# Matching EU projects with programmes and policy objectives

Aligning research or educational innovation with EU policy environments




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## Educational Material Identity

Matching EU projects with programmes and policy objectives

## Contributors

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**Estimated Time: 25 minutes**

# Explanation of buttons and icons

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# Structure

Main Goal
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# Main Goal

This training course aims at enabling learners to understand how to **strategically align project ideas** in research or education **with EU policy priorities and funding programmes**, ensuring proposals are relevant, competitive, and impactful within the frameworks of Erasmus+, Horizon Europe, and other EU initiatives.

# Expected Learning Outcomes 1/3

## Knowledge level

Learners will be able to understand:

- The alignment between EU policy priorities and funding programmes
- The strategic priorities of the EU Commission's 2024–2029 agenda
- The importance of translating policy objectives into practical project ideas that address global challenges recognized at the EU level
- The key policy frameworks for aligning project proposals
- The need for clarity in defining project objectives, problems, and solutions to ensure alignment with EU priorities

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# Expected Learning Outcomes 2/3

## Skills level

Learners will be able to:

- Identify and analyze EU policy priorities and strategic frameworks to align project ideas effectively
- Deconstruct policy documents to extract hidden opportunities and emerging needs
- Map project objectives to EU priorities using structured tools
- Build consortia with partners that have direct ties to EU policy networks and proven track records in EU-funded projects

# Expected Learning Outcomes 3/3

## Attitudes level

Learners will be able to develop:

- Strategic thinking to align projects with EU priorities.
- Analytical skills to decode policy documents.
- Clarity in defining project goals.
- Adaptability to evolving priorities.
- Innovation in bridging policy and practice.

## Keywords

- EU policy alignment
- Strategic priorities
- Project design
- Funding programmes
- Consortium building
- Policy frameworks
- Impact alignment
- Terminology matching

# Introduction

EU funding programmes have been, from 2020, strongly aligned with **EU policy frameworks and strategic objectives** (such as digital transformation, climate change and resilience) as well as with **Sustainable Development Goals**.

EU Commission's 2024-2029 priorities focus on:

- Defence and security
- sustainable prosperity and competitiveness
- Democracy and EU values
- Social fairness and solidarity in societies
- Food security, water and nature
- Strong global Europe to tackle global challenges



# Introduction

The proposed EU's Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2028–2034 will focus on **six strategic priorities:**

- Investing in people, Member States and regions
- Fostering education, social rights and democracy
- Driving prosperity via competitiveness, research and innovation
- Protecting people and building preparedness and resilience
- Protecting Europe
- Building partnerships for a stronger Europe in the world

# Introduction

The new proposed EU budget shows a new trajectory and shift from:

| 2020-2027 | 2028-2034 |
| --- | --- |
| **Redistribution and cohesion** | **Competitiveness, sovereignty & geopolitics** |

Research & Innovation as well Education are some of the priorities of this forthcoming MFF. This is translated into **proposed raise of budgets dedicated to both Erasmus + and Horizon Europe programmes**.

For the next funding programmes, EU proposals will have to be aligned with this new EU agenda with a strong focus on **competitiveness and transformations.**

# Introduction

For education, the proposed trajectory focuses on addressing skills gaps and quality employment in strategic sectors, with a strong alignment of the Erasmus + programme with:

- EU Union of Skills
- Proposed European Competitiveness Fund

For research, the EU pursues the key role of innovation, science and industry to address global competition. Some identified sectors are:

- Clean transition and decarbonisation
- Digital transition
- Health, biotech, agriculture and bioeconomy
- Defence and space



# Key policy frameworks for Erasmus + and Horizon Europe calls

Erasmus + KA2 proposals can align their objectives and outcomes with the following strategic plans and frameworks.

At wider scale, they should have connection with:

- UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals
- Strategic Agenda for Europe 2024 – 2029

They should also align with **key existing/forthcoming EU strategic plans**, such as:

- Union of Skills Communication
- Union of Skills (especially Action Plan on Basic Skills and the STEM Education Strategic Plan)
- European Education Area (including Digital Education Action Plan)
- Council Recommendation ‘Europe on the Move - Learning opportunities for everyone’

# Key policy frameworks for Erasmus + and Horizon Europe calls

Example of alignments with 2024-2029 policy priorities and existing/forthcoming EU strategic plans:



## 1) Supporting people, strengthening societies and social fairness

- European Pillar of Social Rights
- European Skills Agenda

## 2) Democracy and EU values

- Forthcoming: European Democracy Shield

# Key policy frameworks for Erasmus + and Horizon Europe calls

## 3) Sustainable prosperity and competitiveness

- Green Deal
- Competitiveness Compass for the EU (2025 proposition)
- Forthcoming: Green Deal Industrial Plan's pillar on green and digital skills, European Ocean Pact

## 4) Defence and security

- Strategic Compass for Security and Defence (2022)
- European Preparedness Union Strategy (2025 proposition)



# Key policy frameworks for Erasmus + and Horizon Europe calls

## 5) Global Europe

- Global Gateway
- Pact for the Mediterranean (2025)
- Bilateral pacts

## 6) Sustaining our quality of life: food security, water and nature

- Strategic dialogue on the future of EU agriculture (2024)
- Forthcoming : European Ocean Pact



# From EU policy priorities to project ideas

Excellence, impact and implementation stands as the core evaluation criteria for EU funding programmes **but** clear strategic alignment is part of new rewards from evaluators.

Alignment does not mean forcing a concept into “policy language”. It means showing that EU project proposals should **tackle a global challenge recognised at EU level.**

The alignment **does not only concern education (for Erasmus +) and research/innovation (for Horizon Europe)** policy environment, but should match with wider socio-economic, societal needs and challenges.



# From EU policy priorities to project ideas

In this context, proposals should:

- Demonstrate **relevance and intersection of expertise** with EU broader strategic priorities and objectives
- Translate wider policy objectives into **practical work packages** as well as realistic **pathways to impacts**

## Best practices to ensure successful alignment:

- Spend time reading current EU strategies and follow EU public consultations
- Look for recurring themes ("resilience," "transition," "citizen engagement") that aren't explicitly stated as calls but are implicitly prioritized
- Arrange consortium to include partner organisations with expertise matching EU policy environment
- Monitor EU Council Conclusions and Parliament Resolutions for emerging topics



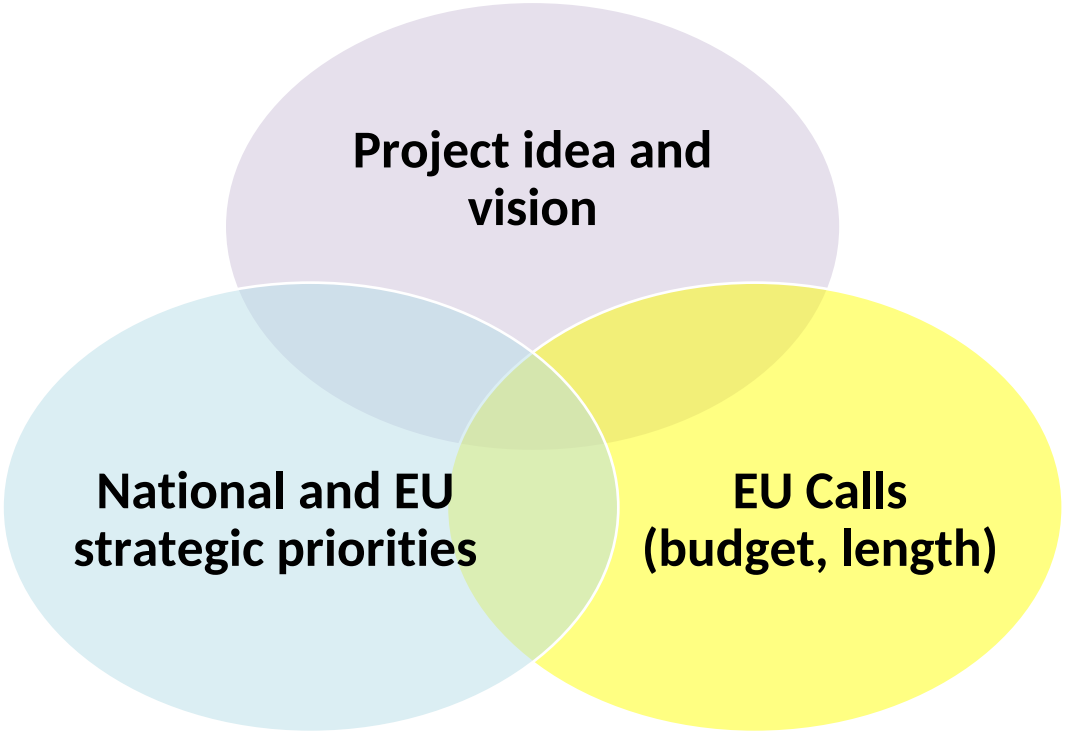
# From EU policy priorities to project ideas

**In order to ensure this alignment:**

TIPS!

- Avoid floating or vague goals
- Focus on defining the objectives of project before the activities and deliverables
- Identify the problems you will tackle and how to solve them
- Avoid jargon—simplify complex ideas to match EU communication style

**CLARITY on what you want to achieve and why!**



# Literature References


EU Commission, “Political Guidelines for the next EU Commission 2024-29”. Accessible here: https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/e6cd4328-673c-4e7a-8683-f63ffb2cf648_en?filename=Political%20Guidelines%202024-2029_EN.pdf

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Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL establishing the Erasmus+ programme for the period 2028-2034, and repealing Regulations (EU) 2021/817 and (EU) 2021/888.