

European Solidarity Corps Quality Label (ESC52)

Guide for Applicants

Deadline: Ongoing throughout the year

Version 1:

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Part 1 – Introduction to Quality Label

1. Introduction

The European Solidarity Corps Programme (2018-2020) brings together young people to build a more inclusive society, supporting vulnerable people and responding to societal challenges. It offers an inspiring and empowering experience for young people who want to help, learn and develop. Any organisation in a participating country which wishes to support or host European Solidarity Corps participants must hold the Quality Label.

2. What is the Quality Label?

The European Solidarity Corps Quality Label certifies that an organisation participating in the European Solidarity Corps is able to ensure the necessary framework conditions for young people to take part in solidarity activities in compliance with the principles of the [European Solidarity Corps Charter](#) and further requirements necessary to ensure quality placements and activities in accordance with the European Solidarity Corps objectives.

It is designed to ensure consistently high standards in European Solidarity Corps activities. Applying for the Quality Label is a quality assurance process facilitating communication between the organisation and programme structures, so that all parties involved are aware of the values, objectives and rules of European Solidarity Corps. All applying organisations must show they are able to implement European Solidarity Corps projects according to the rules of the European Solidarity Corps.

The Quality Label is an organisation's entry ticket for European Solidarity Corps, and proves that it complies with the programme's quality standards. It is a prerequisite for participation, but does not automatically lead to a European Solidarity Corps project grant. The future project grant applications will be assessed based on the criteria presented in the Programme Guide and according to the quality of the specific project.

3. Who is this guide for?

The Quality Label is for organisations that want to support or host participants. To obtain the Quality Label, the applying organisation must be clearly identified. A Quality Label application should not refer to the entirety of a complex organisation with numerous departments and/or branches in general terms. The information entered on the form should make clear the location and the project environment in which the placement will take place. Finally, the application cannot be submitted by any informal group; all applicants must be either registered on Companies House or the Charity Commission in the relevant UK country. More information on the documents required is available on page 11 of this guide.

Depending on the role of the organisation, and the type of participants concerned, there are different requirements in order to obtain the Quality Label. An organisation can apply as a Supporting and/or Host Organisation, to request placements of Volunteers (both as Supporting or Host Organisation) and/or Traineeships and Jobs (Occupational Quality Label). The following organisations must hold a Quality Label to participate in European Solidarity Corps projects:

- All Supporting Organisations;
- Host Organisations hosting volunteers;
- Organisations applying for grants under the Occupational strand (Traineeships and Jobs placements).

In addition, an "umbrella" application can be submitted by an organisation, on behalf of organisations linked to it by statutory links, which are considered its Dependent Entities (i.e. departments). In this case, the applicant organisation must monitor, and accept to be responsible for, the quality and safety of the placements offered by the Dependent Entities on which behalf it is applying, as well as responsible for the appropriate skill development and learning opportunities of the young participants.

It must be noted that, in order to avoid unnecessary administrative burden, the Quality Label is not necessary for organisations certified by similar quality assurance mechanisms of other European Union programmes (e.g. EU Aid Volunteers). These organisations may use the European Solidarity Corps Portal's database and other horizontal services, but shall not be eligible to request a grant in the framework of the Corps or participate in any project funded by the European Solidarity Corps.

4. How to apply?

The application must be submitted using the official form and parts of it (clearly identified) will be published on the European Solidarity Corps platform. Thus, submitting the form ([which can be found here](#)), entails the publication of such parts of the application. The Agency/accreditors will get in touch with the contact person provided on the Quality Label application form. They may have questions, and will arrange interviews and visits to the organisation as required.

Before submitting a Quality Label application, a PIC number (Participant Identification Code) is needed, which can be obtained through the Participant Portal. If your organisation already has a PIC number, it must apply for the Quality Label using that PIC number. Finally, for umbrella applications, note that all organisations intended to be covered by the application (Applicant and Dependent Entities) must have a valid PIC number.

Important note

It is not yet possible for a single Quality Label to cover multiple locations or branches of an organisation. If an organisation wishes to host volunteers in its various branches, then each location/branch would need to register its own PIC, and submit its own application for Quality Label, with the application specifically about that location and context.

You are advised to contact us for further guidance before submitting an application if you are unsure that this situation may apply to your organisation.

You will need to apply to:

- The EACEA in case of:
 - Europe-wide networks or platforms of organisations (umbrella applications);
 - National public authorities and services (e.g. government ministries, national civic services etc.);
 - Placements run with the support of other EU programmes than the European Solidarity Corps, providing volunteering, traineeship or job opportunities.
- Erasmus+ National Agencies
 - Any other public or private entity not falling under the scope of the EACEA.

5. When should an organisation apply for the Quality Label?

Organisations can submit their applications at any time. Organisations must have a valid Quality Label at the start of any approved activities, therefore interested organisations are advised to submit the form before they plan to take part in their first project. An organisation can only apply for a Volunteering project if they have been approved (or at least applied) for Quality Label by the application deadline, however non-applicants (e.g. supporting or hosting organisations) can apply later, but must be approved for Quality Label before they are involved in any activities.

It takes about eight weeks to process a Quality Label application, but organisations should plan for more time before project application, to minimise the risk of a possible delay jeopardising the eligibility of their project application. Quality Labels are, in principle, given for the whole duration of a programme period. Based on random sampling (size of the sample to be established based on risk assessment) and/or targeted checks (for instance as a result of participants' feedback), the labelled organisations are subject to periodical monitoring by the Erasmus+ National Agencies and EACEA. The result of the checks may lead to the withdrawal of the Quality label or its suspension.

6. Assessment procedure

Applications shall be assessed by one or two evaluators who are members of Erasmus+ National Agency's staff or external experts hired under conditions that avoid conflict of interest. The assessment comprises a desk check and a phone interview or - if deemed necessary - an on-the-spot monitoring visit of the organisation's premises.

Evaluators assess organisations on the basis of the set requirements and supporting evidence submitted. They can recommend either one or a combination of the following:

- Awarding the Quality Label;
- A Quality Label that limits the number or type of placements, or functions (when compared to the application);
- A Quality Label bound by specific conditions, under which certain types of placements/locations/functions could be accepted;
- A Quality Label subject to specific monitoring measures.

The evaluators may also propose to refuse awarding the Quality Label. On the basis of the evaluators' assessment, Erasmus+ National Agencies take their decision at the appropriate level and inform applicant organisations of their decision without undue delay.

Where an application for a Quality Label does not result in an award of the Quality Label as applied for, the applicant organisation shall be informed in writing about the rejection reason(s). In case an application receives a negative decision, the organisation, based on the feedback received, can re-submit an application.

7. What is requested from the organisations?

Organisations, depending on which type of placement and function they apply for, will need to give assurances that they comply with the principles and requirements of the European Solidarity Corps Charter, by providing information on the following subjects:

- Purpose and activities of their organisation (extract of articles of association);
- Compliance with the concept of solidarity activities;

- Fair and transparent selection and recruitment procedures for European Solidarity Corps participants;
- The placements' potential to foster young participants' personal, socio-educational and professional development;
- Information about safety and security arrangements;
- Information on whether/ to which extent the specific needs of disadvantaged young persons can be catered for;
- Awareness of certification tools describing the learning outcomes;
- Pre- and post-placement support.

Furthermore, applications for Quality Labels covering volunteering and traineeship placements should also include specific information on measures preventing job substitution. Applying organisations should, for example,

- Describe the distinctive role of volunteers/trainees in their organisation and the approach to guiding them and supporting their learning;
- Ensure that volunteers/trainees do not replace regular jobholders, are not bound to work under contractual obligations similar to those applying to workers, are not taking up essential tasks for the organisation's running operations and that the placement is not part of young person's regular studies or vocational training.

In addition, traineeship placements should comply with the Council Recommendation on a Quality Framework for Traineeships, while job placements need to respect national regulatory frameworks.

Based on the provided information and depending on the type of placement/function envisaged by the organisation, Erasmus+ National Agencies/EACEA shall check the organisation's capacity to deliver quality placements in full compliance with the European Solidarity Corps Charter.

The award of a Quality Label is free of charge for all types of organisations.

8. Important information to consider before applying

Please consider some of the important points that you should think about when applying for Quality Label in the context of European Solidarity Corps:

(Pre-) select and recruit European Solidarity Corps participants in compliance with the principles of equal treatment, equal opportunities and non-discrimination;

The principles set by the European Commission, as described in the European Solidarity Corps Programme Guide, aim at promoting equity and inclusion by facilitating the access to participants with disadvantaged backgrounds and fewer opportunities compared to their peers whenever disadvantage limits or prevents participation in transnational activities for reasons such as:

- disability (i.e. participants with special needs): people with mental (intellectual, cognitive, learning), physical, sensory or other disabilities;
- educational difficulties: young people with learning difficulties; early school-leavers; low qualified adults; young people with poor school performance;
- economic obstacles: people with a low standard of living, low income, dependence on social welfare system or homeless; young people in long-term unemployment or poverty; people in debt or with financial problems;
- cultural differences: immigrants or refugees or descendants from immigrant or refugee families; people belonging to a national or ethnic minority; people with linguistic adaptation and cultural inclusion difficulties;
- health problems: people with chronic health problems, severe illnesses or psychiatric conditions;

- social obstacles: people facing discrimination because of gender, age, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability, etc.; people with limited social skills or anti-social or risky behaviours; people in a precarious situation; (ex-)offenders, (ex-)drug or alcohol abusers; young and/or single parents; orphans;
- geographical obstacles: people from remote or rural areas; people living in small islands or in peripheral regions; people from urban problem zones; people from less serviced areas (limited public transport, poor facilities).

In the field of youth, an Inclusion and Diversity Strategy has been designed as a common framework to support the participation and inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities. The Strategy is available on the [website](#) of the European Commission.

Take into account the different linguistic and cultural background of the European Solidarity Corps participants and put in place measures that facilitate their integration into the local community of deployment;

Multilingualism is one of the cornerstones of European projects and a powerful symbol of the EU's aspiration to be united in diversity. Foreign languages have a prominent role among the skills that will help equip people better for the labour market and make the most of available opportunities. The EU has set the goal that every citizen should have the opportunity to acquire at least two foreign languages, from an early age.

The promotion of language learning and linguistic diversity is one of the specific objectives of the Programme. The lack of language competences is one of the main barriers to participation in European education, training and youth programmes. The opportunities put in place to offer linguistic support are aimed to make mobility more efficient and effective, to improve learning performance and therefore contribute to the specific objective of the Programme.

Issue a certificate to each European Solidarity Corps participant;

At the end of the project every **European Solidarity Corps participant** should receive a certificate. This certificate should be one of the outcomes of a long-term process which should result from the regular contacts (not only at the beginning and the end of the project) between the volunteer and the support people. These contacts should create appropriate environment for personal reflection on learning achievements of the volunteer.

There should also be scope for the volunteer and the organisation to develop individual projects that the volunteer works on during the duration of the placement, which would integrate the volunteer's skills, creativity and active input.

The personal development of the volunteer during their placement will be expected to be manifested through a process of non-formal and informal learning. The use of these terms, non-formal and informal, can be confusing; however the Erasmus+ programme has specific definitions of these terms, which are as follows:

Non-formal Learning [as set out in the 2018 Programme Guide];

This is based on some principles; it is voluntary, motivation-based learning, and it takes place outside of a formal school or education programme (which is to say, formal learning). In the 2018 Programme Guide, p85, it is defined as:

'learning which takes place through planned activities (in terms of learning objectives and learning time) where some form of learning support is present, but which is not part of the formal education and training system.'

Informal Learning;

Informal learning refers to the learning in daily life activities, in work, with peers, etc. It is mainly learning by *doing*. In the youth sector, informal learning can take place in youth initiatives, in peer group discussions, through voluntary activities, and in a variety of other situations. In the 2018 Programme Guide, p85, it is defined as:

'learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure which is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support; it may be unintentional from the learner's perspective.'

Non-formal and informal learning enable young people to acquire essential competences that contribute to their personal and socio-educational development and foster their active participation in society, thereby improving their employment prospects. Learning activities within the youth field are meant to have a significantly positive impact on young people as well as on the organisations involved, the communities in which these activities take place, the youth field itself and the European economic and societal sectors at large.

Part 2 – Applying for Quality Label

Before you begin your application, we recommend completing the following steps:

1. Read more about European Solidarity Corps;
2. Read about organisational and financial capacity;
3. Register on the European Commission’s Participant Portal to obtain a PIC number (unless you have done this previously);
4. Ensure you understand the quality criteria against which your application will be assessed, outlined in the European Solidarity Corps [Charter](#).

1. Read more about this type of application

We recommend that you read the relevant sections of the European Solidarity Corps Programme Guide, UK Erasmus+ website and the European Commission’s website to find out more about European Solidarity Corps.

<https://www.eusolidaritycorps.org.uk/>

The 2019 European Solidarity Corps Programme Guide, which is [available to download](#).

2. Read about organisational capability

Applicants need to demonstrate they have adequate capacity to successfully deliver European Solidarity Corps projects and administer them in accordance with the Quality Label requirements and the programme guide published by the European Commission.

Important note

Please note that eligibility checks investigate each organisation’s specific legal status on a case by case basis, with particular focus on organisations which identify themselves as charities due to the complexities of that sector.

If you are unsure about your legal status, we strongly recommend discussing this with us prior to submitting an application for accreditation, to reduce the likelihood of application being rejected if an organisation is found to be ineligible at a later stage. European Solidarity Corps Quality Label is only provided to organisations which have a legal personality.

Please note that we cannot advise on the best legal status for your organisation as this is determined by your day-to-day operational needs. We can only give guidance on those types which are eligible for European Solidarity Corps funding.

The assessment of organisational capacity will consider:

- the management of the organisation (e.g. details and roles of staff involved in delivery, management of the organisation, including details of any finance and administrative support);
- its past history, if any, in delivering European Commission funded projects;
- the number of staff and volunteers who will be involved in managing the project;
- access to support networks (only for smaller groups);
- the results of previous monitoring or audits by the National Agency.

Capacity checks of public sector higher education institutions (HEIs), colleges and schools may not be as detailed as for other types of organisation.

The National Agency will limit the number of youth volunteers that an organisation manages at any one time if there is no evidence of sufficient organisational capacity to successfully deliver them.

3. Register on the European Commission's Participant Portal

3.1 How do I register?

Registration is compulsory and you will not be able to submit your completed application form if you have not registered your organisation. If you have registered previously there is no need to re-register.

Please note that regardless of the type of Quality Label, the organisation must have registered on the European Commission's Participant Portal before completing application form.

The Participant Portal can be accessed at:
<http://ec.europa.eu/education/participants/portal/desktop/en/home.html>

The Participant Portal is accessible via an individual's ECAS account. A video guide on how to register on ECAS together with a Participant Portal User Manual is [on the UK website](#).

3.2 How do I upload the legal and financial identification forms?

Organisations will need to upload two forms, the Legal Entity Form (LEF) and the Financial Identification Form (FIF), completed and signed by the individual named as the legal representative on the application form. These forms need to be supported by appropriate documentation; for the LEF, this would need to be a copy of Certificate of Incorporation for organisations registered with Companies House, or a copy of the Certificate of Registration as issued by the Charities Commission.

The FIF either needs to be signed and stamped by an appropriate officer of the organisations' bank, or accompanied by a copy of a recent bank statement for the same account as detailed on the form. Once registered, organisations will receive a nine digit Participant Identification Code (PIC). When a PIC is entered into an application form, the institution's details will be entered automatically.

To upload documents on the Participant Portal

1. Click on the menu item "Login" top right
2. You will be guided to your personal participant portal website
3. Click in the top left in the navigation menu select "Organisations" then "My Organisation(s)".

4. You should see your Organisation Name. Click on the small circle on the right hand side labelled MO [for Modify Organisation].
5. A new window will open. You will then need to scroll down to the Documents section and click 'Add Documents.' Choose the file that you wish to upload and you will then see the status to show that the document has been received.

Please see the European Solidarity Corps Programme Guide, Part D Information for Applicants, page 63, which contains detailed guidance on how to complete these steps.

4. Ensure you understand the quality criteria against which your application will be assessed

The European Solidarity Corps guidelines are set out through the Programme Guide and European Solidarity Corps Charter. Please be sure to familiarise yourself with both of these, useful links are shown below.

- [European Solidarity Corps Charter](#)
- [European Solidarity Corps Mission and Principles](#)
- [European Solidarity Corps Programme Guide](#)

Assessment Process

You will need to ensure that each section of the application form is completed in full and that the information provided is in line with the principles of the European Solidarity Corps Charter, **depending on the type of Quality Label that you are applying for**. You must make sure that each answer refers to the question asked, avoid duplicating information and ensure consistency and clarity. Remember to proof read your application.

Any relevant text you enter will be considered in the quality assessment. Please try however to be concise and give the most relevant detail in the most relevant section of the form.

Where to find more help and advice

For further information, please refer to the European Solidarity Corps section on our website.

You can find examples of youth work methods and resources for projects based on themes such as inclusion, diversity and participation, on the SALTO website: www.salto-youth.net. The European Youth Portal gives information on opportunities for young people: <http://europa.eu/youth/en>.

The Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps team at Ecorys is here to help you with queries regarding your application. You can contact us by phone on **0121 212 8947** or by email at esusolidaritycorps@ecorys.com.

Step-by-step guide to completing your application

Using the web-form

It is compulsory to complete the online application form (webForm) when applying for European Solidarity Corps Quality Label. Please ensure you are logged in and access the correct application form (ESC52) available at <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/web-esc/screen/home>.

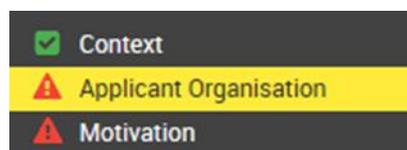
The webForm is an online tool which needs to be opened and edited using a suitable web browser (i.e Internet Explorer, Google Chrome, Microsoft Edge). It is recommended that applicants use the latest version of the web browser, with the most recent updates installed.

The webForm will work with some earlier versions of browsers, but if you are experiencing problems with earlier versions, we recommend updating or trying an alternative browser.

Introduction to the webForm

Before starting your application to obtain the Quality Label for the European Solidarity Corps, please have a look at the following information about the form:

- Mandatory fields are marked in red. They need to be filled-in before you are able to submit the form.
- Once all mandatory fields are filled-in and the validation rules in a section are observed, sections (shown on the top left of the page) will be marked with a check mark. If a section is marked with a red exclamation mark, it means that either there is some information missing or not all rules have been respected. Most individual questions will be marked in the same way to make it easy to identify and fix the issues:



- The form is automatically saved every 5 seconds.
- After closing the form, you will be able to access it under the 'My Applications' tab on the homepage.
- Once the form is submitted, you will be able to re-open and re-submit it until the submission enters the review cycle of the designated Agency. You can re-open the form from the 'My Applications' tab on the homepage. Under the Submission Summary page, you can access information about all submissions you made with this application form.

Saving the webForm

The webForm is saved automatically, as you are completing it. In order to save a local copy on your computer or network, click on the 'PDF' button in the left-hand corner of the screen. This will save the webForm locally on your computer, as a PDF document. You will now be able to click on the form in your local files and open it up, however this will not be used to edit or submit it. It is important to remember that you will need to fill in completely your application online, and this is saved as you go along. This way, you can return to complete it as many times as necessary, before submitting it.

Important note

You will need to be connected to the internet to complete the form and use certain functions such as checking your PIC code, saving and submitting the form.

Online functionality of the webForm and important information on completing fields in the webForm

You must fill in the required fields on the form, using the mouse or tab keys to navigate. Please note that fields appearing in grey where you are unable to enter data are “Pre-filled or Calculated Fields”. You will not be able to modify these, and they will display either information linked to your organisation through your PIC calculation results or data already inputted in other fields or tables within the application form. If there are tables and fields in the form where multiple entries are possible or blocks/sections that can be repeated, you can add or delete rows or sections by clicking on the ‘Add’ and ‘Delete’ buttons

Important note

Based on your answers the webForm will display or make unavailable certain sections, so it is mandatory that you fill in each section in full before progressing.

All the sections of the webForm will display either green or red to illustrate if a section is filled correctly or requires additional information:

Do you envisage involving volunteers who face situations that make their participation in the activities more difficult?

Yes

Please select the categories they may fall into:

Select categories...

Please allow sufficient time to complete the webForm, as functions such as copy and paste do not always work within the form.

Important note

When completing answers to narrative questions in the form, there is a maximum limit of 5000 characters.

A comprehensive guide for filling in the webform is provided by the European Commission and is available: [within the IT documentation section of their website.](#)

Below you can find additional details that should be considered when submitting a European Solidarity Corps Quality Label application to the UK Erasmus+ National Agency.

Context

This section consists of data providing information specific to the application being made. Data fields include National Agency, language used to fill in the form, and type of Quality Label applied for.

In this section applicants are required to complete the field in relation to the languages used to fill in the form. All applications submitted to the UK National Agency must be completed in English. Applicants must therefore select English from the drop down box for this field.

National Agency of the Applicant Organisation

Please choose the National Agency in the country where your organisation is based. For UK, you will need to select UK01 British Council, in partnership with Ecorys UK – British Council.

UK01 British Council, in partnership with Ecorys UK – British Council

Are you applying for a Quality Label only for your organisation (Standard application)? Or are you applying also for Quality Label for dependent entities (Umbrella application)?

Here you can choose the type of Quality Label. This can be for one of the two different types of European Solidarity Corps Quality Label:

Standard application

- All Supporting Organisations;
- Host Organisations hosting volunteers;
- Organisations applying for grants under the Occupational strand (Traineeships and Jobs placements).

Umbrella application:

This should be selected by an organisation, on behalf of organisations linked to it by statutory links, which are considered its Dependent Entities (i.e. departments). In this case, the applicant organisation must monitor, and accept to be responsible for, the quality and safety of the placements offered by the Dependent Entities on which behalf it is applying, as well as responsible for the appropriate skill development and learning opportunities of the young participants.

Applicant Organisation

This section asks applicants to provide information relating to the applicant organisation.

Applicants must enter their organisation's PIC number into the application form and, once entered, the form will automatically populate the applicant organisation's information. The information entered into this section

of the form will be based on the information provided during the PIC registration process. If there are any changes to the information originally provided participants should log back onto the Participant Portal and update the information accordingly.

Once this is filled in, the webForm will enable the applicant to provide additional details about an Organisation's:

- Profile
- Associated Persons
- Background and Experience

This can be completed by clicking on the Organisation Details button at the right of the name of the Organisation, once the PIC has been introduced and recognised by the webForm. See fig below:

Participating Organisations

Role	PIC	Legal Name	Country	Quality Label Details				
Applicant Organisation				Organisation Details	Scope	Motivation	Project Management	Participants

Profile

All applicants should select from the dropdown menu the Type of Organisation, which should be consistent with the information entered on the Participants Portal. Please make sure the options chosen accurately reflect your organisation type:

Type of Organisation

Is your organisation a public body?

Is your organisation a non-profit?

Associated Persons

Enter the details of the person who is authorised to enter into a legally-binding commitment on behalf of your organisation. This may be your Director, Chief Executive, Finance Manager or another member of the Senior Management Team.

Please complete every field in this section by clicking on the '3 lines' symbol () and editing each person's details, as circled below:

Associated Persons

ID	Name	Role
1		Legal Representative 
2		Contact Person 

Important note

Please make sure that the legal representative can be contacted easily and is available to sign any necessary documents at the time of application and during the project lifecycle. If the UK National Agency cannot get in touch with the legal person quickly, it may cause delays with your application.

Useful tip

If after the submission of your application you find that your legal representative leaves your organisation; is no longer able to fulfil the duty; or their contact details change, you should inform us as soon as possible. It is important that we have the most up-to-date information about your organisation.

If the appropriate contact address for the legal representative is different from the main contact address for the applicant organisation, you will need to complete the address details, otherwise just click **Same Address as Organisation** button.

The organisation should also provide details for a contact person. We will use these details as the first point of contact for the European Solidarity Corps Quality Label, any interviews or visits, or any other correspondence in relation to Quality Label. Please complete every field in this section. Please ensure the email address provided is correct and active. If the address of the contact person is different from the organisation address, you must ensure that you provide additional address details.

We recommend that if possible, you choose one person for legal representative and a different person closely linked with the project as a contact person, so there are two points of contact within the organisation.

Important note

It is vital that the details you supply are correct and up-to-date. Due to data protection laws and procedure, we are only able to provide specific accreditation information to the official contact person and legal representative of the organisation using the details provided to us. If after the submission of your application you find that the contact person / their contact details change you must inform us as soon as possible.

Background and experience

The information in this section will inform the assessment of your organisation's capacity to manage the project and proposed grant successfully. If the outcome of your assessment is successful, the following information, along with other elements taken from this form (such as contact information), will be made available to the public via the online database of organisations having obtained a Quality Label. For this reason please, write it bearing in mind the target group you wish to reach.

Please briefly present your organisation, including information on its aims, target groups, regular activities and other relevant aspects.

This information should be consistent with your statutory documents and evidenced by your annual reports.

What are the activities and experience of your organisation in the areas relevant to the European Solidarity Corps?

Please detail how your organisation's previous experience of delivering projects/activities/other work has built the skills and knowledge needed for the activities you propose in this application. Please describe activities that have been run at different organisational levels and any experience with management of national / international volunteers. You should highlight the motivation for sending / receiving / co-ordinating volunteers.

Please give information on the human resources of your organisation (i.e. staff and volunteers), and describe the skills and expertise of the persons that will be involved in the future European Solidarity Corps activities, with specific regard to organising processes and quality learning activities for young people.

Please give information on the key staff/persons that will be involved in European Solidarity Corps activities and on the competences and previous experience that they will bring to the projects. Please give details of the number of administrative and delivery staff involved (detailing and differentiating between paid staff and volunteers) and their competences or relevant experience or qualifications. Giving brief personal details, such as the names and roles of those staff identified as key to the success of a European Solidarity Corps project, may help to demonstrate your organisation's commitment to the venture. Please detail how the organisation is set up to prepare and manage volunteers and how these arrangements are expected to actively contribute to delivering a successful learning activity for young people.

Has your organisation been awarded an accreditation/certification for any other EU Programme/Action?

If you have been awarded a previous accreditation, please enter the EU Programme, Year and reference code. If you are applying for European Solidarity Quality Label as a new organisation, you can leave this section blank.

Scope

In this section you are required to indicate for which type of Quality Label you are applying for, by selection one or more of the options from the drop-down menu:

- Volunteering
- Traineeships
- Jobs

The European Solidarity Corps brings together two complementary strands: volunteering and occupational activities. The volunteering strand offers young people the opportunity to carry out full-time voluntary service

of between two and twelve months in another country. It builds on the European Voluntary Service (part of Erasmus+) as well as other EU funding programmes.

The occupational strand will provide young people with the opportunity of a job, traineeship or apprenticeship in a wide range of sectors which are engaged in solidarity-related activities, and which need highly motivated and socially-minded young people. The occupational strand will be set up gradually through partnerships with public bodies, NGOs and commercial organisations active in these fields.

Based on their different motivation, skills and experience, organisations have the option to apply for European Solidarity Corps Quality Label in order to be eligible to engage participants as volunteers, workers, apprentices or trainees.

Under Quality Label for Volunteering, the organisation will need to indicate one or both of the roles they are applying for:

- **Supporting organisation** (among others, responsible for):
 - Ensure effective coordination of the project in cooperation with all other organisations;
 - Distribute the grant between all organisations;
 - Carry out all or some of the administrative tasks of the other organisations involved;
 - Carry out dissemination and information activities.
- **Host organisation** (among others, responsible for):
 - Offer to the volunteer the opportunity to carry out a well-defined set of tasks, allowing some of the volunteer's ideas, creativity and experience to be integrated;
 - Identify clear learning opportunities for the volunteer;
 - Provide task related support, supervision and guidance to the participant through experienced staff;
 - Provide support for the learning process and for the identification and documentation of learning outcomes, through EU or national validation tools;
 - Provide support to volunteers undertaking language courses;
 - Provide a safe environment for volunteers to maximise their placement experience;
 - Identify a mentor for the participant(s)

Important note

Quality Label for Supporting organisation role can only be awarded to legally established organisations that have an eligible recognised legal status, bank account in their name and can enter in legally binding contracts. For UK Quality Label applications, this can also include unincorporated charities registered with Charities Commission. For the purpose of Quality Label, branches of organisations can only apply for Host Organisation role.

Please note

Please note that it is important to first start filling-in this section as the questions afterwards vary according to the selection made here. Hosting Organisation only questions will be highlighted in **blue**, whereas Supporting Organisation only questions will be highlighted in **pink**.

Motivation

Enter the information as requested in the free text field asking **Please describe the motivation of your organisation to participate in the European Solidarity Corps**. Once the information is entered, the field is marked green.

For Host Organisations only, Under the question **What are the main topics addressed by the activities that you plan to carry out?** you have a drop-down available to select the appropriate topics.

Please choose the most relevant one (or more) that apply to your specific organisation and regular or planned projects. The maximum you can select is three, however at the assessment stage this will be matched with the profile of the organisation and the information you have provided in the other sections of the webForm.

Project Management

How does your organisation address management issues in projects (e.g. distribution of tasks and responsibilities inside your organisation, modalities of cooperation with partners, management of EU grants, quality management framework, validation of learning outcomes)?

Please show how the organisation is managed in order to deal with European funded projects and how the organisation has developed understanding of the European Solidarity Corps projects lifecycle, the mandatory training programme and cooperation with other project partners. Please give details of the depth of the project that you propose and how you plan to coordinate the project between different organisations.

Please describe the process you have established for agreeing roles and responsibilities with partners in order to ensure quality learning outcomes, as well as good administration and delivery of the projects.

Please then describe the process for establishing suitable methods and agreeing and monitoring learning outcomes for participants. Ensure that you detail how you intend to facilitate their active involvement and reflection to ensure the relevance and quality of these outcomes.

How does your organisation plan to monitor the quality of placements of participants in the activities carried out by your dependent entities? How will you monitor that a quality learning process is embedded in the activities and that participants are supported in the reflection, identification and documentation of their learning outcomes?

In the case that any dependant entities are involved in hosting volunteers, information should be provided in order to illustrate how the applicant communicates and cooperates with them in order to ensure that quality of the placements meets the European Solidarity Corps Charter requirements. An adequate set of specific activities and methods should be presented in order to demonstrate that sufficient monitoring is planned to ensure that dependant entities are providing quality placements. Monitoring should take into account all stages of a placement, including preparation, induction, activities, logistic support, personal support and learning component.

In addition, for all Quality Label applications, relevant monitoring activities should be described, clearly presenting how the participants learning process is being assessed, and, if required, tailored around individual needs. The monitoring of quality learning should take into account all stages of support provided, regardless of their type (identifying learning needs, training, reflection, certification of learning, etc.). The monitoring process should demonstrate that organisations have the capacity to facilitate and supervise a good quality learning experience for the participants, in both non-formal and informal contexts, and that results of the monitoring process can be used in order to adapt and enhance the participants learning.

How are the practical and logistic matters addressed in projects carried out by your organisation (e.g. travel, insurance, safety and protection of participants, visa, social security, mentoring and support, etc.)?

In this section you should provide information regarding the practical and logistic matters that are usually associated with the Supporting organisation, and how are responsibilities shared within the partnership.

You should also detail how the organisation will actively support learning and development for the individual.

For Host Organisations only, please describe the practical arrangements for the volunteer (e.g. proper accommodation and local transportation)?

In this section, you should provide all information about the logistical and practical arrangements that are in place for the volunteers that will be taking part in the project in the host community. This should include details about the type of accommodation that will be available and the facilities available to the volunteer, the public transport links in place, available materials and resources and the allowance that each volunteer will receive.

Please describe the local conditions where the volunteer will live and undertake the placement. You should also describe the town, the place of work and the housing arrangements in place. Please give specific details about the working conditions and how they relate to the individual volunteer. It is worth considering the transport in place for the volunteer to travel to and from the organisation or venue, the contacts and the support network available.

For Host Organisations only, please describe the measures you will put in place to embed a quality learning process from the start of the project and support the volunteers in defining and meeting their learning objectives, and organising their reflection, identification and documentation of the non-formal and informal learning outcomes acquired, including through EU or national validation tools

Support to participants, e.g. mentoring of volunteers, must be detailed here, in line with the European Solidarity Corps Charter standards. Mentors are expected to provide regular meetings for volunteers to review learning and offer personal support and are responsible for assisting their integration into the local community. Also, you should include information regarding the on-going task related support that is available to the volunteers, as well as how learning will be addressed, both the personal and professional areas of development.

For Host Organisations only, which measures will you put in place to guarantee that:

- **There is a clear description of the distinctive role of volunteers in your organization.**
- **The placement is not part of the volunteers' regular studies or vocational training.**
- **There are assurances that volunteers:**
 - **do not replace traineeships and / or jobs;**
 - **are not taking up essential tasks for the organisation's running operations.**

Please give details of how tasks will be arranged and who will be responsible. Please specify the tasks that will be carried out by the individual on their own or with other members of the team and how the co-ordinator will oversee these tasks. A clear rationale should be provided regarding the non-job substitution, and specific activities performed by the volunteers should be indicated.

How do you plan to prepare the participants before departure (e.g. intercultural and linguistic preparation, task-related support, learning-process support, and other relevant preparation aspects) and how will you offer them support during and after their experience?

The volunteers that take part in the project will need to be supported throughout their placement in the organisation. This includes before, during and after the project takes place. You should outline in detail about how you will prepare volunteers and ensure there are evaluation mechanisms in place to assess how the placement and project will be run.

You should consider how you will prepare volunteers to adapting to life in a new country, how the volunteer will have direct links and channels of communication with the sending organisation throughout the placement and the evaluation that will take place when the volunteer returns.

For Host Organisations only, how will you guarantee a safe living and working environment for the volunteers? What measures will you put in place to address problems and conflicts during the project period?

The volunteers may find themselves in difficult, unfamiliar or challenging situations and the organisation needs to demonstrate how it is able to minimise the risks and problems that might be associated with such situations. You should show how you have thought about the volunteers' welfare and some of the aspects related to the community and organisation that the volunteer will be part of.

Participants

Please see the [European Solidarity Corps Guide](#) for more information on participants.

For Supporting Organisations only, what is the background and profile of the participants you would like to involve or for Host Organisations only, please describe the background and profile of the volunteers you would like to host?

Please give details of the background and profile of the participants that you want be involved in your volunteering project(s). Whilst this may differ slightly from project to project, you should have a good idea of the types of groups you work with on a day-to-day basis, or the types of volunteers that would benefit your organisation.

How will you ensure an open and transparent selection process and accessibility for all young people?

You should give details of any selection process in place to recruit the volunteers and any previous experience in working with the specified target group or existing relation with partners involved in selection.

How many volunteers can your organisation host at any given time?

For Volunteering teams, the maximum number of volunteers that can be awarded for one activity is 40. If you wish to involve this number of short term volunteers, or indeed large numbers of long term volunteers, please consider the capacity of the organisation, resources and staff and justify how you will be able to manage such amounts. The number of volunteers to be hosted at any one time will be assessed and this can be reduced if sufficient information is not provided regarding the support in place. A distinction should be made between short term and long term.

Do you envisage involving volunteers who face situations that make their participation in the activities more difficult?

These are defined as persons facing some obstacles that prevent them from having effective access to education, training and youth work opportunities.

Please select 'yes' or 'no' from the drop down menu. In this section, you should describe any extra measures that you have put in place for additional support that is needed for the activities.

Please select the categories they may fall into:

Which types of situations are these participants facing? Educational difficulties, Disability, Social obstacles, Cultural differences, Geographical obstacles, Economic obstacles, Health Problems, Refugees.

Fewer opportunities

The European Programmes aim at promoting equality and inclusion by facilitating the access to participants with disadvantaged backgrounds and fewer opportunities compared to their peers whenever disadvantage limits or prevents participation in transnational activities for reasons such as:

- disability (i.e. participants with special needs): people with mental (intellectual, cognitive, learning), physical, sensory or other disabilities;
- educational difficulties: young people with learning difficulties; early school-leavers; low qualified adults; young people with poor school performance;
- economic obstacles: people with a low standard of living, low income, dependence on social welfare system or homeless; young people in long-term unemployment or poverty; people in debt or with financial problems;
- cultural differences: immigrants or refugees or descendants from immigrant or refugee families; people belonging to a national or ethnic minority; people with linguistic adaptation and cultural inclusion difficulties;
- health problems: people with chronic health problems, severe illnesses or psychiatric conditions;
- social obstacles: people facing discrimination because of gender, age, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability, etc.; people with limited social skills or anti-social or risky behaviours; people in a precarious situation; (ex-)offenders, (ex-)drug or alcohol abusers; young and/or single parents; orphans;
- geographical obstacles: people from remote or rural areas; people living in small islands or in peripheral regions; people from urban problem zones; people from less serviced areas (limited public transport, poor facilities).

Useful tip

The principle of equality and inclusion is fundamental to the European Solidarity Corps, therefore if you are planning on involving volunteers and you are designing a potential placement for this type of participants please give extra consideration to making it feasible and available to as many young people as possible, regardless of their background, language skills, physical attributes, and so on.

Please bear in mind that under European Solidarity Corps funding, there are budget categories to support different types of inclusion. If you believe your placement requires the volunteer being able-bodied, or possessing a certain level of English language skills, or any other stipulation which might restrict access to the opportunity, then you must fully justify and demonstrate in the application why this requirement is essential to the placement. Please note that even if you provide evidence in support of a restriction, this does not guarantee that the application will pass the quality threshold when it is assessed.

For more detail on each of the categories, please review page 6 of the European Solidarity Programme Guide, see Inclusion.

For Host Organisations only, what kind of competence, infrastructure and/or resources does your organisation have in order to accommodate and support volunteers facing barriers to participation? Please select for all that apply Yes/No from the dropdown menu:

- A physical environment suitable for young people with physical, sensory or other disabilities (such as wheelchair access and similar);
- Additional mentoring or other support suitable for young people with social obstacles, educational difficulties, cultural differences or similar;
- Other

When selecting your answer it is advised to consider both the existing infrastructure and experience of the organisation, as well as any future developments that are being considered, i.e. identifying additional mentors, adapting the building to make it wheelchair accessible etc.

For Supporting Organisations only, what are the specific measures you will undertake in order to ensure that the participants are adequately prepared and supported, and what follow-up measures will you take after their return?

In this section, you should provide details regarding the additional support made available for the participants facing fewer opportunities. Depending on the specific obstacles that might prevent them from fully benefiting from the volunteering experience, the organisation should describe any tailored support, resources or activities that contribute to a better inclusion of these volunteers.

Summary

This section will display an overview of the types of Quality Label and roles applied for Volunteering. If you are applying as an umbrella organisation, information regarding your dependent entities will also be summarised in this section.

Annexes

Please print, fill in, sign and upload a declaration of honour. The legal representative of the applicant organisation must print the signature page, read it carefully, complete the declaration section by hand and sign it (the National ID and organisation stamp are not required in the UK for youth applicants). This declaration of honour then needs to be scanned and attached as an annex before application form is submitted online.

Important note

It is essential to submit the signature page. Failure to submit this, signed by the legal representative, will result in your application being ineligible.

Any additional documents, relevant for the Quality Label Application can be uploaded here.

Checklist

Before submitting online your application form to the National Agency, please make sure that it fulfils the eligibility criteria listed in the Programme Guide and check that:

- All relevant fields in the application form have been filled in correctly.
- You have chosen the correct National Agency of the country in which your organisation is established. The correct NA is: UK01 British Council, in partnership with Ecorys UK – British Council

Additionally, you should make sure that the application form has been completed using English language, you have annexed the Declaration of Honour signed by the legal representative mentioned in the application and there is an adequate internet connection to submit the Quality Label application online.

Data Protection Notice

Applicants are required to read the data protection notice and tick the appropriate box to confirm this.

Submission

Applicants should only submit the Quality Label application by clicking the left hand side Submit button once they are happy with the finalised version. Applicants need to ensure that they are connected to the internet in order to submit their completed form. Applicants should also ensure that all sections of the form are valid and all annexes are attached before submitting the form.

The UK National Agency advises that applicants save the final completed version of the webForm as PDF on their computers in case of any technical issues with submission.

Important note

The accreditation forms are assessed continually through the year, but please pay attention to the European Solidarity Corps deadlines, as you will need to think about applying for accreditation (Supporting organisation only) in advance of such deadlines.

Alternative Submission Procedure

Only online Quality Label applications can be accepted, and email or post applications will not be considered.

After submitting your application

You will receive an email from the National Agency confirming receipt of your application for Quality Label, usually within 10 days.

First, your organisation's eligibility to participate will be assessed by a review of your financial and legal entity forms, and their supporting documentation, as uploaded on the Participants Portal. The assessors may also review your organisation's accounts most recently submitted to either Companies House or the Charities Commission (if appropriate).

If you have held accreditation previously, or are expanding your involvement in Youth Volunteering projects, the assessors may also review the final reports of any funded projects in the previous three years. If there are any issues identified with the supporting documentation, you will be advised by email and guided on how to correct the issue. Should your organisation be deemed not eligible to participate in European Solidarity Corps projects, or should you not be able to correct any issues with your validation documentation, your application for Quality Label will be rejected and you will be advised of the decision, and the reason for it, via email.

Your application for Quality Label will usually be read and assessed by at least two expert assessors. Once your organisation has passed the validation checks, the next stage in the assessment would either be a site visit by one or both assessors, or a telephone interview with one or both assessors. Please ensure that the person who participates in the interview is a clear contact from the organisation, familiar with the application content and the proposed plans for European Solidarity Corps projects activities.

You would be contacted by email, which would propose a date and time for this event to take place. If the proposed date and time is not suitable or convenient, please respond as soon as you can, proposing alternative dates and times. During the visit/interview, you will be asked questions on your organisation, your application, and your plans for participating in European Solidarity Corps projects.

After the visit/interview, you may be contacted for more information or clarification on some points by one or both assessors. Please note that sometimes the assessors may not agree to approve everything applied for, and may agree awarding the Quality Label on a restricted or reduced involvement in European Solidarity Corps projects.

Once the decision, whatever it is, is reached you will be notified by email. If the decision is not to award the Quality Label, or only to award on a restricted or reduced basis, the email will provide feedback and details as to how and why this decision was reached (please note the opportunity to reapply for Quality Label will be available and if your application is initially not successful, you are recommended to address any problem areas identified and reapply on that basis).

The details of successful organisations will duly appear in a database of Quality Label organisations:

<http://europa.eu/youth/volunteering/>

Please note that you are advised to allow at least eight weeks from submission of your application, although this can and will be extended should you need to provide any further documentation, information, or clarification.

