes Support for Policy Reform (managed in Brussels) which funds large-scale projects that bring together strategic organisations in support of policy reform targeted at the achievement of the goals of the European policy agendas, in particular the Europe 2020 Strategy, and of the Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training (ET 2020).]

Transnational Co-operation Activities (TCAs)

Who and how

In addition to the Key Actions outlined above, Erasmus+ provides opportunities for actors in any sector and from a number of participating countries to come together around specific themes or areas of concern to explore a topic, identify common concerns, undertake a study visit, attend a training event and so develop ideas for further collaboration and learning through Erasmus+ activities.

Relevance to which priorities

Funding under this action can support developments in: **1, Prioritising Early Years; 2, Tackling Disadvantage; 4, Promoting Excellence and Innovation in Schools; 5, Promoting Creativity and Entrepreneurial Capacity in Students; 7, Special Needs Education; 8, Meeting the Skills Needs of the Future.**

Example

[Youth – Non-formal learning to promote inclusion](#)

Related tools and initiatives

As well as the Erasmus+ funding directly available through the three Key Actions and TCAs, the following tools and initiatives could also be used to support developments in Irish education:

- [eTwinning](#) (managed in Ireland by Léargas: schools work together with online tools on shared projects, e.g. STEM development: [Game Theory at Primary School Level](#))
- [EPALE](#) (managed in Ireland by Léargas: online community for those with a professional role in adult learning in Europe.)
- [ECVET](#) (managed in Ireland by Léargas: framework for the transfer and recognition of learning outcomes across VET learning environments)
- [Euroguidance](#) (managed in Ireland by NCGE)

Conclusion

Erasmus+ is not an end in itself but is a strategic tool that can be used to:

- equip children and young people with key enabling skills through providing them with direct access to new experiences and learning
- enable trainees and apprentices to practice skills, experience working life and develop their confidence and language skills
- support all who work as trainers, educators, teachers, youth workers by providing opportunities for continued learning
- support school leaders to meet new demands and pressures by providing opportunities for professional development, examples of good practice, insights into whole school development etc.
- modernise the education system through providing practitioners and policy makers with access to shared learning, best practice, policy developments and professional development across Europe

For more information

If you have any questions or need more information, please contact us:

www.leargas.ie

www.leargas.ie/programmes/erasmusplus/

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