

Project Fiche – IPA Multi-beneficiary programmes / Component I

1 IDENTIFICATION

Project Title	Erasmus Mundus - Action 2: Partnerships Lot - Western Balkans
CRIS Decision number	SI2
Project no.	10
MIPD Sector Code	7. Social Development
ELARG Statistical code	02.26 - Education and culture
DAC Sector code	11420
Total cost (VAT excluded)¹	EUR 12 000 000
EU contribution	EUR 12 000 000
Management mode	Centralised indirect
Implementation management	The programme will be implemented by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA).
Implementing modality	Stand alone project
Project Implementation Type	Grants
Zone benefiting from the action(s)	Western Balkans: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia

¹ The total project cost should be net of VAT and/or of other taxes. Should this not be the case, clearly indicate the amount of VAT and the reasons why it is considered eligible.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence

2 RATIONALE

2.1 PROJECT CONTEXT: ISSUES TO BE TACKLED AND NEEDS ADDRESSED

The Erasmus Mundus Action 2 programme will contribute towards the development of human resources and the international cooperation capacity of higher education institutions in the Western Balkans.

Enable the exchange of staff and students at all levels thereby enhancing their knowledge and skills.

2.2 LINK WITH MIPD AND NATIONAL SECTOR STRATEGIES

This programme has been designed on the basis of the IPA Multi-beneficiary Multi-annual Indicative Planning Document (MIPD) 2011-2013 in which education is a priority under Section 3.7. (Social Development). As noted in the MIPD, the objectives of aid in the area of education is to: Support the development and the quality of the higher education systems through balanced cooperation between local higher education institutions and those of the EU Member States; Enable mutual enrichment and better understanding between the EU Member States and the IPA beneficiaries through the exchange of staff and students at all levels and through the provision of postgraduate studies to highly qualified students in EU universities. The programme will also contribute to enhancing regional cooperation among the Beneficiaries.

2.3 LINK WITH ACCESSION PARTNERSHIP (AP) / EUROPEAN PARTNERSHIP (EP) / STABILISATION AND ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT (SAA) / ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

Higher Education is an issue mentioned in all the European / Accession Partnerships (except Montenegro) as a priority. The Accession Partnerships for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the European Partnerships for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Serbia also indicate higher education as a sector for promoting regional cooperation.

2.4 PROBLEM ANALYSIS

The European Union recognises the importance of higher education for economic and social development. Higher education plays a crucial role in producing high quality human resources, in disseminating scientific discovery and advanced knowledge through teaching and educating future generations of citizens, high level professionals and political leaders, who in turn can contribute to better governance and social cohesion.

The increasing speed at which existing knowledge becomes obsolete, and the rapid changes in the means by which it is delivered and renewed will require high adaptability of the educational sector to meet the needs of the economy and of society as a whole. In the context of globalisation, Beneficiaries that are only weakly connected to the global knowledge economy will find themselves increasingly at a disadvantage and will not be able to generate adequate socio-economic conditions for the population.

Against this background, the promotion of international cooperation between the European Union and Third-Country Higher Education Institutions (HEI) and, in particular, the facilitation of institution-based mobility is a win-win situation not only to improve the results of education, but also to create lasting links and generate mutual enrichment and understanding between peoples. Moreover the mobility scheme envisaged under this specific Lot translates a political choice for the region and is complementary to other actions developed in the area.

This programme offers a unique framework for higher education institutional cooperation and training opportunities relevant to the skilled manpower needs of the Western Balkans, the students and staff benefit from the opportunity to study, teach and research in EU countries and participating universities raise their capacities, build pools of expertise and gain international visibility.

In the framework of strengthening the capacities of HEIs from the beneficiaries and while preparing their smooth entry in the Life Long Learning Programme, the coordination of the mobility scheme by IPA beneficiaries becomes an option.

More specifically, the reform efforts of the Candidate Countries and Potential Candidates for accession include improving the quality of their education systems. This programme aims to build ties at university level through partnerships activities and to set up programmes for student and staff mobility between the EU Member States and the Western Balkans.

In 2007, the European Commission proposed to increase the number of scholarships for graduate and undergraduate students in the Western Balkans. This follows both the recommendation of the Salzburg Communication and the Council Conclusions in December 2006 which emphasised the desirability of promoting people-to-people contacts by making more such scholarships available. In addition, according to the Communication of March 2008² "Western Balkans: Enhancing the European Perspective" and following the recommendations of the Council Meeting of January 2008, the Commission has decided to double the 2007 budget for scholarships as from the academic year 2010-2011. Therefore, the budget and the number of scholarships under Action 2 have doubled from IPA 2007 to IPA 2009 and remained stable since then.

At the end of 2008, the former External Cooperation Window has been integrated as Action II "Partnerships" under the new Erasmus Mundus (2009-2013) programme³ which aims to promote institutional cooperation and mobility activities.

2.5 LINKED ACTIVITIES AND DONOR COORDINATION

This project complements current and previous higher education schemes in the field, building on the positive results that other programmes like Tempus and the Erasmus Mundus Action 1 programmes have generated in the region:

- Tempus aims at up-grading higher education institutions and promoting regional and multilateral networking between higher education institutions in the EU and the Western Balkans. Tempus projects relate to curriculum development and institutional development.
- Erasmus Mundus – Action 1, which aims at enabling highly qualified graduates and doctoral candidates from the Western Balkans and Turkey to engage in postgraduate study at European universities and to obtain qualifications and/or experience in the European Union and EFTA-EEA States.
- Erasmus (part of the Lifelong Learning Programme): among the Candidate Countries and Potential Candidates for Accession, only Turkey participates in this programme, on the same footing as the EU Member States, in the framework of the pre-accession strategy. Pilot projects funded by IPA 2009, which include application of HEIs for Erasmus Charter as well as students' mobility for studies and staff mobility under

² COM (2008)127, 05.03.08

³ Decision N° 1298/2008/EC of 16/12/2008

Erasmus, are implemented in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to prepare the country to its participation in the successor programme "Erasmus for All".

- The Programme shall support and supplement action taken by and in the Member States while fully respecting their responsibility for the content of education and the organisation of education and training systems, and their cultural and linguistic diversity.

The Czech Presidency has co-organised with the European Commission in May 2009 a Pledging Conference which aimed at taking stock of what has been undertaken both by the Commission and the Member States in the provision of scholarships for the students of the Western Balkans. It is now envisaged to create a mechanism of coordination and information between the Commission, the Member States and the Candidate Countries and Potential Candidates for accession.

2.6 LESSONS LEARNED

The Erasmus Mundus (2009-2013) helps to address the issues analysed under point 2 by providing students, researchers and staff from the WB with the possibility to benefit from the experience of pursuing academic studies and work attachments in Europe and by creating international academic networks (partnerships between EU and Western Balkans HEIs).

For the period 2007-2010, under Action 2 six Partnerships have been selected. 1394 students and staff have benefited from the mobility scheme. The participation of students has been in line with cross cutting issues such as gender balance and efforts were done to offering opportunities to individuals in disadvantaged or vulnerable situations.

The 2011 EM Call for Proposals selected three partnerships under the Western Balkans lot. Together these three partnerships plan 541 individual mobilities.

An interim evaluation of the EM (2009-2013) programme has been recently finalised. As a result of participation in Action 2, HEI reported having strengthened their networks, developed credit and course recognition systems, internationalised their teaching, and improved their institutional capacities.

In the Western Balkans, the partnerships have progressed in the recognition of studies and several activities are carried out in this perspective. Moreover, the experience of the selected projects has shown a preference for the HEIs involved in offering short term mobility scholarships (exchange scholarships). While this type of mobility is contributing to raise the HEIs capacity and also to prepare their smooth entry in the Life Long Learning Programme; students and staff, as seen from surveys and case studies, often considered their mobility too short, in particular, when experiencing visa-related delays. Special attention should be devoted to solve visa-related problems beforehand.

From an institutional point of view, third-country partners have gained valuable experience in handling international mobility projects through the programme and to establish or consolidate the required procedures and structures. For some of the EU partners, the programme opened up a new geographical region for cooperation, which will encourage future cooperation, although they have been confronted with some challenges due to non-integrated university structures in the WB countries. Internal communication channels were not always clear and a lack of clear structures within the own institutions needs to be addressed. As a general comment, partner HEIs underlined the need for Western Balkans' faculties to be more involved in the programme and internal communication (between the administrative staff in charge of running EM projects and academics) needs to be improved.

3 DESCRIPTION

3.1 OVERALL OBJECTIVE OF THE PROJECT

Contribute towards the development of human resources and the international cooperation capacity of higher education institutions in the Western Balkans

3.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE(S) OF THE PROJECT

Enable the exchange of staff and students at all levels thereby enhancing their knowledge and skills.

3.3 RESULTS

The expected results of this programme are:

- Greater multilateral exchange of students and staff between the European Union and the Western Balkans;
- Enhanced international cooperation capacities of higher education institutions in the Western Balkans through cooperation with high quality European institutions (Erasmus Charter) with extensive experience in European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) and in the implementation of the "Bologna process";
- Improved cultural understanding and respect for diversity.

The main performance indicators for this programme are the number of institutions, the number of students and staff participating in the programme per type of educational profile (undergraduate, master, PhD, post-PhD and staff) as well as the involvement of students belonging to a disadvantaged or vulnerable group in accordance with the provisions indicated in the annual Call for proposals.. The results of the programme will be evaluated through an assessment and analytical study to be implemented by the Commission services.

3.4 MAIN ACTIVITIES

Mobility activities include:

(a) Student exchanges

The types of mobility to be funded in this first phase of the programme are: undergraduate students, master students, doctoral and post-doctoral fellowships.

(b) Staff exchanges

The programme will also fund mobility for academic and administrative staff with the purpose of teaching, practical training and research exchanges allowing better cooperation and institution building with Western Balkans HEIs.

(c) Partnership activities to organise mobility and the transfer of best practices.

The grants awarded also cover the costs of organising student and staff exchanges, work with partners on a credit transfer system, the application of principles such as the diploma supplement and work with partners on quality assurance issues. The exchange of students and staff within the programmes can take place between higher education institutions from the EU and higher education institutions from the Western Balkans.

In order to create more links among the HEIs in the Western Balkans, a limited number of mobilities can be foreseen between the institutions in this region.

In this context and in line with the principles inscribed in the Bologna process the universities involved in the mobility exchange are responsible for the recognition of the studying carried out by their own students abroad in particular for not-degree seeking students (short mobility). The process of recognition concerns also the recognition of academic degrees/diploma obtained in EU for degree seeking students (long term mobility).

The maximum duration should be up to 4 years in order to cover the whole duration of doctorate courses.

The total number of masters' scholarships and doctoral candidates fellowship will rather be around 150 if the above proposed budget distribution is applied.

3.5 ASSESSMENT OF PROJECT IMPACT, CATALYTIC EFFECT AND CROSS BORDER IMPACT (WHERE APPLICABLE)

The programme will have a catalytic effect on the implementation of the Bologna recommendations and will strongly contribute to the promotion of mutual understanding in a multicultural environment and training.

Performance is monitored through desk, field monitoring and an annual partnerships' conference in Brussels. The Erasmus Mundus National Structures act as information offices in EU Member States as well as EU Delegations and National Tempus Offices (NTOs) do in the Third-Countries.

For all activities regarding the mobility of students and staff from both partner and non-partner institutions, applicants must explain in which way these mobility exchanges favour the creation of durable links with the Candidate Countries and Potential Candidates for accession, how they can respond to the social, economical and political needs of the Candidate Countries and Potential Candidates for accession concerned and how they will help to disseminate European social and democratic values.

3.6 SUSTAINABILITY

The Programme requires to the consortia to develop a sustainability plan in order to ensure the proper implementation and continuity of the joint programme, to ensure the appropriate dissemination and exploitation of the project results, as well as the impact and sustainability of these results in the long term (financially, institutionally, etc.) beyond the funding period. It is expected that as a result of these projects long term stable bilateral cooperation among the European and Western Balkan institutions are set up as well as among the higher education institutions in the Western Balkans. The programme contributes to the capacity building of these institutions to manage mobility thus enhancing their preparation to entry the Life long Learning Programme.

3.7 ASSUMPTIONS AND PRE-CONDITIONS⁴

This programme will be implemented on the assumption that performing partnerships will be selected on the basis of the quality of their proposals and that numerous students and staff are interested in exchange activities.

⁴ Assumptions are external factors that have the potential to influence (or even determine) the success of a project but lie outside the control of the implementation managers. Such factors are sometimes referred to as risks or assumptions but the Commission requires that all risks shall be expressed as assumptions. Pre-conditions are requirements that must be met before the sector support can start.

There are two further risks: that mobility is not ensured as foreseen due to practical difficulties in obtaining visas; and that the period of study or diploma obtained is not recognised. The programme also requires that the partnerships work with bodies (ministries, accreditation bodies, etc.) that are responsible for recognition of diplomas and of study periods. Activities at regional level are organised in order to share best practices and to identify the challenges of the recognition process.

Unexpected low number of candidates, low number of suitable candidates, tardy or unexpected drop-outs, delayed visa procedures, force majeure as well as other unforeseen events represent a risk for the partnership not to comply with the mobility flow/distribution per type of mobility as required in the Call for proposals. More flexibility will be allowed in this respect.

4 IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

The implementation of the programme involves different actors in different phases. The Agency implements the programme involving the EU delegations in the Western Balkans and EM national structures, which play an important role during the selection phase. The EU delegations provide information on the eligibility of the third country institutions and the relevance of the projects for the region /country. The EU delegations and EM national structures are invited to participate in the field monitoring. Moreover, during the project implementation they play an important role such as to facilitate obtaining visas, solving recognition issues etc. The Tempus National Offices are also strongly involved in promotion activities and in liaising with the Ministries of Education in the beneficiaries concerned in order to ensure a smoother implementation of the programme in the region.

4.1 INDICATIVE BUDGET

Indicative Project budget (amounts in EUR)

			SOURCES OF FUNDING									
			TOTAL EXP.RE	EU CONTRIBUTION		NATIONAL CONTRIBUTION					PRIVATE CONTRIBUTION	
ACTIVITIES	IB (1)	INV (1)	EUR (a)=(b)+(c)+(d)	EUR (b)	%(2)	Total EUR (c)=(x)+(y)+(z)	% (2)	Central EUR (x)	Regional/ Local EUR (y)	IFIs EUR (z)	EUR (d)	% (2)
Activity 1	x		12 000 000	12 000 000	100	-					-	
TOTAL IB			12 000 000	12 000 000	100							
TOTAL INV												
TOTAL PROJECT			12 000 000	12 000 000	100							

NOTE: DO NOT MIX IB AND INV IN THE SAME ROW. USE SEPARATE ROWS.

Amounts net of VAT

- (1) In the Activity row, use "X" to identify whether IB or INV
- (2) Expressed in % of the **Public** Expenditure (column (b))
- (3) Expressed in % of the **Total** Expenditure (column (a))

4.2 INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE (PERIODS BROKEN DOWN BY QUARTER)

Contracts	Launch of Call for Proposals	Signature of contracts	Project Completion
Call for Proposals	Q4 2013	Q3 2014	Q4 2018

4.3 CROSS CUTTING ISSUES

It is necessary to increase efforts to promote dialogue and understanding between cultures world-wide. It is important to bear in mind the social dimension of higher education as well as the ideals of democracy and respect for human rights, including gender equality, especially as mobility fosters the discovery of new cultural and social environments and facilitates understanding thereof. In so doing, no group of citizens or Western Balkans nationals is excluded or put at a disadvantage.

The programme promotes equality between men and women and focuses on offering opportunities to individuals in disadvantaged or vulnerable situations. It includes provisions for students with special needs, and in particular by helping to promote their integration into higher education, and promoting equal opportunities for all.

In this context a transparent selection process that respects minimum objective criteria (academic merit, gender balance and favourable treatment of disadvantaged students) will remain in place in order to guarantee a fair selection of candidates.

4.3.1 *Equal Opportunities and non discrimination*

Over the past few decades increasing attention has been paid to the gender dimension of poverty and development in transition economies, particularly in relation to the role of women in education and the impact of higher education on equal opportunity policies.

Projects should mainstream gender issues in their aims and activities, specifically in subject matters and areas of study where the presence of women in the economy has traditionally been very low (science and technology). Projects should promote gender balance and identify factors influencing gender discrimination.

Projects in the sphere of education and sciences should promote the change of gender roles and societal stereotypes, avoiding any sort of cultural prejudice in educational materials.

The principle of equal opportunities should be taken into account when evaluating the quality of all projects proposed under the three components. Specific attention will be paid to this dimension when determining the benefit of mobility activities.

While implementing the project activities and, to the extent applicable, the beneficiary will try to assure that gender disaggregated data is made available to carry out an analysis of the social and economic impact of the actions undertaken.

4.3.2 *Environment and climate change*

The project beneficiaries shall ensure that during implementation of their actions due consideration is given to the governmental policies relating to environmental management and that such policy is embodied, as appropriate, within all strategic policy documents they may draft, all training activities they may carry out and new study programmes and curricula that they may design.

4.3.3 *Minorities and vulnerable groups*

Specific attention will be paid to this dimension when evaluating the quality of all projects proposed under the programme.

4.3.4 *Civil Society/Stakeholders involvement*

The projects will be implemented by universities from the partner countries in close cooperation with civil society and other stakeholders at local and regional level. These associated actors will be closely involved in the promotion of the scholarship scheme and in the identification of eligible scholarship candidates among the target group(s) concerned. In addition, these stakeholders will directly benefit from the European education and training received by the scholarship holders after these have returned to their home countries.

ANNEXES

1. Log frame
2. Amounts (EUR) contracted and disbursed per quarter over the full duration of project
3. Description of the institutional framework
4. Reference list of relevant laws and regulations only where relevant
5. Details per EU funded contract
6. Project visibility activities

ANNEX 1: Logical framework matrix in standard format

LOGFRAME PLANNING MATRIX FOR PROJECT FICHE		Erasmus Mundus – Action 2: Partnerships, Lot - Western Balkans	
		Contracting period expires: 30 November 2014	Execution period expires: 30 November 2018
		Total budget: EUR 12 000 000	IPA budget: EUR 12 000 000
Overall objective	Objectively verifiable indicators	Sources of Verification	
To contribute towards the development of human resources and the international cooperation capacity of higher education institutions in the Western Balkans.			
Project purpose	Objectively verifiable indicators	Sources of Verification	Assumptions
To enable the exchange of staff and students at all levels thereby enhancing their knowledge and skills.	Number of delivered scholarships	European Commission and EACEA services.	After selection the assumption is that students and academics from Western Balkans and EU are permitted to leave their country and enter the European host country or third country. European Union Delegations are involved in the promotion of the programme. If necessary they should cooperate with local EU embassies in the Western Balkans in order to ease the visa application process. In addition, selected partnership should also involve the EU Delegations for cooperation on specific regional initiatives.
Results	Objectively verifiable indicators	Sources of Verification	Assumptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Greater multilateral exchange of students between the European Union and the Western Balkans; also within Western Balkans - Enhanced international cooperation capacities of higher education institutions in the Western Balkans through cooperation with high quality European institutions (Erasmus Charter) with extensive experience in European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) and in the implementation of the "Bologna process"; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of students participating in the Programme per type of educational profile (undergr., master, PhD, post-PhD and staff) - Number of universities / partnerships selected through the Call for proposals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Universities and Partnerships Commission and EACEA 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The spreading of the experiences of EU universities in the framework of Erasmus exchanges and in the implementation of the “Bologna process”; - Improved cultural understanding and respect for diversity; 			
Activities	Means	Costs	Assumptions
<p>(a) Student Exchanges</p> <p>The types of mobility to be funded in this first phase of the programme are: undergraduate students, master students, doctoral and post-doctoral fellowships. For staff: teaching, practical training and research exchanges;</p> <p>(b) partnership activities to organise mobility and transfer of best practice:</p> <p>The grant awarded covers also the costs of organising student and staff exchanges, work with partners on a credit transfer system, the application of principles such as the diploma supplement and work with partners on quality assurance issues. The exchange of students and staff within the programmes can take place between higher education institutions from the EU and higher education institutions from the Western Balkans.</p>	<p>The selected partnerships will receive a grant agreement covering the mobility activities of the call for activities starting in the academic year 2014/2015</p>	<p>EUR 12 000 000</p>	

ANNEX 2. Amounts (in EUR) contracted and disbursed per quarter over the full duration of project

Contracted	Q4 2012	Q1 2013	Q2 2013	Q3 2013	Q4 2013	Q1 2014	Q2 2014	Q3 2014	Q4 2014	Q1 2015	Q2 2015	Q3 2015	Q4 2015	Q1 2016	Q2 2016	Q3 2016	Q4 2016	Q1 2017	Q2 2017	Q3 2017	Q4 2017	
Erasmus Mundus - Action 2: Partnerships Lot - Western Balkans								12 000 000														
Cumulated								12 000 000														
Disbursed	Q4 2012	Q1 2013	Q2 2013	Q3 2013	Q4 2013	Q1 2014	Q2 2014	Q3 2014	Q4 2014	Q1 2015	Q2 2015	Q3 2015	Q4 2015	Q1 2016	Q2 2016	Q3 2016	Q4 2016	Q1 2017	Q2 2017	Q3 2017	Q4 2017	
Erasmus Mundus - Action 2: Partnerships Lot - Western Balkans								6 000 000						3 600 000				2 400 000				
Cumulated								6 000 000						9 600 000				12 000 000				

ANNEX 3: Description of Institutional Framework

The National Tempus Offices have been asked to ensure the promotion of the Erasmus Mundus Programme. Every Candidate Country and Potential Candidate for accession has established a Tempus Office.

These are the authorities in charge of the Higher education Sector in the Beneficiaries:

- Albania: Ministry of Education and Sciences
- Bosnia and Herzegovina: Ministry of Civil Affairs- Sector for Education.
- The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: Ministry of Education and Science
- Kosovo: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
- Montenegro: Ministry of Education and Science
- Serbia: Ministry of Education and Science

ANNEX 4: Reference list of relevant laws and regulations only where relevant

- Council Decision of 18 February 2008 (2008/210/EC) on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the European Partnership with Albania and repealing Decision 2006/54/EC
- Council Decision of 18 February 2008 (2008/211/EC) on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the European Partnership with Bosnia and Herzegovina and repealing Decision 2006/55/EC
- Council Decision of 18 February 2008 (2008/212/EC) on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the Accession Partnership with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and repealing Decision 2006/57/EC
- Council Decision of 22 January 2007 (2007/49/EC) on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the European Partnership with Montenegro.
- Council Decision of 18 February 2008 (2008/213/EC) on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the European Partnership with Serbia including Kosovo
- Multi-beneficiary Multi-annual Indicative Planning Document 2011-2013

ANNEX 5: Details per EU funded contract where applicable:

The programme will be implemented on an indirect centralised basis by the European Commission following Article 53a of the Financial Regulation and corresponding provisions of the Implementing Rules.

Implementation tasks are delegated under Article 54(2) (a) of the Financial Regulation to the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, which was created by Commission Decision 2005/56/EC of 14 January 2005. The mandate of the Agency was extended by Commission Decision 2007/114/EC of 8 February 2007.

According to Article 12 (3) of the Council Regulation No (EC) 58/2003 of 19 December 2002 laying down the statute for executive agencies to be entrusted with certain tasks in the management of Community programmes, any programme delegated to an executive agency has to contribute to the financing of the administrative budget of the agency.

This programme is to be implemented through a Call for Proposals. The Call requests proposals from partnerships of higher education institutions (HEI) from the EU and from the

Western Balkans to draw up a mobility scheme for students at all levels and staff. Higher education institutions from the EU must all have been awarded an Erasmus Charter. Leading applicants may only be HEI from the EU. Partnerships must comprise at least five European HEIs from at least three EU countries, plus universities from a minimum number of the Western Balkans to be determined in the Call for Proposals. Western Balkans HEIs can play a role of joint coordinator, being actively involved in co-ordination and management tasks of the partnership. In the framework of raising the Western Balkans HEIs capacity and also to prepare their smooth entry in the Life Long Learning Programme, the coordinating of mobility scheme by IPA beneficiaries could be also an option.

Proposals will state the number of mobility activities planned. In their proposal, partnerships will demonstrate the mechanisms for the selection of students and of staff for the scheme. They must guarantee a transparent and objective selection that takes into account academic merit, socio-economic situation, gender balance, support for disabled students and compliance with regional priorities. Partnerships must prove their capacity and experience in hosting students.

The best partnership or partnerships will be retained. An evaluation of the quality of the proposals, including the financial and operational capacity and expertise of the applicant and its partners, will be carried out based on a number of award criteria relating to (a) the relevance of the proposal, (b) the quality of the proposal (cooperation mechanism, implementation of the mobility and services provided to the grantees) and (c) the sustainability of the proposal.

The EACEA will conclude a grant agreement with the coordinating institution of each partnership covering the mobility activities of the call for activities starting in the academic year 2014/2015.

ANNEX 6: Project visibility activities

Awareness raising activities towards universities in the partner countries will be organised with the support of the National Tempus Offices in the beneficiaries concerned. The promotion of the individual scholarship offered to nationals from the partner countries will be organised by the local universities and by the associated partners from civil society. Dissemination of project results will be organised by the beneficiaries.