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# Implementation Guidelines - Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps green transition and sustainable development strategy

## **EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

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# **Implementation Guidelines - Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps green transition and sustainable development strategy**

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# 1. Introduction

Climate change and environmental degradation pose existential threats to Europe and the entire world. Reports by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)<sup>1</sup> describe the devastating and potentially irreversible consequences of rising greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Some limits to the Earth's carrying capacity have already been exceeded<sup>2</sup> and biodiversity is in rapid decline<sup>3</sup>. Various multilateral processes seek to address these challenges. The Paris Agreement<sup>4</sup> (2015) marks an important step in the international process to fight climate change, aiming to keep the increase in global average temperature below 2 °C (compared with pre-industrial levels) and even to limit it to 1.5 °C.

In 2019, the European Union adopted the European Green Deal<sup>5</sup> and committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 55% in 2023, compared with 1990 levels. The EU has pledged to become the first carbon-neutral continent by 2050. It also aims to ensure an economic growth decoupled from resource use, with an inclusive approach that leaves no person or place behind.

Education and training have a crucial role to play. EU Member States have underlined their commitment to making teaching and learning for sustainability a priority in education. This commitment is reflected in the 2022 Council Recommendation for the green transition and sustainable development<sup>6</sup> and in the decision of the European Parliament and the Council on a European Year of Youth where one of the main objectives was to highlight how the green transition can offer opportunities for young people.

Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps are powerful learning tools at European level. These programmes aim to reach 10 million participants over the years 2021-2027, mainly young people, thus offering significant potential for raising awareness of these issues. The programmes can play an active role in fostering new skills, enabling the green transition and promoting individual and collective action in support of sustainability. They serve as strong instruments for reaching out to and engaging with a wide spectrum of stakeholders, such as schools, universities, providers of vocational education and training (VET), youth and sports organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), local and regional authorities, civil society organisations and businesses. All these groups can become active agents in the transition towards climate neutrality by 2050. The programmes can function as role models and have a multiplier effect at European, national, and local level.

**The present document provides an overview of already existing and implemented activities to make Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps contribute systematically to the green transition, with impactful activities. The**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ipcc.ch/ar6-syr/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.stockholmresilience.org/research/planetary-boundaries.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ipbes.net/global-assessment>

<sup>4</sup> <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement>

<sup>5</sup> [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en)

<sup>6</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32022.0627%2801%29>

aim of the strategy is to engage, inspire and motivate Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps participants, beneficiaries, project coordinators and partners, implementing bodies and other stakeholders involved in the programmes to play an active part in the green transition. It is the basis for further work to elaborate concrete guidelines, toolkits, trainings and other operational activities and resources by implementing bodies and SALTO Green.

This document has been co-drafted by all those who support the implementation of the two programmes: the European Commission, the National Agencies<sup>7</sup> and the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), the SALTO Resource Centre for the Green Transition in Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps, as well as a group of stakeholders representing, among others, beneficiary organisations, researchers, practitioners, and former participants.

## 2. Policy framework

The European Green Deal recognises the key role of schools, training institutions and universities in actively involving students, learners, parents, workers and the wider community in the changes required for a fruitful transition to a climate-neutral economy. The New European Bauhaus<sup>11</sup> was launched in 2020 with the ambition to help make the Green Deal a cultural, human-centred positive and tangible experience, and calls on all Europeans to “imagine and build together a sustainable and inclusive future”. Through their broad lifelong learning dimension and cross-disciplinary collaborative approaches across the sectors of education and training, youth, sport and solidarity, Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps contribute to providing the necessary skills and developing innovative practices to bring about change.

To achieve the objective of the European Education Area<sup>8</sup> by 2025, the European Commission has emphasised the importance of focusing on six aspects: quality, inclusion and equality between men and women, ecological and digital transitions, support for teachers and trainers, higher education and, finally, a strong geopolitical dimension. The Commission underlines the decisive role of education and training for the green transition, highlighting the need for learners of all ages to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes to live more sustainably, to adopt a different model of consumption and production, and, both individually and collectively, to support the transformation of our societies.

The European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience (2020)<sup>9</sup> defines measures for upskilling (improving existing skills) and reskilling (training in new skills) the workforce to support the green transition. The vocational education and training sector is recognised as strategic for the digital and

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<sup>7</sup> National Agencies implementing the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes : [https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/contacts/national-agencies?facets\\_\\_permanent%7Cfield\\_eac\\_topics=1964](https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/contacts/national-agencies?facets__permanent%7Cfield_eac_topics=1964)

<sup>8</sup> <https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/green-education/about-green-education>

<sup>9</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1223&langId=en>

green transitions in the Council Recommendation on vocational education and training for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness, and resilience (2020)<sup>10</sup>. The Recommendation considers it essential to support employment in the green economy by promoting the development of green skills among people, educational and training institutions and public authorities, and by encouraging businesses to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the green economy.

In the Porto Declaration<sup>11</sup> (May 2021), the European Council set the objective of placing education and skills at the centre of political action to meet the challenges of the ecological and digital transitions. Although challenges remain, this will bring enormous opportunities for people in the EU. There will be a need for greater investment in education, vocational training, lifelong learning, upskilling and reskilling, to stimulate employment transitions towards sectors where there is a growing demand for labour.

In 2022, the Commission tabled a Council Recommendation on the green transition and sustainable development. The Recommendation is a key policy statement highlighting the crucial role of education and training in working towards the goals of the European Green Deal. The main purpose of the actions set out in the recommendation is to equip learners and educators with the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for a greener and more sustainable economy and society, to help education and training institutions integrate sustainability into teaching and learning in all aspects of their activities, but also to create a shared understanding on the deep and transformative changes needed in education and training for sustainability and the green transition. Following the Recommendation, the Commission published a European competence framework on sustainability ('GreenComp')<sup>12</sup>, which sets out the knowledge, skills and attitudes that all leaders should acquire for the green transition. These competencies cover four areas: embodying sustainability values, embracing complexity in sustainability, acting for sustainability and envisioning sustainable futures. A community of practice was set up to connect schools, researchers, public authorities and other bodies using the new GreenComp competence framework. This framework is already being actively used by educators in different settings, including by programme beneficiaries in actions such as the Erasmus+ teacher academies.

As part of European cooperation on youth policy, the European Youth Strategy<sup>13</sup> for 2021-2027 is organised around 11 objectives, including 'A green and sustainable Europe'. This objective aims for a world where all young people are environmentally aware, educated and able to make a positive impact in their daily lives. Young people require green competences to address climate issues, and the Erasmus+ youth activities, as well as the European Solidarity Corps provide an important space for the acquisition of these competences in a non-formal learning setting, as well as to put them into practice through youth-led initiatives and volunteer activities of different kinds.

The EU Work Plan for Sport recognises sport as an important enabler of sustainable development. To achieve this, the plan focuses on education for sustainable sport, environmentally friendly sports practice, facilities and events, and the evolution of

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.eumonitor.eu/9353000/1/j9vvik7m1c3gyxp/vla0ekyy79qj>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/05/08/the-porto-declaration/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/bc83061d-74ec-11ec-9136-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>.

<sup>13</sup> <https://europeanyouthstrategy.eu/>

sport and its practice in the light of climate change. When monitoring its implementation, experts have looked into how the European sporting system could best promote environmental sustainability and set out recommendations addressed primarily to the public authorities and national sports organisations. These included an invitation for sport and sustainability champions to promote green sport, the establishment of knowledge-sharing bodies, and for funding at national and European level to support the transition to greener sport.

To help achieve climate neutrality, Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps have defined climate action and environmental sustainability as one of their four key priorities for 2021-2027. This means that the programmes' actions should contribute towards the general objective under this Multiannual Financial Framework of ensuring that 30% of EU budget expenditure is devoted to climate-related measures.

While Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps programmes cannot enable a full response to the green transition, they can play a crucial role in educating and better equipping young people, learners of all ages and citizens in general with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes. The programmes support projects and activities addressing the societal challenges related to environmental protection, sustainability and climate goals. They support initiatives to prevent, mitigate or repair adverse effects from extreme weather events and natural disasters.

### **3. Aims of the strategy**

The strategy provides guidance on how to implement the support to green transition as one of the four horizontal priorities at all levels of the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes. It addresses the operations of the programmes themselves, of the projects funded and how the programmes prepare and engage participants and institutions to actively contribute to the green transition.

It aims to:

- help raise awareness on climate change and sustainability and empower participants to actively contribute to and shape the green transition;
- help equip participants with the knowledge and skills they need to make sustainable choices and engage in sustainable practices during programme activities;
- contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and other environmental impacts of the activities supported by the programmes and working towards carbon neutrality;
- develop and strengthen the role of Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps as examples for embedding environmental, climate and sustainability concerns in activities at project, organisational and programme level.
- support participating organisations in building their capacity through the exchange of good practices and experiences;
- foster the development of a monitoring system through relevant data collection, reliable indicators and reporting tools.



## **Target groups of the strategy**

- This strategy addresses everyone involved in implementing Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps programmes and should serve as a useful framework to promote the green dimension in the activities and inspire good practice examples.
- The main target groups addressed by this strategy are:
  - applicants and potential applicants
  - beneficiary organisations implementing funded projects
  - participants
    - young people and youth workers
    - learners in any field of education and training
    - staff in any field of education and training
    - staff active in the field of sport
  - National Agencies, including evaluators involved in the selection of projects
  - National Erasmus+ offices (NEOs)
  - the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)
  - SALTO Resources Centres, in particular the SALTO on the Green Transition
  - trainers, facilitators, researchers, etc.
  - policymakers at any level in the fields of education and training, youth, sport.

## **4. Programme mechanisms to support the green strategy**

In addition to promoting the use of sustainable means of transport, the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes encourage participants to pay attention to environmental sustainability at every step of a project's lifecycle and to translate this attention into practical action. Routinely incorporating environmental considerations into projects encourages organisations to work together for sustainability and to exchange good practice, developing joint initiatives in this area.

In both Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps, this commitment to the environment and the fight against climate change forms part of the criteria for granting financial support, thus confirming the commitment to contribute to the green transition.

The European Solidarity Corps funds projects that promote solidarity as a value and respond to societal challenges, and climate change is a clear example of these. Organisations and groups of young people can create projects to make a difference in their communities.

More specifically, the Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps programmes include the following actions, features and mechanisms to support the green transition and sustainable development:

## **4.1. Green travel**

By providing financial support for mobility, Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps encourage participants to use the most sustainable means of transport (for example train, bicycle, bus or car-pooling) to and from their destination. These programmes provide increased financial support for the use of more sustainable means of transport and support additional daily allowances to adapt to longer travel times. As a result, participants reduce their carbon footprint and experience another way of travelling, fostering a change of behaviour, for example, considering those means of transport when travelling for leisure or work. The journey starts the moment you leave home, and sustainable travel can help make it even more memorable.

## **4.2. DiscoverEU - an Erasmus+ mobility actions promoting eco-friendly travel**

DiscoverEU is an action of the Erasmus+ programme that offers 18-year-old Europeans the opportunity to explore Europe's diversity, learn about its cultural heritage and history, and connect with people from all over the continent. When selected as a traveller, they are offered a travel pass and travel predominantly by rail, participating in – amongst other things – cultural visits, learning activities, sports and art festivals. In its first 5 years of existence, over 248 000 young Europeans have had the chance to explore Europe by rail. 90% of them have expressed a desire to continue to travel by train across Europe after experiencing DiscoverEU. This shows the programme's effectiveness in encouraging the use of greener means of transport. DiscoverEU helps to not only expand people's horizons but also create a more environmentally conscious generation.

## **4.3. Volunteering and solidarity projects with the European Solidarity Corps**

Volunteering activities with the European Solidarity Corps can be carried out individually or as part of a team.

Individual volunteering provides young people with the opportunity to contribute to the daily work of organisations in solidarity cross-border or in-country activities to the ultimate benefit of the communities within which the activities are carried out, for example concerning environmental education, activities in the field of nature protection, nature monitoring, conservation and protection of European cultural heritage.

Volunteering Teams bring together groups of international volunteers to carry out tasks for a project over a short period of time (for example during holidays or breaks between study periods). Examples of the valuable work that can be accomplished by volunteering teams include regeneration of green spaces, recovery and redistribution of unused food, recycling of materials, etc.

Solidarity Projects are youth-led activities where informal groups of at least five young people can get funding to run a project, for example around the topics of climate action, environment and nature protection. The funding can help them to bring

positive change to their local communities, have their voices heard and develop valuable skills.

#### **4.4. Environment and the fight against climate change – a cross-cutting priority in Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps**

The Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programme guides<sup>14</sup> encourage organisations to design projects that focus on environmental themes by including 'Environment and the fight against climate change' in the four 'horizontal' priorities. To be granted, partnerships must address either a) at least one 'horizontal' priority or b) at least one specific priority relevant to the field of education, training and youth'.

Projects focusing on the green priority can aim, for example, to develop skills in fields related to sustainability, using the framework of Green Comps or Sustainable Development Goals. They can also take the form of innovative practices to prepare learners, staff and workers to become agents of change (e.g. save resources, reduce energy use and waste, compensate for carbon footprint emissions, opt for sustainable food and transport choices, etc.). Projects can also seek to boost environmental consciousness and awareness of climate issues or tackling eco-anxiety.

#### **4.5. Embedding green practices in project design**

While some projects choose to focus on the green transition and sustainable development, all the projects funded by the Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps programmes are expected to have a sustainability dimension.

At different levels, all types of projects receiving funding can help lessen the ecological impact of the programmes by reducing the carbon footprint of their activities, leading by example and normalising greener behaviours. This means that applicants are expected to reflect on what can be done to make their projects more sustainable and eco-friendly. Besides travel, highly impactful decisions must be made regarding choice of venue, food offered, reduced use of materials and equipment and waste management.

#### **4.6. Use of virtual mobility and digital cooperation tools and platforms**

Incorporating virtual and blended activities in project is encouraged, as part of the twin (digital and green) transition. Digital tools allow for more sustainable implementation of projects. They do still generate greenhouse gas<sub>2</sub> emissions, but less than physical travel or most paper communication. Wherever it makes sense to do so, organisations are invited to combine face-to-face meetings with virtual ones, to organise virtual activities and events and to limit and replace administrative

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<sup>14</sup> Erasmus+ programme guide : <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-programme-guide>  
European Solidarity Corps programme guide : [https://youth.europa.eu/solidarity/organisations/reference-documents-resources\\_fr](https://youth.europa.eu/solidarity/organisations/reference-documents-resources_fr)

processes. This combination of practices allows project beneficiaries to keep the advantages of face-to-face collaboration and exchange that the programmes offer, while using less polluting methods of collaboration when travel and physical meetings are not essential.

Platforms such as the European School Education Platform (including eTwinning) and EPAL (Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe) produce support materials and facilitate the sharing of effective educational practices and policies for environmental sustainability in the Erasmus+ programme.

## **4.7. Outreach and multiplier effect**

Erasmus+ is also a powerful instrument for reaching out to and engaging with a wide spectrum of players in the society (schools, universities, VET providers, youth and sports organisations, NGOs, local and regional authorities, civil society organisations, etc.) who can become active agents in the transition towards climate neutrality by 2050.

In practical terms, when applying for funding applicants have to explain how their project contributes to sustainability and climate neutrality. Project proposals can also include activities designed to be implemented sustainably, raise awareness among participants and promote responsible use of resources. In their final report, projects beneficiaries must describe if, and how far, these planned measures have been implemented.

In line with this, priority is given to projects that are sustainable, incorporate green practices and values and promote awareness and behavioural changes. Evaluators are trained to give due consideration to the environmental and sustainable aspects of the projects and their impact on climate change.

## **5. The role of organisations in preparing, rolling out and following up on projects**

Applicant organisations and beneficiaries play a key role in the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes: they design and implement projects, prepare and support participants before, during and after the projects have been completed. Therefore, it is important to raise awareness about the need to think about the different project phases and how environmental sustainability and related practices are to be embedded throughout.

### **5.1 Before the project**

Organisations are encouraged to design their project by integrating the green dimension in all its aspects and into all the activities planned. The participation of

people with fewer opportunities must also be considered when designing the activities, to ensure an inclusive transition, leaving no participants behind. For example, they are encouraged to consider and possibly calculate the carbon footprint of their projects and aim to reduce it when they organise their next activities, as this can lead to a learning process.

Organisations can act as powerful multipliers and draw inspiration from the results and sustainable practices of past projects when designing their own project.

To achieve this, National Agencies and EACEA should provide organisations with updated training and reference materials. They need to ensure that applicants and potential applicants have the knowledge and skills needed to green their own projects, or that they have the chance to develop them during implementation. Project formulation is a crucial stage for green decision-making – for example on green topics in the content of the activities, choosing to host them online, or choosing sustainable options when organising events.

## **5.2 During the project**

The organisation should ensure that the implementation of the project complies with sustainability principles and the various guidelines that support them – such as this strategy. The organisations must promote environmentally friendly practices among all participants and, when possible, the activities implemented must also incorporate a green approach.

For projects involving travel, organisations must inform potential participants of the opportunities offered by the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes and help them identify measures that could be valuable for them, both formal and non-formal education activities, such as the use of sustainable means of transport as an alternative to travelling by plane. Organisations are also encouraged to raise awareness of the impact of choosing low-emission options, and facilitate eco-conscious choices for their participants, for example by offering composting and recycling, making vegetarian meals available, etc.

Considering that the organisations are drivers for changing the behaviour of project participants, they should also use the opportunities offered by the programmes, such as the Key Action 2 Partnerships for Cooperation, to provide development opportunities for their staff in the field of the green transition.

## **5.3 After the project**

Organisations should evaluate the impact of activities on the participants and on the organisations themselves.

Organisations should actively promote the results of their project and share inspirational examples and good practices among relevant stakeholders to raise awareness of the importance of the green transition. Promotion and dissemination activities can be carried out through different channels, with the aim of reducing the impact on the environment by choosing sustainable means of communication (such as limiting printing, choosing eco-friendly materials, favouring images over video, etc.).

Organisations should also commit to ensuring the sustainability of their project after programme funding has come to an end. They are encouraged to foster long-term sustainable changes in their operations and in their beneficiaries' lives.

## **6. The role of National Agencies, Resource Centres, the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)**

National agencies promote and implement the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Programmes at national level and are the link between the European Commission and participating organisations at local, regional and national level. They therefore play a crucial role in supporting the uptake, implementation and follow-up of projects that aim to promote the green transition and environmental sustainability.

National agencies and the Executive Agency must provide organisations with updated training and reference materials. They should ensure that applicants and potential applicants have the knowledge and skills needed to green their own projects, or that they have the chance to develop them during implementation.

The SALTO resource centres are instrumental in supporting this task. Specifically, the **'SALTO Green' Resource Centre**, focusing on green transition and environmental sustainability, addresses climate change, in accordance with the European Green Deal. SALTO Green gathers knowledge, organises capacity-building activities and creates supporting tools and guidelines for National Agencies' staff and programme beneficiaries. In doing so, it enables the agencies' staff to efficiently promote this green strategy at national, regional and local level in their respective countries.. For example, SALTO green has developed a compendium of projects with good green practices and gather definitions of key concepts to have a common understanding of the green transition. Additional SALTO Green resources and activities, such as webinars, workshops, shared best practices, learning materials, research on the green priority, and frameworks for identifying good practices, support Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps stakeholders in implementing the horizontal green priority in the programmes. These activities boost National Agencies capacity in policy- and practice-related green transition. SALTO Green supports the coordination and reporting on the work by National Agencies and gathers, analyses and shares examples and good practices.

SALTO Green acts as a knowledge hub between policies and practices. It helps to continuously improve the quality of formal and non-formal education for sustainable development and attitudes regarding climate change. It also contributes to an increase in environmentally responsible behaviour, a reduction in the overall carbon footprint generated by participation in the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes, and to the acquisition of new skills that promote the ecological transition in existing and new professions.

In third countries not associated to the programmes, EU delegations and, where available, the National Erasmus+ offices (NEOs) play a significant role in promoting awareness of opportunities offered by the programmes that relate to the green transition and environmental sustainability among the target groups identified in this strategy.

National agencies, resource centres, and the EACEA must actively promote awareness of various options and support mechanisms for projects aimed at contributing to the green transition and environmental sustainability. They should engage with participants within their respective networks and tailor their approaches to specific information needs, while working through organisations closely connected to these participants.

In addition, the European Commission also aims at leading by example in the efforts working towards making Europe the first climate neutral continent in the world by 2050. In 2022, the European Commission made a pledge under the European Climate Pact and committed to gradually reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 60% compared to 2005. In managing the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps, the Directorate General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture also interacts with other funding programmes, European Commission services and other EU Institutions in connecting initiatives and policies that contribute to achieving climate goals.

An example of these interactions is the synergy between the European Solidarity with the Horizon Europe Missions 2023-2027, wherever the volunteering activities of the European Solidarity Corps can contribute to the ambitions of the Missions for climate adaptation, ocean and waters restoration, soil health restoration, the promotion of climate-neutral and smart cities, and the improvement of the lives of people affected by cancer, supporting the Horizon Europe Missions and Green Deal goals and key strategies, thus further increasing the solidarity opportunities available to young people in these areas.

## **6.1 Information and awareness raising**

National agencies and the EACEA play an important role in outreach and information activities. They should gear their information strategy to specific target groups in their geographical context.

National agencies and the EACEA – supported by SALTO Green and the European Commission – should provide guidelines and examples of good practices to all the organisations that are active in Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps. These organisations can then gradually adapt according to their own capacities. In the same spirit of stimulating synergies, national agencies and the EACEA offer networking opportunities for stakeholders, such as TCA (Training and Cooperation Activities) or NET (Networking) activities.

National agencies and the EACEA should work together to develop and provide information material in accessible formats that encourages behavioural changes. This means using sustainable means of transport and organising more environmentally friendly events, conferences and meetings. The national agencies and the EACEA should collect and make use of examples of good practice to inspire and encourage participants to reduce and offset the environmental footprint of the activities concerned.

National agencies and the EACEA should provide systematic, equitable and tailored support for potential applicants and beneficiaries of green transition and environmental sustainability projects at all stages of the project cycle. They can provide this supportive approach themselves or implement systems of multipliers, coaches, project visits, training, consultancy, etc. National agencies and the EACEA need to dedicate sufficient human and financial resources to rolling out this approach in an effective and long-term way.

## **6.2 Strategic approach at national level**

National agencies are encouraged to develop their own strategy for the green transition and environmental sustainability in the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes. These strategies should be based on national realities, but be consistent with the overarching strategy at European level. The national agencies' work programmes need to list the actions that contribute to their strategy.

National agencies are recommended to reduce their own carbon and ecological footprint. They could, for example, annually evaluate the impact of the measures they take, by calculating their footprint using a consistent and reliable tool, with a view to consistently reducing the impact of their operation and all activities. Offsetting should only be considered for greenhouse gas emissions that cannot be avoided. Even in such cases, national agencies should consult local stakeholders with expertise in the green transition to identify reliable and efficient offsetting tools and accurately measure their impact. All organisations and other stakeholders should likewise be encouraged to prioritise carbon footprint reduction. National Agencies are encouraged to communicate publicly about their work and their strategy for the green transition and environmental sustainability.

## **6.3 Green contact points**

There is a green contact point in each National Agency implementing the programmes. This contact point coordinates actions related to the green transition and environmental sustainability within the Agency. This is the contact person for green transition issues for other national agencies, the European Commission and resource centres. Green contact points have a key role in developing environmental knowledge within their agencies. They receive the necessary support via training, guidelines and tools provided by SALTO to allow them to increase their knowledge in the field of green transition. They share their expertise and knowledge with colleagues, but also promote actions for the green transition and sustainability within their respective agencies, such as training. They should also tackle any possible obstacles to the implementation of the National Agency's green strategy.

They are an essential link with the European Commission and SALTO Green, sharing information on the realities of their agency and the situation on the ground in their country.



## **6.4 Training and networking for organisations, staff in the agencies and expert evaluators**

With the support of the SALTO Green Resource Centre, National Agencies organise training, networking and showcasing opportunities for organisations, experts and National Agency staff.

These training sessions should help to build the capacity required within the national agency network in order to better evaluate and manage projects. It is essential that all staff within the agencies be informed about national and EU policies concerning the green transition, with a view to implementing them efficiently across all measures under the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes.

Beside national instruments, Training and Cooperation Activities (TCA) in Erasmus+ and Networking activities (NET) in the European Solidarity Corps are important tools for coordinated capacity building and networking. Long Term Activities (LTAs) provide a means for far-sighted cooperation and the development of implementation, as well as for increasing the influence of the priority on green transition in the programmes through activities over several years conducted by multiple National Agencies.

For their pool of evaluators, national agencies should specifically implement adequate training and activities that help them to implement a green approach in a consistent manner. They should be encouraged to consult colleagues with expertise in the green transition and environmental sustainability so that they can produce accurate and ambitious guidance material. Through their assessments and recommendations, expert evaluators play a major role in combating greenwashing and misinformation, as well as in identifying truly sustainable practices in project proposals and project reports.

The Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes do not provide a single standard of what constitutes sustainability; each country should adapt the general principles to its local, regional and national realities and should aim to always go further in its green transition. At the same time, each pool of experts should have a common and ambitious understanding of implementation of the green priority within the two programmes.

## **6.5 Evidence-gathering, monitoring and reporting**

To efficiently measure the results of the projects and the impact of the programmes, monitoring and reporting systems need to be optimised. Those tools are essential to collect appropriate qualitative and quantitative data on the implementation of the green priority. It is important to measure the impact of the programmes at individual level, but also at organisations one (for example in terms of capacity building).

SALTO Green will support evidence-gathering and monitoring activities by providing an overview of progress on the green transition in the programmes – for example, by conducting targeted surveys and research.

## **6.6 Synergies with other programmes**

National agencies and the EACEA may support beneficiaries in finding the most appropriate action (project format) for their project that contributes to the green transition and environmental sustainability. This may be within the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes, or through other/additional funding opportunities. Other programmes, such as the funding schemes under the Cohesion Policy Funds, Horizon Europe, the LIFE programme or the European Economic Area are relevant examples.

Where national agencies are hosted by umbrella organisations covering various European and national programmes, they should use this leverage to foster a positive knock-on effect. This will facilitate synergies between the two programmes and other programmes and initiatives and the sharing of good practices on the green transition and environmental sustainability.

## **7. Link with other Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps horizontal priorities**

Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes encompass four horizontal priorities: Inclusion and diversity, digital transformation, environment and fight against climate change, participation in democratic life and civic engagement.

Addressing environmental challenges such as climate change requires resilience and adaptation. By integrating environmental considerations and inclusion aspects in projects aims to promote social inclusion and equity, to a more just and sustainable world for current and future generations. Overall, inclusion and green priorities are essential for promoting environmental justice, reducing disparities, and building resilient and sustainable communities that benefit all members of society.

By integrating civic engagement and green priorities in projects, it can help on a local and/or national scale participants to develop an understanding of their interconnectedness with the planet and the importance of collective action.

By using virtual mobility, for instance, preparatory visits can be digital ahead of physical mobility, including pre-mobility online courses, organizing virtual meeting and using digital cooperation tools, projects can significantly reduce their overall carbon footprint.

The green priority in the programme can play a role in raising awareness on climate change, to develop the necessary knowledge skills and attitudes that lead to a better care for our planet earth, to make teaching and learning for sustainability particularly through the design of education and training content and formats, by encouraging projects to be more environmentally sustainable through the use of digital means.

It should involve citizens in climate action and contribute to achieving the goal of becoming the first carbon-neutral continent by 2050.

## 8. Where to find inspiration from successful experiences and good practices

The following resources provide access to practices, materials and documentation on the green transition and sustainability:

- Erasmus+ Project Results Platform<sup>15</sup> – access to all funded Erasmus+ projects searchable by topic, year, country, etc.
- ESC project results database –access to all funded European Solidarity Corps projects
- SALTO on Green Transition and environmental sustainability – training, publications or resources.

Communities of practitioners, learners and stakeholders also strengthen the green transition and sustainability priority. These communities can gather and share resources and practices via platforms and networks, as the Education for Climate Coalition<sup>16</sup> does on a general level.

Network teams such as Europass, Euroguidance, Eurodesk, the European Agenda for Adult Learners and vocational training experts also hold webinars and conferences on the green transition that help the Erasmus+ national agencies to understand how this priority is implemented in each part of the education sector.

At policy level, the Eurydice network produces a vast amount of information, comparative thematic reports and studies on specific topics. The report 'Increasing achievement and motivation in mathematics and science learning in schools'<sup>17</sup> showed how environmental sustainability is addressed in the school curriculum in science subjects. The Eurydice descriptions of the national education systems also contain information on learning about environmental sustainability. Through Eurydice reports, Erasmus+ projects concerning the green transition can be promoted via Eurydice social media channels.

Activities contributing to other existing EU initiatives in the field of environmental sustainability, such as the New European Bauhaus, are highly encouraged. These initiatives help to raise awareness among all beneficiaries of the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes.

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<sup>15</sup> <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects>

<sup>16</sup> <https://education.ec.europa.eu/news/increasing-achievement-and-motivation-in-mathematics-and-science-learning-in-schools>

<sup>17</sup> <https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/publications/mathematics-and-science-learning-schools-2022>

## 9. Resources

1. Erasmus+<sup>18</sup> and the European Solidarity Corps<sup>19</sup> programmes
2. European Education Area<sup>20</sup>
3. European Green Deal<sup>21</sup>
4. [A Green Deal industrial plan for a net-zero age](#)<sup>22</sup>
5. 2030 climate target plan
6. European Youth Strategy 2019-2027
7. European youth work agenda
8. New European Innovation Agenda
9. Next Generation EU - let's make it green
10. Farm to fork strategy
11. GreenComp: the European sustainability competence framework - European Commission (europa.eu)<sup>23</sup>
12. [European strategy for universities](#)<sup>24</sup>
13. Digital Education Action Plan (2021-2027) | European Education Area (europa.eu)<sup>25</sup>
14. Biodiversity strategy for 2030 - European Commission (europa.eu)<sup>26</sup>
15. Council recommendation on vocational education and training for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience<sup>27</sup>
16. New European Bauhaus<sup>28</sup>
17. European Climate Law - European Commission <sup>29</sup>
18. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (United Nations)<sup>30</sup>
19. EMAS (eco-management and audit scheme)<sup>31</sup>
20. Salto Green Sharepoint
21. Eurodesk<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/>

<sup>19</sup> <https://youth.europa.eu/solidarity/>

<sup>20</sup> <https://education.ec.europa.eu/>

<sup>21</sup> [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en)

<sup>22</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_23\\_510](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_510)

<sup>23</sup> [https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/greencomp-european-sustainability-competence-framework\\_en](https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/greencomp-european-sustainability-competence-framework_en)

<sup>24</sup> <https://education.ec.europa.eu/document/commission-communication-on-a-european-strategy-for-universities>

<sup>25</sup> <https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/digital-education/action-plan>

<sup>26</sup> [https://environment.ec.europa.eu/strategy/biodiversity-strategy-2030\\_en](https://environment.ec.europa.eu/strategy/biodiversity-strategy-2030_en)

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/content/council-recommendation-24-november-2020-vocational-education-and-training-vet-sustainable>

<sup>28</sup> [https://new-european-bauhaus.europa.eu/index\\_en](https://new-european-bauhaus.europa.eu/index_en)

<sup>29</sup> [https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/european-climate-law\\_en](https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/european-climate-law_en)

<sup>30</sup> <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>

<sup>31</sup> [https://green-business.ec.europa.eu/eco-management-and-audit-scheme-emas\\_en](https://green-business.ec.europa.eu/eco-management-and-audit-scheme-emas_en)

<sup>32</sup> <https://eurodesk.eu/greening-youth-information-services/>

## **Finding information about the EU**

### Online

Information about the European Union in all the official languages of the EU is available on the Europa website at: [https://europa.eu/european-union/index\\_en](https://europa.eu/european-union/index_en)

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