



VOLUNTEERING PARTNERSHIPS

What are they?

Volunteering Partnerships are a specific project format designed for enabling experienced volunteering organisations to develop and implement long-term projects, within a stable contractual framework. Volunteering Partnerships will also help enhance the quality and quantity of European Solidarity Corps volunteering opportunities. Projects should strategically respond to important societal needs; contribute to strengthening communities while enabling young people to acquire useful experience, skills and competences for their personal, educational, social, civic and professional development, thereby improving their employability. Volunteering Partnerships may implement the same volunteering activities as Volunteering Projects, except complementary activities.

How does it work?

Volunteering Partnerships provide experienced organisations with a simplified and flexible alternative format for implementing volunteering activities. The projects will be delivered in two stages.

In the first stage, applicants will be required to submit a project proposal laying down the objectives, relevance and impact of their project, an overall description of activities for the entire duration and indicative annual targets. After the selection and awarding process is completed, a 3-year financial framework partnership agreement is signed by the applicant organisation and the National Agency. The financial and operational capacity of the applicant will be verified before signature. The financial framework partnership agreement will set out the procedure to conclude specific agreements for annual grants as well as the general rights and obligations of each party under the specific grant agreements. An indicative budget corresponding to the entire duration of the project will be included. The financial framework partnership agreement will not give rise to any obligation of the National Agency to award specific grants.

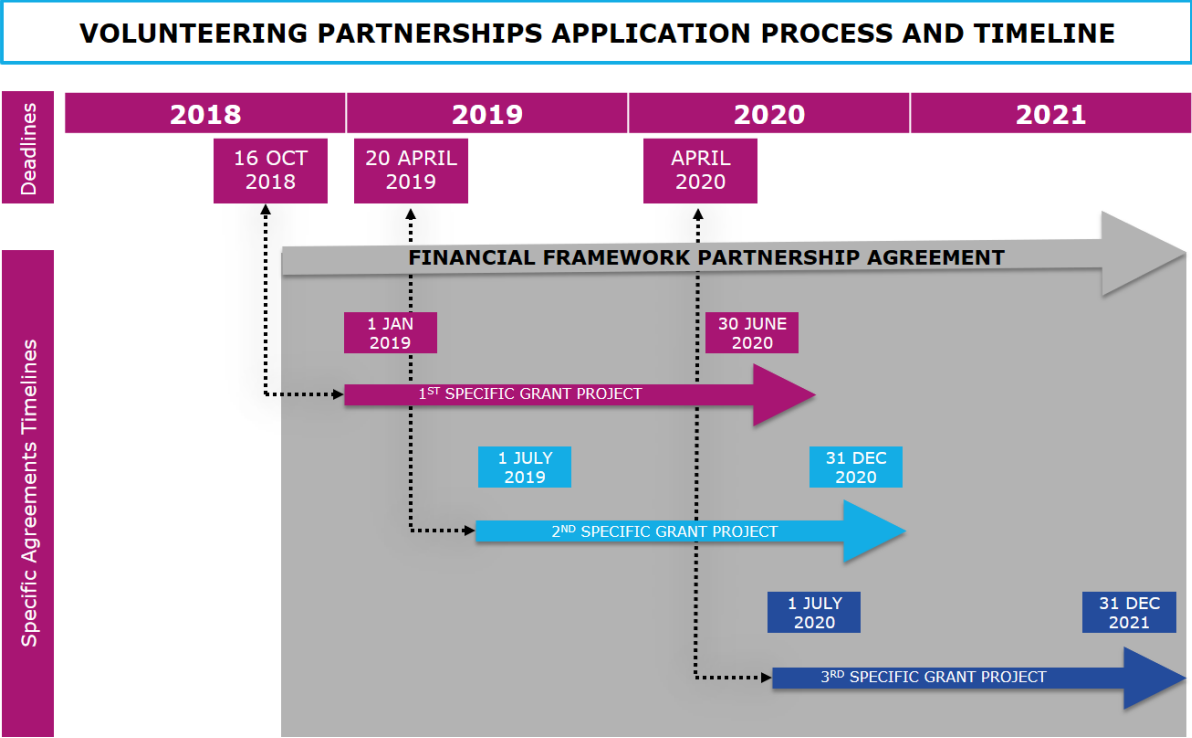
In the second stage, the award of a financial framework partnership agreement will give applicant organisations the possibility to apply for funding for volunteering activities in a simplified way under three annual calls (2018, 2019, 2020). Subject to the funds being available, the National Agencies will invite the organisations with whom the financial framework partnership agreements have been signed to provide a detailed work plan of volunteering activities in order to conclude specific agreements for grants for periods of 18 months.

In order to ensure a timely start of the activities, in 2018 the applications for the financial framework partnership agreements and the applications for the first specific agreements will have the same deadline, 16 October 2018. The applications for specific grant agreements will be evaluated only after the framework partnership agreement has been awarded. The quality of the activities proposed in the

applications for specific grant will be assessed by taking into account the context provided in the framework partnership agreements.

For the subsequent years, specific agreements of duration of 18 months will be awarded following a simplified assessment of the quality of project performance and depending on the availability of funds. The graphic below illustrates the process envisaged.

Successful Volunteering Partnership applicants are not eligible for funding under the Volunteering Projects format.



Frequently Asked Questions

APPLICATION AND EVALUATION PROCEDURE

1. What happens with the organizations that do not apply in October 2018 for ESC12, can they apply next year although the number of years of the agreement will be less than three?

Answer: There is only one call for volunteering partnerships, the current one in 2018. No further calls are envisaged for (ESC12) in the next three years.

2. Are organisations obliged to use all three deadlines for specific grants? Could they also skip one in 2019 or 2020?

Answer: Organisations are not obliged to submit annual requests for funding.

3. An organisation decides to apply for Volunteering Partnerships (including specific grants) and volunteering projects. Is there a specific order that the NAs should follow during evaluation?

Answer: The applications for specific grant agreements will be evaluated only after the framework partnership agreement has been awarded. The quality of the activities proposed in the applications for specific grant will be assessed by taking into account the context provided in the framework partnership agreements.

If the applicant also submits an application for a volunteering project, it will be evaluated only if the award decision for the volunteering partnership is negative.

4. Can the 18 months projects overlap, meaning that the organisations can apply for 2019 annual grant request even though the activities from the 2018 grant request have not been completed (or the 18 month period has not elapsed)?

Answer: Yes, the 18 months projects may overlap and the organisations will be able to apply for subsequent grants.

5. What are the criteria for the “experienced” organizations?

Answer: There is no EU-wide criteria for what an experienced organization. This is a qualitative assessment. It will be up to the applicant to describe in the application form their experience and achievements. The NAs will use the award criteria to select those that qualify for volunteering partnerships.

6. What is the payment structure for Volunteering Partnerships in the light of annual grant requests? Will there be Final Reports for each annual grant request? Will there be progress (interim) reports?

Answer: Each 18 month project will require a final report, that will trigger the payment of 20% balance. These reports will include a qualitative description of the activities that have been implemented. The third 18 month project report will also include a separate section in which the applicant will describe the achievements of the entire FPA.

The beneficiaries will also have to submit a progress report for the FPA contract, by the end of 2019.

7. In the Volunteering Partnership annual form there is no budget requested. How can we calculate a budget for this project? How do we know the travel costs?

Answer: Volunteering partnerships are supposed to be awarded to trusted and experienced organisations, this format is a simplified way of applying for funds. The budget is missing in order to simplify the form and maximise flexibility. The NAs will calculate the amount awarded based on the information made available in the application form (number of applicants, duration and country of destination).

8. Why aren't complementary activities eligible?

Answer: Complementary activities are financed through real costs, not unit costs. Unlike exceptional costs (which are linked to the mobilities specified in the application form), the costs incurred for complementary activities cannot be justified if they are not included in the application form and are therefore not eligible.

9. When and how can the organisations ask for exceptional cost and cost related to accompanying persons?

Answer: Applicants can ask for exceptional costs after the specific grant is awarded. The specific grant agreement will include a clause which will allow the beneficiaries to use a percentage of the grant for exceptional costs. If this maximum amount is exceeded, an amendment to the grant agreement will be required.

10. Can organizations use all the money they were granted even though the number of activities (or duration) changes? E.g. one long time project is cancelled, could an organization organize two short term projects?

Answer. Yes, there are flexibilities in this regard.

11. Can the budget be transferred between specific grants? In case organization do not spend all the money they applied for, can they move unused money from the first 18-month period to the next? How would this work?

Answer: No, the specific grants cannot be moved from one 18-month project to another.

12. How will an activity be defined: all placements in the same organisation at the same time? All placements in the same organisations (with different flows for different activity dates?), each individual placement?

Answer: Set of tasks carried out by the participant as part of a project. An activity is defined by the same location, the same time frame and the same scope.

PARTNERSHIP

13. There is no information about the hosting organizations in the first application for volunteering partnership or in the annual form. Where can it be seen which organizations take how many volunteers at what time? Can organisations submit a Volunteering Project or Volunteering Partnership without partner organisations? At what point do the organisations have to have the partner organisations?

Answer: Information about partners is not required at application stage. This will be required during implementation stage when using Mobility Tool and when they submit the final report.

14. If an organisation applies and gets accepted it is not eligible to apply for standard applications. What about being partner in other projects from organizations that applied in other (EU) countries? Can they still be partner even though they are in an FPA?

Answer: Yes.

15. Where do the partners come in? When do the applicants need to attach the mandates of the partners? Only for ESC11? (and not for ESC12 and ESC13?)

Answer. Mandates are not required for partner organisations in the European Solidarity Corps projects as they are not part of the agreements (all mono-beneficiary grant agreements).