

# 2020 European Solidarity Corps Handbook

## Volunteering Action (Volunteering Projects and Volunteering Partnerships)

Version 2: September 2021

## Table of Contents

1. Introduction .....	4
2. Background .....	5
2.1. The European Solidarity Corps .....	5
2.2. European Solidarity Corps Guide .....	5
2.3. Type of activities under Volunteering Action .....	6
2.4 Participating Countries .....	6
2.5. Target Groups and Participants .....	7
2.6. Special rules.....	9
3. What does the UK National Agency do?.....	10
3.1 Contracting Process .....	10
3.1.1 Bank Details .....	10
3.1.2 Grant Agreements and Annexes .....	11
3.2 Quality Assurance .....	16
3.3 Monitoring Activities.....	17
3.3.1 Monitoring Calls/Emails.....	18
3.3.2 Audits, Checks and Monitoring Visits .....	18
3.4 Project Amendments .....	20
3.4.1 Minor Changes – Notification Only .....	21
3.4.2 Significant Changes – Contract Amendment Request.....	21
4. What do organisations do?.....	23
4.1 Management of your project .....	24
4.1.1 Project Monitoring.....	24

4.1.2 Roles and responsibilities .....	27
4.1.3 Health and Safety.....	31
4.1.4 Risk Assessment .....	333
4.1.5 Safeguarding .....	33
4.1.6 Insurance .....	34
4.1.7 Selection of Participants.....	36
4.1.8 Participant Withdrawals: how to prevent or manage them?.....	37
4.1.9 Mobility Tool+ .....	38
4.1.10 Support for non-formal and informal learning .....	39
4.1.11 Recognition of Learning Outcomes .....	42
4.1.12 Evaluation .....	43
4.1.13 Impact.....	44
4.1.14 Dissemination .....	477
4.2 Financial Management of your Grant .....	499
4.2.1. Audit Arrangements .....	49
4.2.2. Reporting on Mobility Tool+ (budget categories) .....	50
4.2.3. Eligibility of Costs .....	54
4.2.4 Subcontracting.....	555
4.2.5 Exchange Rates .....	55
4.3 Participant Reports .....	56
4.4 Payment Arrangements .....	577
4.5 Beneficiary Reports.....	58
4.5.1 Interim Reports .....	58
4.5.2 Final Reports .....	58
5. More Help and Advice .....	61

## Overview of changes

This page outlines the document history from the date of creation, noting all minor and major changes undertaken on the document and any supplementary document(s).

Page number in the previous version	Change	Page number in this version
P. 8	Foreign Office Travel Advice update	P. 8
P. 7	Changes to the national immigration system as of 1 January 2021	P. 8-9
P. 9	Force Majeure in the context of COVID-19	P. 9-10
P. 11	Grant Agreement (GA) for Volunteering Projects (ESC11) and Annexes.	P. 12
P. 22	Impact of COVID-19 update	P. 24-26
P. 27	Accreditation, Quality Label	P. 30
P. 28	Virtual Activity	P. 31
P. 28	Insurance update	P. 34

# 1. Introduction

The 2020 European Solidarity Corps Handbook for Volunteering Action is designed as a guide to support UK beneficiaries with the management of their 2020 Volunteering Projects (ESC11) and Volunteering Partnerships - Annual Agreements (ESC13).

The Handbook provides **practical guidance on the various stages of your project lifecycle** and should be used as a reference point for all common project queries. Please note that, while we have tried to cover all main areas of the project lifecycle within this Handbook, the guidance is not exhaustive. It is important to note that this guidance is supplementary to your (annual<sup>1</sup>) Grant Agreement and annexes, which you should always refer to first when checking contractual requirements. **We also recommend you continue to refer to the [2020 Corps Guide](#) during your project to ensure you are managing your grant in accordance with European Solidarity Corps rules.** You can find it and other relevant documents under the [Project Support](#) webpage on our website under 'Key Documents'.

Please note that this document may be subject to change throughout the course of the initiative. Changes will be recorded on page 3 of this document and the most recent version will be found on our website.

**Should any information in this handbook differ from either the (annual) Grant Agreement or the 2020 Corps Guide, the content of the (annual) Grant Agreement, its annexes and the 2020 Corps Guide will take precedence.**

## Important note

Remember, if you have any queries or issues that you can't find answers to within the Handbook, the ESC Team at the UK National Agency (UK NA) are on hand to help and should be your first point of contact for any questions related to your project at [eusolidaritycorps@ecorps.com](mailto:eusolidaritycorps@ecorps.com)

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<sup>1</sup> only applicable to ESC13 projects – Volunteering Partnerships

## 2. Background

### 2.1. The European Solidarity Corps

The European Solidarity Corps intends to bring young people together to build a more inclusive society, supporting vulnerable people and responding to the challenges facing society across the continent. The initiative **offers an inspiring and empowering experience for young people who want to help communities, learn and develop their competencies**. This is ensured by funding a variety of opportunities across a broad range of areas, such as integration of migrants, environmental challenges, prevention of natural disasters, education and youth activities or measures to prevent radicalisation. The initiative aims to support the acquisition and use of knowledge, skills and qualifications to facilitate personal and professional development.

### 2.2. European Solidarity Corps Guide

The [2020 European Solidarity Corps Guide](#) is the key document produced by the European Commission for anybody requiring a thorough knowledge of the Corps. This document is mainly addressed to those organisations that are already involved or wish to take part in the Corps. It contains detailed information on the Actions and all the rules and conditions required in order to apply for funding under the Corps and to manage the grant. It is essential that organisations continue to consult the Corps Guide for the year in which they receive funding. **The European Commission can make changes to their published documents. To ensure that you use the most up-to-date version of the 2020 Corps Guide, you should check the [European Commission’s European Solidarity Corps website](#) and download the 2020 Corps Guide.**

The 2020 Corps Guide contains information covering all Actions and types of projects that are funded under the initiative. There are sections of the Corps Guide applicable to all projects as well as sections applicable specifically to Volunteering. Please see below for a breakdown of the 2020 Corps Guide and the important sections for Volunteering Projects and Volunteering Partnerships.

Key Sections	Page numbers
General Information about the European Solidarity Corps	Pages 4 – 13
Specific Information about Volunteering (as managed by the UK NA)	Pages 22 – 32
Information for Applicants	Pages 71 – 86
Dissemination and exploitation of results – a practical guide for beneficiaries	Pages 87 – 91

Glossary of Key Terms

Pages 92 – 94

Useful References and Contact Details

Page 95

## 2.3. Type of activities under Volunteering Action

The Volunteering Action of the European Solidarity Corps provides an exciting opportunity for organisations to offer young people to partake in solidarity activities in the format of a full-time voluntary unpaid activity for a period of up to 12 months. Volunteering is set to promote solidarity as a value, while helping to overcome important societal challenges and address the needs of local communities. Participants receive funding to go on a placement, usually to another country, to gain experience and acquire new skills and competencies that are relevant to their learning needs.

However, activities can take place in the same country as the country of residence of the participant and those are called ‘in-country activities’. They are aimed specifically at encouraging and facilitating the participation of young people with fewer opportunities. There is a strong emphasis on ensuring that opportunities are made available where national schemes do not exist or to complement existing national schemes, and also to cater for priorities identified at a European level within the framework of the European Solidarity Corps. Should in-country activities be part of your project, you will have to ensure these clearly demonstrate European added value.

The main types of activities that can be included in an ESC11 or ESC13 project are as follows:

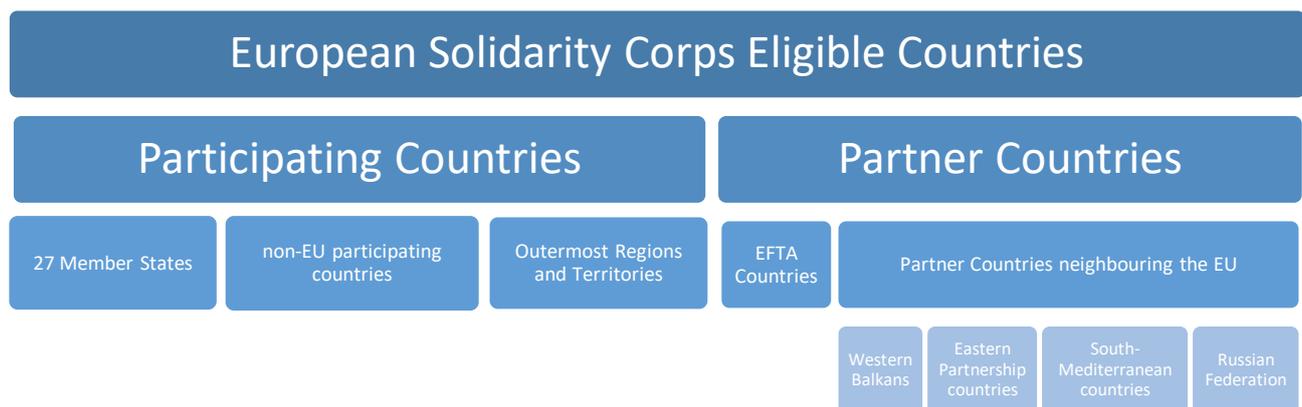
- **Individual Volunteering Activities** – where a young person will be allocated a placement for a duration of 2 months (i.e. as from 60 days) to 12 months. In cases where young people with fewer opportunities are volunteering, the activity can last a minimum of 2 weeks (i.e. 14 days), excluding travel time.
- **Volunteering Teams** – where a group of young people (a minimum 10 and a maximum 40 participants) will be volunteering together for 2 weeks to 2 months (i.e. up to 59 days), excluding travel time.
- **Advance Planning Visits (APV)** – as the name suggests, these are planning visits to the country of the host organisation before the start of volunteering activities.
- **Complementary Activities** – relevant side activities designed to add value and augment the results of the project as well as to strengthen its impact. These activities are only applicable to ESC11 projects.

## 2.4 Participating Countries

The European Solidarity Corps is available to organisations from both **Participating Countries** (Member States of the European Union and non-EU participating countries) and **Partner Countries** (EFTA countries and partner

countries neighbouring the EU). Organisations from both Participating Countries and Partner Countries are eligible to take part in ESC11 and ESC13 projects.

Overseas Countries and Territories can take part in volunteering activities, subject to the arrangements applicable to the Member State with which they are connected. British Overseas Territories are: Anguilla; Cayman Islands; Falkland Islands; South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands; Montserrat; Pitcairn Islands; Saint Helena, Ascension Island and Tristan da Cunha; Turks and Caicos Islands; Bermuda; Gibraltar; British Antarctic Territory; British Indian Ocean Territory; and British Virgin Islands.



You can claim exceptional costs for expensive travel for participants, which is likely to include travel from outermost regions (ORs) and Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) up to a maximum of 80% of the total eligible costs so that they can also take part in your project. **However, you will need to justify that the standard funding rules (based on the contribution of unit costs per travel distance band) do not cover at least 70% of the travel costs of participants.** For more information, please refer to pages 29 - 32 of the Corps Guide, or you can find out more information on the European Commission website.

## 2.5. Target Groups and Participants

The main target groups for volunteering projects are **young people who will volunteer with host organisations.**

If the volunteering activity takes place in the UK, participants **must have the right to live and work in the UK.** Should you have any queries regarding individual participants, please seek advice from the [UK Visas and Immigration office](#) (previously known as [UK Border Agency](#)).

Participants involved in a volunteering project must comply with the below criteria to be considered eligible:

Volunteering Activity	Residency	Age	Additional requirements
ESC11 – Volunteering Projects	Residents in a Participating Country or in a Partner Country	18 – 30*	being registered on the <a href="#">European Solidarity Corps Portal</a>
ESC13 – Volunteering Partnerships Annual Agreement			

\*Participants must have reached 18 and must not be older than 30 at the start date of the activity.

For accompanying persons, no maximum age limit applies, but they must be at least 18 years old. An accompanying person is **a person who accompanies participants with special needs or fewer opportunities in an activity in order to ensure their safety, protection, provide support and extra assistance during the placement.** Accompanying persons do not undertake project-related work or training, and they are not the same as the project participants, however they are eligible for financial support under the Corps rules.

### Foreign Office Travel Advice

For projects taking place outside of the UK, you must check and follow the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) travel advice prior to departure (<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>). Should the FCDO restrict travel to the country or region your participants are travelling to, please contact the UK NA to discuss the situation. Depending on the precise FCDO’s advice, activities may need to be postponed or cancelled. Please note, the FCDO strongly advises to arrange travel insurance and check it provides sufficient cover during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Furthermore, you should check and keep updated about the UK Government’s Guidance on red, amber and green list rules for entering [England](#) , as well as guidance on rules for entering [Wales](#), [Scotland](#) and [Northern Ireland](#).

### Changes to the national immigration system as of 1 January 2021

From 1 January 2021, some participants coming to the UK may require a visa under the Tier 5 (T5), Temporary Worker, Government Authorised Exchange (GAE) scheme. This is part of the UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) points-based system and is needed before participants can take up their Erasmus+ placement/opportunity in the UK.

If your participants require a T5 GAE visa, please bear in mind that the applicants first need a sponsor (Certificate of Sponsorship) before they can apply for their visa. The British Council and Ecorys are licensed Category A sponsors. We advise you to submit your applications for the Certificate of Sponsorship as early as possible (i.e. at least 12 weeks prior to desired travel). Please find more information at

<https://www.erasmusplus.org.uk/t5-visa-how-to-apply-for-a-certificate-of-sponsorship> - please read the European Solidarity Corps T5 handbook available on this webpage for additional details.

**N.B.** Volunteering projects (ESC 11) and Volunteering Partnerships (ESC 13) lasting between 2 weeks to 1 month can be undertaken on a Visitor's visa and a Certificate of Sponsorship is not required.

The UK National Agency is unable to provide information or respond to queries relating to the changes to the immigration rules that came into effect on 1 January 2021. As such you must refer to [UK Government guidance](#).

## 2.6. Special rules

Please note, for Individual Volunteering activities, **participants can take part in only one European Solidarity Corps long-term volunteering placement (i.e. one lasting more than 60 days)**. Volunteers who have taken part in Erasmus+ volunteering activities or in the European Voluntary Service are not eligible.

**Exceptions:** In duly justified cases, volunteers who carried out an Erasmus+ volunteering activity, a European Voluntary Service (EVS) or a European Solidarity Corps Individual Volunteering activity lasting up to 2 months (i.e. up to 59 days, excluding travel days) can take part in an additional European Solidarity Corps volunteering activity - cross-border only - and the total amount of time across volunteering activities in total must not exceed 14 months.

Furthermore, a volunteer from a Participating Country must carry out the activity in a Participating Country or in a Partner Country. A volunteer from a Partner Country must carry out the activity in a Participating Country.

It is the beneficiary organisation's responsibility to ensure participants are eligible and meet the above requirements as well as any additional criteria specified in the 2020 Corps Guide. The UK NA will validate participants at the end of the project and if they are found to be ineligible, all associated costs will also be deemed ineligible, which will affect your final grant amount.

### **Force Majeure in the context of COVID-19**

We appreciate Coronavirus remains active and it is therefore difficult to progress with your project with any degree of certainty.

To incur project costs at this uncertain stage of Coronavirus may no longer be deemed as force majeure and may not be covered by your European Solidarity Corps (annual) Grant Agreement.

Therefore, before booking travel, accommodation or any other activities in relation to your project, you are strongly advised to check the relevant government guidance and support channels e.g.

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus> and the [Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office website](#) for advice on the unique circumstances per country, and to review and accept all risks attached to any advanced bookings.

Please also visit our website and read our FAQs, which can be downloaded from [here](#).

You must ensure the health and safety of your participants remains at the forefront of all decisions you take, together with the ability of your organisation to cover any costs incurred should placements not proceed as planned. Please see section 4.1.3 *Health and Safety* for further details.

You must also ensure that your organisation has the capacity to receive participants and provide the activities to participants as stated in your application and as approved by the UK NA.

## 3. What does the UK National Agency do?

### 3.1 Contracting Process

Following the assessment and selection process, before starting any funded project activity, you must have a signed (annual) Grant Agreement with the UK NA. **It is essential that you sign your (annual) Grant Agreement before committing any funds to project activities.** In exceptional circumstances, any eligible project activities undertaken between the official project start date and the date the agreement is signed by the UK NA will be covered retrospectively, provided they are in line with the terms of the agreement. However, any activity undertaken before the agreement is signed by the UK NA is done so at beneficiary's own risk. If for any reason we are not able to contract with a beneficiary, project costs already incurred will not be covered by the UK NA and, as such, you may wish to limit the number of activities you carry out before the process is complete.

During any stage of your project lifecycle, for administrative and financial management project issues or if you require advice and support on your project, please contact the UK NA for support via our email helpline at [eusolidaritycorps@ecorps.com](mailto:eusolidaritycorps@ecorps.com).

#### 3.1.1 Bank Details

To enable us to make payments, your organisation must be set up on our financial system, for which we require your organisation's full bank details. You will be given a unique vendor number that should be quoted on all future invoices / payment queries.

**Should your organisation's bank details change, please notify the ESC Team via email immediately.** You must also contact us if:

- your organisation’s name changes; and/or
- your organisation’s legal status changes - please contact us if you are unsure about the legal status of your organisation, as this may have a direct effect on the eligibility of your organisation and the continuation of any live ESC or Erasmus+ projects.

You will be asked to complete a new Bank Details Form and upload it onto the [Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Organisation Registration System](#) (ORS) platform. We will use that form to update your organisation’s details on our financial system. If we do not hold the most up-to-date information, we will be unable to pay your organisation’s grant. We recommend that you keep a copy of this form for your own records.

Please attach your organisation's letter-head above	
<b>Bank detail form</b> – text boxes will automatically expand as you type in the details. <b>Guidance notes on next page.</b>	
Project Code	
Organisation or applicant full name	
Organisation or applicant registered address	
Bank account holder's name	
Bank & Branch Name	
Bank Branch Address	
Bank Branch Postcode	
Account Number	
Sort code (UK)	
Swift/International BIC Code	
IBAN Number	
Fedwire/ABA Routing Number (for USA banks only)	
Registered VAT number (if applicable)	
Company registration number (if applicable)	
<b>The British Council will pay in Euro</b>	
Confirm the account specified will accept payments in the currency above	<input type="checkbox"/> confirmed
<b>Routing Bank Information:</b> If the payment requires to be redirected via a routing bank please provide the routing information below. The following information must be provided if the IBAN / SWIFT numbers do not correspond with your bank account number and sort code details.	
Routing bank & branch name	
Routing Account number	
Routing Bank & Branch Code / Sort code (UK)	
Routing IBAN Number	
Routing Swift/International BIC Code	
Other routing code	

### 3.1.2 Grant Agreements and Annexes

To enter into a contract, all successful applicants must sign a(n) (annual) Grant Agreement with the UK NA. If you are a coordinator of a project, you will have signed the agreement on behalf of any other potential partners in the project, based on the provisions of the internal Partnership Agreement(s) you should have in place with your partners.

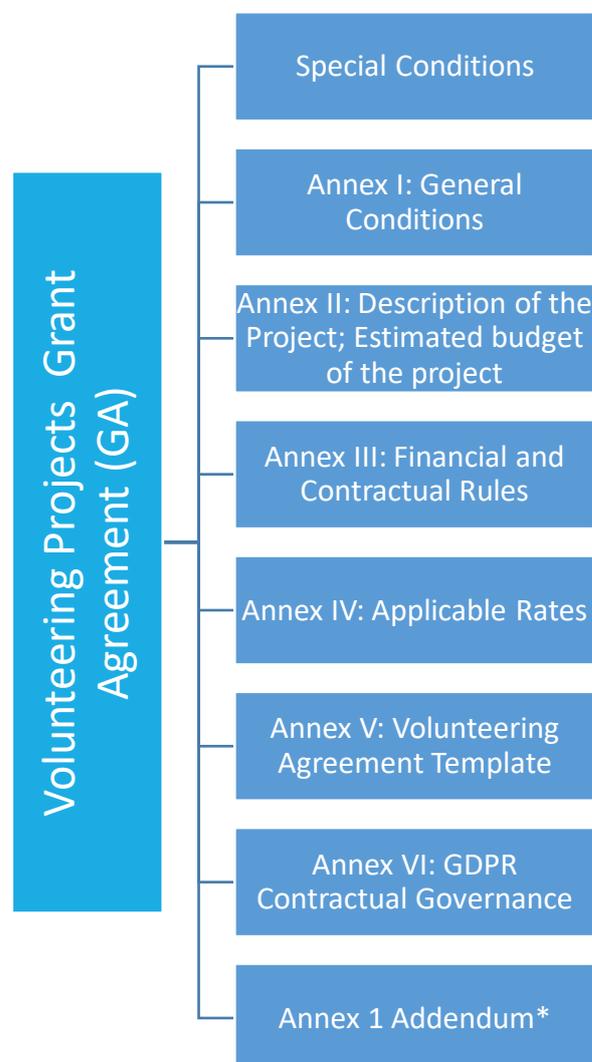
**The (annual) Grant Agreement is a legally binding contract between your organisation and the UK NA, which includes key details about your project, based on your initial application as well as the requirements and guidance for managing your grant.**

Your agreement is tailored to the type of project and activities you have been funded for. All agreements include Special Conditions, followed by several annexes applicable to your project.

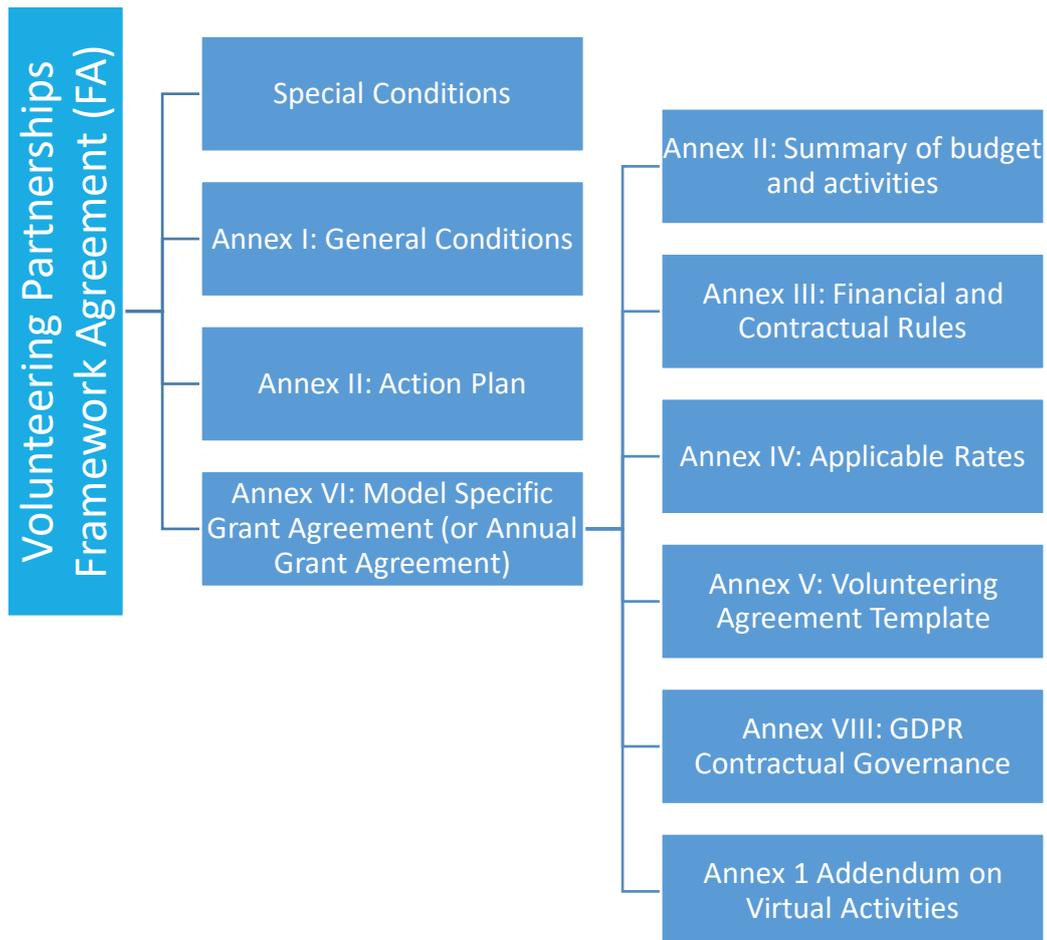
You must ensure that you have at hand a copy of your:

- Grant Agreement (GA) for Volunteering Projects (ESC11) and Annexes.
- Framework Agreement (FA) for Volunteering Partnerships (ESC12) and Annexes, some of which are specifically linked to the associated Volunteering Partnerships Annual Grant Agreement (ESC13).

Please ensure that you read the entire agreement carefully so that you are familiar with your organisation’s contractual obligations. Please note that the ‘Addendum on Additional Financial and Contractual Rules only applicable to Projects organising Virtual Activities due to COVID-19’ may feature under either Annex 1 or under Annex IV depending on the 2020 Call Round you are contracted under.



\*Please note that the “Addendum on Additional Financial and Contractual Rules only applicable to Projects organising Virtual Activities due to COVID-19” features under Annex IV for 2020 Call, Round 3 projects.



## Special Conditions

This is the main part of your agreement, which includes **essential information that is specific to your project**.

### Important note

For Volunteering Partnerships (ESC12), as explained above, there will be 'Special Conditions' applicable to the Framework Agreement and the Annex VI: Model Specific Grant Agreement (or Annual Grant Agreement) which holds further annexes linked specifically to your ESC13 project.

It is very important to check this information carefully, especially the following sections:

- Article I.2.2 (in GA) / Article 2.2 in Annex VI (FA):
  - Project start and end dates along with the duration for Volunteering Projects (ESC11)
  - Annual project start date and duration for Volunteering Partnerships (ESC13)
- Article I.3.1 (in GA) / Article 3.1 in Annex VI (FA) – Maximum grant awarded
- Article I.4.4 (in GA) / Article 4.4 in Annex VI (FA) – Final Report and final payment

- Article I.9.1 (in GA) / Article 10.1 in Annex VI (FA) – Mobility Tool+ requirements (reporting)
- Article I.9.3 (in GA) / Article 10.3 in Annex VI (FA) – European Solidarity Corps Portal requirements.

All approved European Solidarity Corps project activities must take place between your project start and end dates, which can be found in your Grant Agreement and, where applicable, Annex VI to the Framework Agreement. Any activity (e.g. volunteering placements, APV or complementary activity) that falls outside of the project start and end dates will not be eligible for funding and would lead to a reduction to your final grant amount.

## Addendum on Virtual Activities

This annex only refers to projects organising Virtual Activities (due to COVID-19) and provides information on Virtual Activities and applicable additional financial and contractual rules. Please ensure you read this document carefully and if you have any questions, please contact the ESC Team at the UK NA.

## Annex I: General Conditions (in both GA and FA)

The General Conditions are standard rules that include information on the legal, administrative and financial provisions for all EU funded grants. To understand these in the context of European Solidarity Corps, the Special Conditions part includes information about how to correctly read and understand the General Conditions. This document contains a large amount of important contractual information and should be consulted carefully.

## Annex II: Summary of the budget and activities (in GA and Annex VI to FA)

This document includes information that has been taken from your original project application, but it may also contain corrections or amendment applied by the UK NA, where necessary, following various checks. This is your **contractual budget**, so you should use it when implementing your project to ensure that you are completing the same activities that you planned for in your application and that have been approved by the UK NA. This is very important because the UK NA will use Annex II of your agreement during the assessment of your Final Report.

The number of participants and accompanying persons, hosting and supporting organisations, placement durations and destination countries are defined in your application. If you wish to change these, you should contact the UK NA as soon as possible. Any alteration to your project implementation, which differs from the information set out in this annex may result in the full or partial repayment of your grant at the Final Report stage. Please see section 3.4 *Contract Amendments* for further details.

### Important note

For small changes that do not affect the objectives of your project, you may implement a budget transfer without amendment to redistribute funds. Please check Art. 1.3.3 / 3.3 of your Agreement for the transfers permitted without amendment. However, we advise you to contact the ESC helpline first to ensure eligibility of the intended change(s).

## Annex III: Financial and Contractual rules (in GA and Annex VI to FA)

This annex provides comprehensive information on the financial and contractual rules you must follow when managing your grant and implementing your project. For each budget heading you can check what activity this covers, how the funding is calculated and what supporting documents you will need to provide to evidence the activity and associated costs. There is also information about the assessment of the Final Report that will need to be submitted **after the end of your project** and the types of checks the UK NA may undertake during and after your project. You should read this annex thoroughly to ensure that your project activities are eligible, compliant and supported by the right documents to prevent issues with your Final Report. The documents cited therein will also need to be retained for audit purposes.

By signing the (annual) Grant Agreement/Framework Agreement, your organisation has entered into a legal contract with the UK NA under these terms. If you do not comply with the Corps rules and terms of the (annual) Grant Agreement/Framework Agreement, your organisation may be required to repay all or part of the grant.

## Annex IV: Applicable rates (in GA and Annex VI to FA)

Here is where you can find the breakdown of all the **applicable unit costs** for the budget headings applicable to your project that were used to calculate individual budget categories. Depending on your project, this may include: Travel, Organisational Support (Project Management and Activity Costs), Pocket Money, Inclusion Support, and Linguistic Support. Information about Exceptional Costs and Complementary Activity Costs (if applicable) is not included in this document because these budgets are based on actual (real) costs incurred. This document will help you make decisions about any necessary budget transfers, should these be required during the lifetime of your project.

For **Volunteering Projects (ESC11) 2020 Round 3 applicants**, the Grant Agreement, Annex IV contains the **'Addendum on Additional Financial and Contractual Rules only applicable to Projects organising Virtual Activities due to COVID-19'**. Please ensure you read this document carefully and if you have any questions, please contact the ESC Team at the UK NA. This document will otherwise be cited under 'Annex 1' (see below under 'Addendum').

## Annex V: Volunteering Agreement template (in GA and Annex VI to FA)

This annex is a template of the Volunteering Agreement between your organisation and the volunteer involved in your project. It should be completed and signed by both parties and provide an overview of the roles and responsibilities associated with taking part in a volunteering project. A participating organisation can complete the relevant sections of the template, based on their role within the project and the specific project needs.

**It is compulsory to have a signed Volunteering Agreement for each volunteer participating in your project.** You may edit the template to better fit the needs of your organisation and the project, but as a general rule, you can only add information to the template that does not contradict what is already covered there. **It is very important that you do not remove any information as these templates have been designed to meet the minimum requirements necessary for your project.**

In the template, some of the text is included in square brackets, which means you will need to edit this information. You need to complete some sections with the correct details for the placement and the individual participant, whereas other parts refer to different options that you can select. You must make sure the option you choose is appropriate for a given participant and delete any you have not selected.

## Annex VIII: GDPR Contractual Governance (in GA and Annex VI to FA)

This annex provides information on how to store and process data in line with the GDPR provisions.

## 3.2 Quality Assurance

The UK NA strives to ensure that only the highest quality applications are funded and to provide as much help and support as possible to you throughout your project lifetime. However, it is your overall responsibility to ensure the quality of planned activities.

The quality commitment to placements is based on the [European Quality Charter for Mobility](#) which has been approved by the European Parliament as a reference document for all people planning, providing or undertaking mobilities abroad. You should ensure that these principles are adhered to in the on-going organisation of your project and placements. Moreover, organisations participating in a Volunteering Project need to uphold the quality standards and core values laid down in the [European Solidarity Corps Charter, which are supported through your EVS or Quality Label accreditation](#)<sup>2</sup>. It is important to be fully aware of the

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<sup>2</sup> Please also see pages 16-21 of the 2020 Corps Guide on the Quality Label and the ESC website at <https://www.eusolidaritycorps.org.uk/quality-label>

Charter and the framework conditions upon which you were awarded your accreditation as failure to comply with this may result in the suspension and/or termination of your project.

During the course of your project, you may be asked to provide quarterly updates that should include key project milestones and any changes from the original application form. **This information should be as accurate as possible as the UK NA will use this to monitor your project's progress against the application form.** Please keep in regular contact with the UK NA to receive relevant help and guidance.

To confirm that all parties involved in your project are committed to ensuring high quality, all host and supporting partner roles and responsibilities need to be clearly agreed and outlined in contracts or Partnership Agreements. This will be discussed further in this Handbook.

In addition to making sure you have a strong and committed partnership in place, before starting your project, you and your partners should ensure that:

- the recruitment and selection of participants is relevant, fair, transparent and inclusive
- the placement content is relevant to the needs of participants and participating organisations as well as meeting the objectives of the Corps programme
- you have clear management strategies in place, with appropriate personnel responsible for managing the project
- your participants are supported with relevant preparation prior to their placements and that practical support, including mentoring, is available to them throughout the duration of the project
- there are clear and appropriate monitoring arrangements in place
- solidarity, equity and inclusion for participants are promoted
- access to participants with disadvantaged backgrounds and fewer opportunities is facilitated.

### 3.3 Monitoring Activities

The UK NA is required under its contract with the European Commission to undertake monitoring activities, audits and checks on a representative sample of organisations each year. The checks vary in scope and depth according to the type of check performed. These activities are carried out to ensure that the management of the European Solidarity Corps is satisfactory and within the terms of the Grant Agreement/Framework Agreement and Corps rules. Therefore, beneficiaries should ensure that appropriate reporting and monitoring procedures are in place. Beneficiaries must gather and retain all necessary information and documentary evidence, which demonstrates clear and transparent management of the projects as this may be inspected by the UK NA and/or the European Commission.

### 3.3.1 Monitoring Calls/Emails

A sample of projects is chosen every year to participate in quarterly monitoring calls or to provide quarterly emails about the progress of their project. If your project is selected, **the UK NA will get in touch and schedule these calls with you or request email updates throughout the lifetime of your project.** Monitoring calls/emails are a great way for us to get to know you better and to find out more about your project as well as get to know the types of challenges our beneficiaries face when implementing their projects.

### 3.3.2 Audits, Checks and Monitoring Visits

There are four types of visits which can be undertaken by the UK NA or other agencies:

- Monitoring Visits (UK NA only)
- On the Spot Checks (UK NA only)
- System Checks (UK NA only)
- Audit Visits (UK NA or other agencies).

**At the end of any of the above visits or checks, you will receive a feedback report and the opportunity to provide further information if it was not available at the time of the check.** We will provide you with formal feedback in the form of a draft Visit/Check Report within 30 days of the visit or check, taking into account any initial comments from your organisation (i.e. the beneficiary). You will then have a set period of time within which to respond to the draft report and provide any missing information or additional comments, as necessary. The final version of the Visit/Check Report will be then sent to you within two months of the visit/check and it will also be appended to your project file at the UK NA.

#### Monitoring Visits

A Monitoring Visit aims to support and counsel the beneficiary and provides an opportunity for you to take stock of the project achievements and review your progress against the objectives set at application stage. It could also be used to gather and disseminate good practice examples.

The visit also provides an opportunity for the UK NA to gain a greater understanding of your project and to **review whether the project is meeting the needs of its participants and other stakeholders.** Where possible, you should ensure that a participant and any partners/stakeholders, where applicable, are available for a short interview with UK NA representatives.

The key areas for discussion are:

- project management, progress and implementation
- project partnership
- recruitment, preparation and support of participants

- project monitoring, evaluation and future activity
- impact of the project
- dissemination
- financial management

UK NA representatives will assess whether you can deliver your project to **the specifications detailed in your application form, your contract and in line with the requirements of the European Solidarity Corps**, ensuring that your activities are eligible and compliant.

Monitoring Visits will explore examples of good practice that you have developed that other projects might benefit from. The information gathered during the visit will feed into our work in monitoring the progress of the initiative in the UK as a whole and will be used to inform reports produced for the UK National Authority for the initiative – the Department for Education and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport - as well as for the European Commission.

## On the Spot Checks

A random sample of projects will receive an ‘on-the-spot’ financial check from the UK NA to provide assurance on the reality and eligibility of project activities during project implementation. On the Spot Checks verify that the amounts claimed for individual mobilities in relation to the agreement are supported adequately by the documentation held by your organisation.

There are five areas that an On the Spot Check aims to investigate:

- eligibility of costs under each budget category
- eligibility of participants for the action
- coherence of participants with the application
- eligibility of activities
- quality of activities.

It is a compulsory requirement for organisations to retain evidence of any payments to partners / participants in all instances. **This may be in the form of invoices for payments made directly by the beneficiary and in the form of bank transfers/receipts signed by the participant.** During On the Spot Checks, the UK NA will need this evidence to be provided alongside any other supporting materials to verify the reality and eligibility of undertaken activities.

Organisations that are subject to an On the Spot Check are chosen at random or based on a risk assessment, using a methodology specified by the European Commission. Typically, an On the Spot Check will take one day and you will be notified at least two weeks in advance if you have been selected.

## Systems Checks

A percentage of projects will be chosen for a Systems Check. **Systems Checks will only be conducted with recurrent beneficiaries that receive high levels of funding through the European Solidarity Corps.**

System Checks consist of two distinct phases:

The first will be an in-depth check of organisational procedures and systems set up to manage European Solidarity Corps projects. For example, we would expect to see evidence of the Pocket Money being paid/transferred to your participants. This check phase will also have a strong focus on the overall mechanisms and procedures put in place to run the project(s).

The second phase is an On the Spot Check of the most recent finalised project. Original documents will need to be available and we request that all relevant people working on the project are present during these checks so that all questions or queries can be resolved on the day.

## Audit Visits

The European Commission may request an external audit or wish to arrange a random inspection of the project accounts after the project has been completed. You are, therefore, required to keep all original documents relating to the implementation and financial management of your project for a period of 3 years (for projects with grants of less than €60,000.00) or 5 years (for projects with grants of more than €60,000.00) after the final payment has been made, in line with Article II.27.2 in Annex I (in GA and FA).

Audit visits may be undertaken by the European Commission, the European Court of Auditors, the UK NA's own Internal Audit and/or Compliance Teams and other relevant bodies.

**The European Commission and the European Court of Auditors operate on a short timescale and may request a visit at a very short notice.**

The European Commission and the European Court of Auditors have their own method of planning visits and the UK NA is only informed of the organisations they intend to visit when they announce a visit.

The UK NA may identify organisations for ad hoc visits on the basis of the amounts of funding awarded, issues arising from previous reports or other information received from the beneficiary, project partners or participants involved.

## 3.4 Project Amendments

Due to the nature of managing a Volunteering Project, beneficiaries are likely to encounter situations that result in the details of their projects changing from the plans made in original applications. This may be

something as small as the Contact Person changing within their organisation to a substantial change, like replacing a partner during the delivery of their project. For either type of change, please [contact the UK NA to request an amendment](#). For any budget change, please see art. I.3.3 of your GA or 3.3 Annex VI to FA and inform the UK NA via email.

### 3.4.1 Minor Changes – Notification Only

Minor Changes are issues which the UK NA would expect to see throughout a project lifecycle and can be implemented with minimal impact upon the beneficiary, project or the UK NA. Therefore, these are classed as administrative amendments to the (annual) Grant Agreement and the beneficiary only needs to notify the UK NA of the type of change and any details which need to be updated. There is a simple and short form to complete, which the UK NA can provide you with. Upon completion, this form needs to be emailed back to the UK NA to be approved automatically and processed, usually within 5 working days.

### 3.4.2 Significant Changes – Contract Amendment Request

Significant Changes are changes that have the potential to substantially affect the delivery of a project or alter the project-specific content of the (annual) Grant Agreement and so they have the potential to call into question the initial assessment decision or have a significant financial/legal impact. Therefore, to request a Significant Change, the beneficiary must submit a formal Contract Amendment Request Form, providing a clear justification for the proposed changes to the project. Please contact the UK NA to discuss the proposed changes and to request the form.

Due to the nature of Significant Changes to a project, the request will be formally assessed by the UK NA and, if approved, a Supplementary Agreement will be annexed to the original (annual) Grant Agreement. Therefore, Significant Change requests are deemed exceptional and carry no guarantee of approval by the UK NA. They also take longer to process (up to 45 days) and may require you to provide additional documents.

All proposed changes must be communicated to the UK NA in advance and at least one month before the end date of the project. The table below provides a list of potential changes which can be requested by beneficiaries and which category they fall into.

Change Requested	Permitted		Not Permitted
	Minor Change	Significant Change	
Contact Person	✓		
Legal Representative	✓		

Change Requested	Permitted		Not Permitted
	Minor Change	Significant Change	
Bank details	✓		
Beneficiary organisation's address	✓		
Partner organisation's details (i.e. address, personnel, etc.)	✓		
Project activities	✓	✓	
OLS licences	✓	✓	
Partner withdrawal		✓	
Replacing a partner		✓	
Adding a new partner		✓	
Budget changes not covered by budget transfers (Article I.3.3 in GA / Article 3.3 in Annex VI to FA)		✓	
Participating countries		✓	
Project start and end dates		✓	
Project duration		✓	
Beneficiary organisation name		✓	
Beneficiary organisation legal status		✓	
Replacement of beneficiary organisation			✓
Reporting schedule			✓
Payment structure and schedule			✓

Please be aware that requests for changes to project activities and Online Linguistic Support (OLS) licences can be classed as either a Minor or a Significant Change, depending on the scope of the request. This will be verified

by the UK NA when you contact us. Moreover, a change to the project dates or duration will naturally change the reporting schedule for the project. However, you will not be able to request a change to the reporting schedule independently of this.

Should you wish to implement a change because of the impacts of COVID-19 or the new UK Immigration System, please contact the ESC Team via email to outline this change in advance, so the UK NA may provide you with further support and guidance. Please see the section ‘Impact of COVID-19’ below for further details.

## 4. What do organisations do?

Monitoring falls both on the UK NA, as aforementioned, but also on you as the beneficiary and Project Manager. **You will be accountable to the UK NA for the implementation of the project, the use of the awarded funding and any amounts paid directly to your partners and participants.** Your role for monitoring is also detailed in Article I.4 (in GA) / Article 4 in Annex VI (FA) and runs throughout the Grant Agreement/Framework Agreement and the Annexes. Monitoring covers the activities of your project, the financial management of your project as well as your project partners and participants.

Your Grant Agreement/Framework Agreement details what you need to have in place regarding the level of monitoring and support to ensure the safekeeping of your participants and help you to understand the expectations that we have of you as the beneficiary. It is essential that you continue to consult the 2020 Corps Guide and your agreement to ensure compliance with the European Solidarity Corps rules for the year in which you received the funding for your project and that you contact the UK NA for further guidance where needed.



## 4.1 Management of your project

### 4.1.1 Project Monitoring

When it comes to monitoring your project, you will need to ensure that it is progressing in line with your application. Your role in monitoring also includes ensuring compliance with your Grant Agreement/Framework Agreement, the provisions of your Erasmus+ volunteering accreditation/Quality Label as well as checking that you are adhering to the roles and responsibilities that you set out in your application and agreed with your project partners.

You will need to monitor your project finances too, and make sure you are familiar with the various budget transfers that you can and cannot do. It may be easier to see your project as consisting of a series of mini projects, each placement being such a mini project. **All funds for participants (i.e. Travel, Inclusion Support, Pocket Money and Linguistic Support – if applicable) must be spent on or given to the participants.** This leaves Organisational Support and/or Exceptional Costs and Complementary Activities Costs, if applicable, which is the funding available for you, as the coordinator, to aid with the costs of implementing project mobilities.

#### Impact of COVID-19

The UK NA understands that COVID-19 related restrictions are still common across the world and in the UK and this might affect the development of your project. In response to this, the European Commission has implemented several mechanisms enabling beneficiaries to adapt better to the external factors surrounding the current pandemic. You can therefore make use of the following:

- **Extend your project duration.** You can request a duration extension of up to 12 additional months in accordance with the latest possible end date and project duration as specified by the European Commission – contact the ESC Team for further support.
- **Apply virtual or blended activities.** Please check the [Virtual Activity Guide](#) and the Addendum of your Grant Agreement – ‘Additional Financial and Contractual Rules Applicable to Projects Organising Virtual Activities and Mobility Tool+’. Note, you will have to register virtual activities on Mobility Tool+. Please note that virtual activities are defined as ‘virtual activities taking place in the home country of the participant’.
- **Apply ‘force majeure’.** Please see the FAQs on our website [here](#) or contact the ESC Team for further support. Further details on evidence to be retained for force majeure to be applicable is provided below.

- **Apply budget transfers.** Please check art. I.3.3 (3.3) *Budget transfers without amendment* within the Special Conditions of your Grant Agreement for existing budget transfers permitted. In addition to this article, you may implement the following:
  - you are permitted to transfer (without amendment) up to **10% of funds from any budget category to Exceptional Costs** to cover costs related to activities in the context of COVID-19 , for example to cover COVID-19 tests or quarantine periods in the hosting country which must also involve virtual activities. Please contact the ESC Team for any further details and read the FAQs on our website [here](#).
  - Additional costs related to **Tier 5 visa and health surcharge** fees could be claimed through a contract amendment request to the UK NA, which will be considered on a case by case basis. Transfers may be made from any budget category into the Exceptional Costs budget to cover visa-related costs, even where no Exceptional Costs budget was requested at application stage. Reimbursement is 100% and must be supported by relevant invoices/receipts. Please note that it is not possible to request additional funding over and above the total grant amount approved by the UK NA.
- **Interrupt an activity** if needed. Please consult your Grant Agreement Annex III under the heading ‘Pocket Money’. Please note that you will have to register interrupted activities on Mobility Tool+ and note this in the participant’s Declaration of Attendance.

To apply any of the above mentioned, you should first contact the UK NA for further guidance.

Should you have incurred additional costs due to the impacts of COVID-19 or the change in the UK’s immigration system, please contact the ESC Team at the UK NA to check the updated acceptable costs that you may be able to claim under Exceptional Costs budget category (even if such costs have not been originally claimed) as well as guidance on the documents that must be retained to evidence such costs. Examples may include COVID-19 tests (if necessitated by national authorities only).

Should there be a need to cover costs for **quarantine due to COVID-19**, you can claim those by integrating the quarantining period into the activity duration. For more information, please refer to the Grant Agreement Addendum at either Annex IV or Annex 1 and refer to our FAQs which can be downloaded from our website [here](#). For periods of quarantine occurring prior to the release of the Addendum that have incurred costs, the UK NA will assess costs case by case on the basis of the evidence and information provided to the UK (e.g. at Reporting stage).

When it comes to the requirement to quarantine in a hotel for those participants arriving from red list countries, the associated costs may not be covered. If at the time of booking the ticket, your volunteer was from a country on the red list, we would expect that you are accepting this risk and are ready to pay for the

hotel quarantine or you have requested prior approval from the UK A to cover these costs through your grant. However, if the home country of the participant changed from the amber list to the red list shortly before their arrival in the UK and it was not possible to delay the activity, cancel or change their ticket, you may be able to invoke the force majeure clause. However, you will need to present relevant evidence, such as screenshots or emails from the airline. Also, we would expect you to have relevant travel insurance in place. As indicated above, you should always try to recover any additional costs from the insurance provider before invoking the force majeure clause and retain evidence of this in any claim for force majeure.

Please note that any costs incurred in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic will be eligible **ONLY IF** they are necessitated by the relevant national authorities and a pre-requisite for physical activity abroad, but **NOT** when they are a precautionary measure in a situation where borders are already open and physical activities can be conducted as usual. Retain evidence of compulsory requirements and advice where possible.

Please note, Exceptional Costs will always require justification and supporting evidence, such as invoices or receipts (Invoices must be compliant as per government instructions <https://www.gov.uk/invoicing-and-taking-payment-from-customers/invoices-what-they-must-include>). We strongly advise you to take any screenshots of the online recommendations issued by relevant national authorities regarding international travel. Such screenshots should include a clear date for verifications purposes.

## Monitoring Partners

As far as monitoring of your project partners is concerned, you need to ensure that they are adhering to the rules of the European Solidarity Corps in terms of eligible activities. Your project partners will need to work with you to ensure that participants are supported and safe whilst they are on their placement. They will also need to work with you to ensure that activities are carried out as planned and that they are eligible. You may want to set up a Partnership Agreement before the activities begin, which would cover partners' roles and responsibilities as well as details on payments, including conditions, dates and amounts.

It is important to ensure that your partner(s) is/are clear on their roles and responsibilities within the project, and that you have agreed on the activities that they will deliver. It may also be a good idea to arrange for monthly catch-ups with your project partner(s) and more frequent communication during period(s) when there are activities taking place.

It is the responsibility of you and your partner(s) to negotiate a training programme for your participants and it is important that it is tailored to each individual participant's needs. You should also ensure that expectations are clear where monitoring and mentoring arrangements are concerned. Furthermore, you will need to work with your partners and participants together to establish Volunteering Agreements and to discuss evaluation, dissemination and post-placement support.

You may want to agree a timeline with your partner(s), including deadlines for tasks to be completed, so that you can monitor your partner(s) and your own tasks effectively.

## Monitoring Participants

Monitoring participants is about supporting them and, where possible, involving them more in the project and forming learning agreements. You will need to ensure that participants are supported throughout their placement: before, during and after it. **You may want to set up a Facebook or WhatsApp group and invite your project participants to join. This way you can encourage collaboration and monitor them more closely to offer tailored support and advice easily.**

You will need to work with your participants to ensure they understand their Volunteering Agreements that they sign for their placements, to adapt placements where applicable, and also to ensure that they are aware they need to complete a Participant Report after their placement, where they should provide as much feedback about their volunteering experience as possible.

Insurance and placement activities will need to be organised beforehand and you will need to ensure your participants are aware of the applicable arrangements and what to do if their placement does not go according to plan or if they need help when something goes wrong whilst they are on their placement.

### 4.1.2 Roles and responsibilities

The responsibilities of the **applicant/coordinator** are to:

- Monitor and ensure the project is implemented in accordance with the Grant Agreement/Framework Agreement.
- Act as the intermediary for all communications between the project partners, participants and the UK NA.
- Inform the UK NA of any changes to the name, address, Contact Person or Legal Representative as well as of any legal, financial, technical, organisational or ownership situation change(s) for any of their partner(s).
- Inform the UK NA of any event likely to affect or delay the implementation of the project.
- Be responsible for supplying all documents and information to the UK NA required under the Grant Agreement/Framework Agreement.
- Be responsible for obtaining and verifying any information required from the other partner(s) before passing it on to the UK NA.
- Establish requests for any payments in accordance with the (annual) Grant Agreement.
- If applicable, ensure that appropriate payments are made to project partner(s) without any unjustified delays - all payments should be made directly to the partner(s) by a bank transfer and appropriate

evidence of the amounts transferred to each partner should be kept in case of any future checks or audits.

- Provide all the necessary documents in the event of checks and audits initiated before the payment of the balance.
- Regularly update the online reporting system - Mobility Tool+ (please see the [EC Online Guide for using the Mobility Tool+](#) for further guidance).

The responsibilities of the **project partners** are to:

- Inform the coordinator of any changes to their name, address, Contact Person or Legal Representative as well as of any change to their legal, financial, technical, organisational or ownership situation.
- Inform the coordinator of any event likely to affect or delay the implementation of the project.
- Submit to the coordinator in a timely manner any data, documents or information required for the UK NA reporting, audits, checks, monitoring or evaluation.
- Ensure the appropriate Erasmus+ or Quality Label accreditation is in place before hosting or sending volunteers<sup>3</sup>.

**Please note that for Volunteering Projects, the European Solidarity Corps Quality Label describes the roles of organisations acting as a Supporting or Host Organisation and defines the minimum quality standards that must be respected within any Volunteering Activity.**

Participating organisations will take on different responsibilities and tasks within the project, depending on their role. Each project is made up of a unique partnership, so it may be that some responsibilities are shared out differently. Some examples of areas of responsibility include:

<b>Project Management – Supporting Role</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure effective coordination of the project in cooperation with all other participating organisations.</li> <li>• Distribute the grant between all organisations (mainly a role of the applicant organisation).</li> <li>• Carry out all or some of the administrative tasks of the other organisation(s) involved.</li> <li>• Carry out dissemination and information activities.</li> </ul>
<b>Before the Activity – Supporting Role</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Select and match registered candidates in the European Solidarity Corps Portal or support the registered candidates to find suitable opportunities.</li> <li>• Ensure that the volunteer signs a Volunteering Agreement which includes a learning and training component.</li> <li>• Encourage the volunteer to enrol and take part in the general online training offered through the European Solidarity Corps portal.</li> </ul>

<sup>3</sup> For further information, please read the article about accreditation extensions on the [ESC website](#).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that the volunteer receives support in carrying out language preparation (if applicable, support to carry out the online language course and assessment provided by the Commission).</li> <li>• Provide adequate preparation for the volunteer before departure, according to the individual needs and in line with the Training and Evaluation Cycle.</li> <li>• Ensure the participation of the volunteer in the pre-departure training session, if organised by the National Agency or SALTO.</li> <li>• Ensure that the volunteer is in possession of the (UK) European Health Insurance Card or Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC), as applicable<sup>4</sup>, and is covered by the obligatory insurance plan foreseen by the Corps (if applicable).</li> <li>• Ensure that the volunteer receives the European Solidarity Corps Info Kit.</li> <li>• Stay in touch with the volunteer and the Host Organisation throughout the activity.</li> </ul>
<p><b>During the Activity – Host Role</b></p>	<p><i>Learning, mentoring and support</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that the volunteer attends the full Training and Evaluation Cycle (if applicable).</li> <li>• Ensure that the volunteer makes proper use of the (UK) European or Global Health Insurance Card and only uses the insurance scheme when required by the circumstances (if applicable).</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Identify clear learning opportunities for and with the volunteer.</li> <li>• Provide task related support, supervision and guidance to the volunteer through experienced staff.</li> <li>• Provide support for the learning process and for the identification and documentation of learning outcomes, through EU or national validation tools, in particular Youthpass or Europass.</li> <li>• Support the volunteers undertaking language courses, if necessary.</li> <li>• Identify a mentor who is responsible for providing to the volunteers: personal support as well as support to carry out self-reflection, identification and documentation of the learning outcomes of the activity (through the use of EU or national validation tools).</li> <li>• Encourage contact with other European Solidarity Corps participants whenever possible.</li> <li>• Provide opportunities to integrate in the local community, meet other people, etc.</li> </ul> <p><i>Pocket Money and volunteering conditions</i></p>

<sup>4</sup> Please see the NHS website [here](#) further information.

<b>After the Activity – Supporting Role</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide suitable accommodation and healthy meals (or a food allowance) to the volunteer, including during the holiday period.</li> <li>• Ensure that means of local transport are available for the volunteer.</li> <li>• Provide the due allowance to the volunteer on a weekly or monthly basis.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide support to help reintegration of the volunteer into the home community.</li> <li>• Provide the volunteer with the opportunity to exchange and share experiences and learning outcomes.</li> <li>• Encourage the involvement of the volunteer in dissemination and exploitation of results.</li> <li>• Provide guidance regarding further education, training or employment opportunities.</li> <li>• Ensure the participation of the volunteer in the annual European Solidarity Corps event (if the event is being held).</li> </ul>

**Participants'** responsibilities are to:

- comply with all arrangements negotiated for their placement and do their best to make the placement a success;
- abide by the rules and regulations of the Host Organisation, including the normal hours, code of conduct and rules of confidentiality;
- communicate with the Host Organisation about any problems or changes regarding the placement; and
- complete and submit an evaluation questionnaire (i.e. a Participant Report) in the specified format (standard template), together with any supporting documentation, at the end of the placement.

Please keep in regular contact with the ESC Team so that the UK NA is able to provide on-going help and guidance to ensure that your project's delivery is of the highest quality.

## Accreditation

Please note that any organisations participating in your project must hold a valid and relevant to the role [Quality Label](#) or an Erasmus+ volunteering accreditation at the latest at the start of the activities. It is your responsibility, as an applicant, to ensure that your partners are accredited throughout the duration of the activity they are involved in, otherwise any associated costs will be considered ineligible at the Final Report stage.

Moreover, for Individual Volunteering activities, any **Host Organisations identified in the application form will need to have at least submitted their Quality Label prior to the Call deadline** for a given round.

Please note that Partner organisations can use their current accreditation to take part in activities or mobilities funded under the current programme up to **31 December 2021**.

Please see more details and most recent update on accreditation on our website [here](#).

### 4.1.3 Health and Safety

Ensuring that participants are working in a safe and healthy environment is not just a contractual requirement of running a placement, it guarantees that the participant has a good experience at their placement which is safe. **It is essential that you cover all aspects of participant's health and safety from the start of the project and throughout the participant's placement duration.** The UK NA recommends that you follow your organisation's health and safety procedures and are fully aware of the health and safety procedures within the Host Organisation.

Due to the current and ongoing situation with COVID-19, you must ensure the health and safety of your participants remains at the forefront of all decisions you take. This means observing national restrictions, if applicable, of the host country as well as of the sending country. For the UK, please follow the UK Government's websites:

- for England: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-coronavirus-restrictions-what-you-can-and-cannot-do>
- for Scotland: <https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>
- for Wales: <https://gov.wales/coronavirus>
- for Northern Ireland: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19>.

### Virtual Activities

Considering the exceptional circumstances created by COVID-19, a safe and suitable option for your project participants may be a virtual activity. This is where the Host Organisation has made it possible for participants to continue part of their physical activity placement through virtual learning or other virtual activities. By definition, **a 'virtual activity' is an online activity taking place in the home country of the participant.** The virtual activities where the participant is physically present in the destination country must be registered as physical. For in-country virtual activities, please use the participant's hometown.

Participants may begin an activity virtually, however, this should then be followed up with the physical activity (thus becoming a blended activity). The physical activity must meet the minimum placement duration requirement set out in the 2020 European Solidarity Corps Guide. You should not deliver participant activities virtually in their entirety as this goes against the principles and rules of the European Solidarity Corps programme.

For blended activities, the combination of virtual and physical periods of activities must comply with the maximum duration eligible for the activity type as set out in the 2020 European Solidarity Corps Guide.

Periods of interruption between the virtual and physical activity periods are allowed, provided that the activity is carried out within the project duration and periods of suspension are recorded in Mobility Tool+ and in the participant's Declaration of Attendance at the end of the project.

Virtual activity calls into question the original aims and objectives of your application form and must not be the first option for the beneficiary. The exception is virtual Advanced Planning Visits (APVs), used for the facilitation and preparation of activities for the successful and high-quality implementation of activities, as conducting this type of activity virtually will have a minimal impact on the original aims and outcomes of your project and it is important to conduct this activity, especially in cases where adaptations to activities will need to be agreed for participants with fewer opportunities.

Therefore, you are strongly encouraged in the first instance to extend your project's duration, if possible, up to the maximum eligible duration stipulated by the 2020 Corps Guide to allow physical activities to take place as originally planned, but at a later date and when it is safe to do so.

If you still wish to request that part of a European Solidarity Corps activity placement takes place through other virtual activities (i.e. becomes a blended activity), please note:

- your total grant awarded cannot be increased
- the UK NA may carry out a check by attending part of the virtual activity online
- virtual activities must be reported in Mobility Tool+
- at the Final Report stage:
  - evidence will be required for all budget categories paid on an actual costs' basis, e.g. Exceptional Costs, Complementary Activities, Exceptional Costs for reinforced mentorship, etc. (if applicable);
  - evidence that a virtual activity took place should be provided and may include: a timetable of virtual activities, virtual meeting agendas and screenshots;
  - any ineligible costs or ineligible activity will lead to an automatic reduction in your final payment or a refund to the UK NA; and
  - in any request and in your Final Report the UK NA will be interested to hear why you opted for a virtual activity, over a project extension, which would allow for a physical activity.

Further details on virtual activities can be found in Annex 1 or Annex IV of your Grant Agreement (as applicable) entitled 'Additional Financial and Contractual Rules only applicable to Projects organising Virtual Activities due to COVID-19'.

## 4.1.4 Risk Assessment

Risk assessments should be completed on your Host Organisation's accommodation, office environment, travel arrangements (e.g., travel insurance) and any other areas you deem appropriate. **A good risk assessment will help you to avoid incidents and aid in the smooth-running of your project.** The UK NA recommends that you follow the risk assessment procedures used within your organisation. Further information on risk management and how to conduct a risk assessment can be found on the [UK Government's Health and Safety](#) website.

## 4.1.5 Safeguarding

Safeguarding can refer to either a person or the mechanisms in place to ensure protection against danger, damage, injury, etc. **Particularly when working with young people and/or vulnerable adults, it is important that you have safeguarding policies in place.** This may mean that you have accompanying persons (who have been vetted as appropriate) to travel with the young persons or to assist vulnerable adults involved in activities. Further information about safeguarding can be found on the [UK Government's Disclosure and Barring Service](#) website.

Volunteering activities may involve the participation of minors (young people under the age of 18), albeit not as direct participants (i.e. the target group of your participants could be minors). It is the responsibility of all organisations taking part in the activities to ensure appropriate safeguarding procedures are in place. Child Protection means protecting children from abuse. This could be physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect.

All partner organisations are responsible for minimising the risk of harm by identifying and managing potential risks and having a positive and open relationship with the participants involved in the project. You must consider that whilst in the UK, there are strict child protection laws, while other countries may not have such structures and procedures in place, but it is important to:

- be aware of the situations which may present risks and take appropriate actions;
- make sure that a culture of openness exists between you and the children in your care, so that it is possible for either party to raise or discuss any issues or concerns; and
- make sure there is a sense of accountability with other adults, so that poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour does not go unchallenged.

Please visit [British Council's website](#) to find out more about the Child Protection Policy.

The UK NA requires projects to sign a European Solidarity Corps Child Protection Checklist at the contracting stage. The checklist details the legal and regulatory requirements that must be adhered to when working with children directly or when delivering work that has an impact on children. This is to ensure that when involving

those who are under 18, and therefore classed as minors (e.g. target groups the participants will be working with), beneficiaries will provide:

- a clear line of accountability by having someone at the top level to take leadership responsibility for the child protection arrangements, including the commissioning and/or provision of services;
- a designated professional lead for child protection, with clearly defined responsibilities and cover arrangements;
- a clear and accessible Child Protection Policy, signed by the most senior person in the organisation and available to all relevant stakeholders, including children;
- a written Code of Conduct describing appropriate/expected standards of behaviour for staff when working with children;
- clear policies in line with those from the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) or equivalent for reporting and responding to allegations against staff;
- safe recruitment procedures to carefully screen applicants (both staff and volunteers) and to help prevent unsuitable individuals working with children;
- clear whistleblowing procedures, suitably referenced in staff training and the Code of Conduct arrangements which clearly set out the processes for sharing information; and
- appropriate support for staff, including undertaking mandatory induction and Child Protection training.

#### 4.1.6 Insurance

Organisations participating in European Solidarity Corps must have effective procedures and arrangements in place to promote and guarantee the safety and protection of their project participants. Under the European Solidarity Corps, all participants, including staff, must be insured against the potential risks associated with their involvement in the project activities. The initiative does not define a unique format of insurance, nor does it recommend specific insurance companies. It is the responsibility of project coordinators to obtain appropriate insurance, relevant to the type of project carried out and to ensure the insurance policy is available at a national level. Furthermore, it is not necessary to subscribe to a project-specific insurance if the participants are already covered by the existing insurance policies of the project organisers.

It is the responsibility of the participating organisations to identify the most suitable insurance policy, depending on the type of activity and availability of appropriate insurance in their own country.

For all activities, as a minimum, the following areas must be covered:

- **Travel Insurance** (recommended), including damage or loss of luggage.
- **Accident and Serious Illness Insurance**, including permanent or temporary incapacity.
- **Medical Assistance Insurance**, including after care and special insurance for particular circumstances, such as outdoor activities.

- **Death Insurance**, including, wherever relevant, repatriation costs in case of projects implementing cross-border activities.

You should also establish if the Host Organisation has a relevant Liability Insurance which covers participants in their workplace for the duration of their placement, whether they are at the workplace or not. It is the responsibility of the Supporting Organisation to check that this is in place as the European Commission is not liable for any damage caused by a participant or beneficiary (please see Article II.4.1 of Annex I (GA and FA)).

The level of Liability Insurance coverage and Accident Insurance coverage can vary across different countries, so organisations are advised to check this beforehand.

All participants qualifying under national legislation should apply for the [UK European Health Insurance Card \(UK EHIC\)](#) if the participant has rights under the Withdrawal Agreement or Global Insurance Card (GHIC) or use an existing EHIC if valid, which entitles the holder to reduced costs and/or free emergency healthcare in most European countries during their volunteering placement.

However, the coverage of the applicable Health Insurance Card or private insurance may not be sufficient, especially in case of repatriation or a specific medical intervention. In that case, a complementary private insurance might be useful. It is the responsibility of the Supporting Organisation of the young person to ensure that their participant is aware of any health insurance issues.

Every volunteer must be registered with the European Solidarity Corps Volunteering Insurance Scheme, which complements the coverage provided by the appropriate Health Insurance Card and/or the national social security systems. Volunteers who are not eligible for the European Health Insurance Card are entitled to receive full coverage through the Volunteering Insurance provided by the European Commission.

The Supporting Organisation, in cooperation with the Host Organisation(s), is responsible for enrolling the volunteer(s) in the aforementioned insurance scheme which is run by [Cigna](#) (a global health service company). You will need to register your volunteer(s) two weeks before the voluntary placement is due to start and it should cover the full duration of the Volunteering Activity. This is compulsory for the participants in the Volunteering Projects under the Corps. This insurance provides Health, Third Party Liability and Life Assurance cover.

### Insurance Scheme (Cigna)

The European Commission has launched a new process for enrolling participants onto the European Solidarity Corps insurance scheme. Enrolment of cross-border eligible participants in decentralised projects to the insurance scheme will be done automatically through the Mobility Tool+ (MT+) and the European Youth Portal/PASS. **It is therefore crucial that you register all participants on Mobility Tool+ in good time prior to their departure.**

After you have added the participants onto MT+ before their departure and all the information is complete, tick the checkbox '*In the case of participants entitled to insurance coverage*' and mark the participation as 'Complete'. Please note that this information will be sent to the insurance company to enrol the participant'.

**Additional remarks:**

- If participation is in status **Draft**, then the information about a participant will not be sent to the insurance, therefore the participant will not be insured.
- The information will be sent to Cigna once per week, therefore please encode the participants in MT+ at least 2 weeks prior to their departure.
- Do not encode a participant directly in the Cigna portal; there is the risk of double registration and hence double insurance costs.
- You should keep the participation data updated in MT+.

The contact person of the coordinating organisation will receive an email, confirming receipt of the enrolment and summarising the data that have been received by Cigna. If you notice any information is incorrect, please send your comments to [clientservice2@cigna.com](mailto:clientservice2@cigna.com)

In case of questions regarding affiliations, insurance certificates or to communicate changes of personal data, please inform Cigna by email at [clientservice2@cigna.com](mailto:clientservice2@cigna.com)

In case of questions regarding coverage, a specific claim or about the claiming and direct payment procedures, please contact Cigna by email [erasmusplus@cigna.com](mailto:erasmusplus@cigna.com)

## 4.1.7 Selection of Participants

### Selection

The selection of volunteers can be carried out by any of the organisations involved in the project. Usually, this task is carried out by the Supporting Organisation. Volunteering activities are open to all young people, including those with fewer opportunities. Volunteers should be selected in a fair, transparent and objective way, regardless of their ethnic group, religion, sexual orientation, political opinion, etc. Furthermore, they should not be selected based on their educational level, qualifications, specific experience or language knowledge. **Also, the placement be free to the volunteer.** You may decide to create a more specific participant's profile, if appropriate, depending on the tasks of the placement or the project context.

Please note that in the case of Volunteering Activities under the European Solidarity Corps, when applying for funding, organisations must select volunteers from the pool of young people registered in the European Solidarity Corps Portal. Organisations should carry out their recruitment of young people by registering on the matching tool, i.e. the [Placement Administration and Support System \(PASS\)](#). Should you have any queries about the matching process, please contact the ESC Team.

## Agreement with the Volunteer

Before they begin their placement, each volunteer must sign a Volunteering Agreement with the Supporting Organisation and the Host Organisation. This agreement defines the tasks the volunteer will carry out during their placement and the intended learning outcomes. As part of the agreement, they should also receive the [European Solidarity Corps Volunteering Activities Info-Kit](#), which contains information about what to expect from the Volunteering Activity, how to use Youthpass and how to receive a certificate at the end of their activity. This agreement remains an internal document for partners and volunteers.

### 4.1.8 Participant Withdrawals: how to prevent or manage them?

It is important to ensure that you take all necessary steps to prevent participant withdrawals pre-placement or mid-placement. This includes:

- **managing expectations** to ensure that your participants know exactly what is expected of them whilst on placement;
- providing partners and Hosting Organisations with **clear information** regarding your participants, so that they are aware of the proposed activities and intended outcomes;
- implementing **good quality selection plans** to ensure that you have involved only appropriate participants - the information you provide to your participants from the outset of your project may influence their expectations, so it would be good practice to conduct interviews as part of the recruitment process in order to determine what participants want to achieve from their placements;
- **thoroughly preparing participants** linguistically (especially for a long-term cross-border Volunteering Activity), culturally and practically for their volunteering placement.

The standard procedure, should a participant withdraw from your project pre- or mid-placement, is as follows:

Type of activity	Duration (excluding travel)	Eligible for reimbursement (at the Final Report stage) in case of participant's withdrawal?
Team Volunteering Activity (14 days minimum)	0 – 13 days	No
	14 – 59 days	Yes
Individual Volunteering Activity (60 days minimum)	0 – 59 days	No <sup>5</sup>
	60 – 365 days	Yes

<sup>5</sup> Unless the participant selected has fewer opportunities.

Where the minimum duration has been completed, costs will be reimbursed for the completed days. Should the minimum duration requirement not be met, none of the costs associated with these participants will be covered by the Corps grant and you should seek to make a claim through your insurance policy in the first instance. If a participant decides to leave their placement early of their own accord and without a valid reason, you must follow the terms outlined in their Volunteering Agreement to attempt to recover any funds spent. Please note, as per the terms of the Volunteering Agreement, you can request reimbursement of pocket money funds from the participant for non-active days. However, travel expenses (incoming and outgoing) should be reimbursed to the participant.

Only in exceptional circumstances will the UK NA recognise the cause of withdrawal as a **force majeure** and consider reimbursement of the costs attributed to the withdrawn participant(s). In such case, you are advised to contact the ESC Team to see if it is possible to submit a claim for one or more of the cost components within your (annual) Grant Agreement, i.e. Organisational Support, Inclusion Support, Linguistic Support (if applicable) and/or Travel (including Exceptional Costs for expensive travel costs) as well as Exceptional Costs, if applicable. If so, you must clearly explain in writing the reasons for the participant's withdrawal. Your claim will be assessed by the UK NA who will determine whether it is justified, based on the following criteria:

- whether there was a genuine reason for the withdrawal
- whether you took reasonable steps to maintain the participant's involvement in the project
- whether the costs are genuinely non-refundable (i.e. pre-booked accommodation)

The ESC Team will notify you of the UK NA's decision and the next steps. If you are unable to demonstrate that reasonable steps were taken to avoid such withdrawal, the UK NA reserves the right to request repayment of the corresponding part of the grant. You should therefore ensure you retain and provide any applicable documentation and/or correspondence if possible.

#### 4.1.9 Mobility Tool+

[Mobility Tool+](#) (MT+) is an online management and reporting system all beneficiaries must use to manage their project(s) under the Corps. The tool should be used to register participants and placement information as well as to monitor your budget expenditure, manage participant evaluation reports and create and submit your final beneficiary report to the UK NA. In line with Article I.9.1 (GA) / Article 10.1 in Annex VI (FA), **the beneficiaries must encode information regarding the participants and activities as soon as they are selected and not later than 1 week before the start of the service**. However, as stated above, given the new Cigna insurance scheme implemented by the European Commission, beneficiaries should aim to input information on upcoming participant activities two weeks prior to the start of their activity.

**It is important that the MT+ is kept up to date at all stages of your project life cycle** and that the information is accurate, especially regarding the conducted activities and related unit costs or real costs. This is particularly important as MT+ will automatically send out Participant Reports to all participants for them to complete at

the end of their placements, using the placement dates entered on the tool. Moreover, it is a **contractual requirement** for all projects to report on their project activities using MT+.

Please note that in order to log into MT+, you will need to use the EU Log-In details linked to your email address. The Contact Person and Legal Representative for your organisation will automatically have access to the tool using the email address detailed in the application. Once you are logged in, you can then add additional contacts to assist with the reporting of the project. However, we recommend that the “edit” function in the tool is only reserved for the project coordinator.

For further information and support please refer to the [EC Online Guide for using the Mobility Tool+](#) in order to familiarise yourself with how to use the software.

#### 4.1.10 Support for non-formal and informal learning

Non-formal learning is a key feature of the European Solidarity Corps. In addition to being embedded in the activities, from which the participants will learn, some quality and support measures aiming at supporting and reinforcing the learning development of the participants are foreseen. These include the General Online Training, the Online Linguistic Support and the Training and Evaluation Cycle.

##### General Online Training

[General Online Training](#) is an open access training for registered candidates and participants selected for an activity. It is provided via the European Solidarity Corps Portal. **General Online Training is an open access induction with various modules, such as the mission of the European Solidarity Corps, ethics, integrity, roles and responsibilities of the participants, European values, inter-cultural awareness, thematic training, health and safety, etc.** The general objective of the training will be to support European Solidarity Corps registered candidates in their engagement in quality solidarity activities and contribute to the building of the community of the Corps. The training should become part of a non-formal learning process of participants who will be involved in specific projects and for the candidates registered in the portal, but not yet selected in order to capture their attention and stimulate their motivation.

##### Linguistic Preparation and Online Linguistic Support (OLS)

Please remember that you must ensure your participants will be provided with linguistic preparation as outlined in your application and this needs to be **relevant and appropriate to the placement as well as proportional to the length of the placement.**



The European Commission provides support for language learning and linguistic diversity, with information and links to tools, portals and databases, such as the [European Language Label database](#) for innovative projects in language teaching and learning.

### Online Linguistic Support (OLS)

The [Online Linguistic Support \(OLS\)](#) tool is an online platform designed to support language learning for long-term volunteers, by offering them an opportunity to assess their skills in a foreign language and, for selected participants, by providing an online language course to follow and improve their competence. Further information can be found on OLS [here](#).

Linguistic Support funding for any long-term volunteers who will be working in languages that OLS does not currently offer at all levels, must be requested at application stage under the Linguistic Support budget and could, for example, finance a language tutor for your participants.

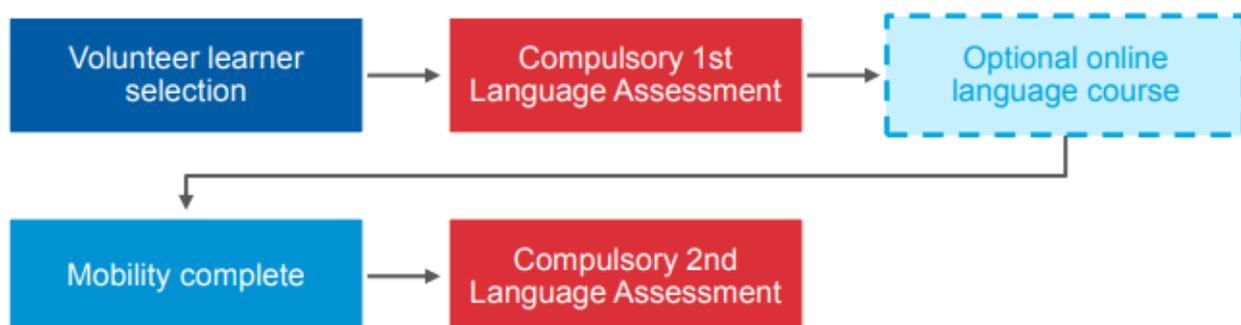
If Linguistic Support or OLS access was requested in your application, then your (annual) Grant Agreement will confirm the amount of Linguistic Support budget or the numbers of OLS access licenses that your project has been granted. If the UK NA finds that it has additional OLS access licenses, then OLS access may be offered to eligible organisations who omitted to request them at the application stage but require them.

For projects with granted OLS access, there are currently three main criteria that define who the OLS is for and who will be given access to it:

- The OLS service is for volunteers in long-term cross-border activities, i.e. **volunteering abroad lasting from 2 to 12 months**.
- The OLS has course content and assessments for 24 languages. Courses for more languages are likely to be developed in the future.
- Except for native speakers, participants using these languages as their **main language of volunteering** can be supported through the online service.

Languages	Language assessment available	Language course available
Dutch, English, French, German, Italian, Spanish	Yes	Yes – at all levels
Portuguese	Yes	Yes – up to and including B2 level
Czech	Yes	Yes – up to and including A2 level
Bulgarian, Croatian, Danish, Estonian, Greek, Finnish, Hungarian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Romanian, Slovak, Slovenian and Swedish	Yes	Yes – at A1 level
Irish Gaelic and Maltese	Yes	none available

The OLS consists of mandatory language assessments which take place before and at the end of the volunteering placement, and of an optional language course to be followed in between the two language assessments.



If you have been granted OLS licenses, then the UK NA will arrange the log-in to the system for your assigned OLS Contact Person, **using the email address provided in your application**. You will be allocated the number of assessment and course licenses as detailed in your (annual) Grant Agreement and you will then be responsible for allocating these OLS access licenses to your participants, allowing them to complete language assessments and/or courses.

### Training and Evaluation Cycle for participants

One of the key features of the European Solidarity Corps is the training and evaluation it provides to the participating organisations and participants. Firstly, **guiding young participants through a non-formal learning process before, during and after their period of activity**. Secondly, **supporting Quality Label/accredited organisations in offering a qualitative frame for the experience to take place**. This is applicable to all participants embarking on a volunteering activity and for all organisations that hold a Quality Label or Erasmus+ volunteering accreditation.

The Training and Evaluation Cycle (TEC) for participants consists of the following sessions:

- pre-departure training (only for cross-border activities)
- on-arrival training (for activities of 2 months and longer)
- mid-term evaluation (for activities of 6 months and longer)
- annual European Solidarity Corps events.

Participants have **a right and an obligation** to attend the pre-departure training, on-arrival training and mid-term evaluation sessions, and organisations must ensure that their participants take part in TEC as it is considered an integral part of the activity. **In addition to the Training and Evaluation Cycle, participants should receive continuous counselling and guidance before, during and after the activity period.**

#### Important note

In the United Kingdom, the organisation that provides on-arrival and mid-term evaluation trainings for the participants is [Experiment in International Living UK \(EIL UK\)](#). They can also offer pre-departure training when organisations send several volunteers abroad at around the same time. During COVID-19 virtual trainings have been available.

**To book your participants on one of the trainings, please contact EIL UK directly at:**

Karen Morris - Cultural Groups & Training Manager

Email: [escordinator@eiluk.org](mailto:escordinator@eiluk.org)

Tel: 01684 562577 / Fax: 01684 562212

Please read more about the TEC minimum requirements and quality standards on pages 61-65 of the 2020 Corps Guide. Page 18 of the 2020 Corps Guide explains the roles and responsibilities of organisations involved in supporting participants through the TEC cycle.

### 4.1.11 Recognition of Learning Outcomes

**It is important that all placements are either formally or informally validated.** It is best practice to recognise the time spent on the placement through a course of study, but less formal methods are also acceptable, such as certificates of achievement created by the Supporting or Host Organisations. More formal methods of validation should be utilised as well, where possible, and these include:

## Youthpass

Every young person taking part in a volunteering activity is entitled to receive a Youthpass certificate. Youthpass describes and validates the non-formal and informal learning experience acquired during the project (i.e. learning outcomes).

Youthpass can also be used during the project activities as a tool to help participants to become more aware of their learning process. For support and more information on Youthpass, please consult the publications page on [Youthpass website](#). You can find a variety of publications that explain the key competences of Youthpass, like '[Youthpass in the EVS Training Cycle](#)', '[Youthpass Unfolded](#)' and other useful information on the website, like [leaflets](#), [newsletters](#), [games](#) or [essays](#).

Through the Youthpass process, reflection on learning becomes more structured and the educational value of the project is strengthened. It makes the learning of the participants more conscious. By putting emphasis on the learning processes and its outcomes, it raises the participants' awareness of learning in a diversity of contexts and helps them to reflect on their learning wishes and needs.

## Europass

The UK NA recommends using [Europass](#) to validate participants' time spent on a placement. Europass is a European wide initiative that aims to help individuals to present and document their skills and qualifications in a clear and transparent way throughout Europe. Europass consists of five documents that enable potential employers to understand which subject has been studied, what training has been completed and how much experience has been gained.

## Language Recognition

The portfolio of Europass documents includes a section called "Language Skills" within the [Europass profile](#). It provides a way of validating linguistic skills gained on a placement as well as adding information about other language training (either formal or informal) an individual may have received. A volunteer will be able to self-assess their language competences based on the [Common European Framework of Reference for Languages \(CEFR\)](#) and can share their results with employers or education institutions as necessary.

### 4.1.12 Evaluation

Evaluation is a key process within your project as it allows you to measure to what extent you have met the aims of the project and identify where improvements can be made. You should **evaluate the performance of the project throughout its lifecycle and as soon as the project has finished** in order to guarantee an accurate recall of events.

When planning your evaluation strategy, you could start by asking yourself:

- What are you evaluating?

- What are your KPIs for the project?
- Who should be involved?
- What methods should you use?
- When should you evaluate?
- How should you use your findings?

To help you answer these questions, you should check your application as you will be expected to follow the evaluation plans set out there.

The following hints and tips should be of help with your evaluation strategy:

- Involve all parties who had a role in the project, such as participants, Host Organisations and project partners.
- Circulate the results of the final evaluation to appropriate personnel and senior management in order to increase dissemination and impact of the project at an organisational level.
- Identify the key improvements that need to be made in subsequent funding applications as the assessors of any future application(s) would expect to see that the results of your past evaluations have been taken into account in the planning of the next project.
- In the Final Report to the UK NA explain how the different forms of evaluations received have led to changes in the project and training provision, but if no changes have been made, please give reasons why.
- Please remember to evaluate each phase of the project lifecycle, from the usefulness of your preparatory activities right through to your dissemination techniques.

Alongside your own evaluation processes, all participants in your activities (excluding accompanying persons) must submit a Participant Report which is sent automatically by the MT+ to the participant after the placement is finished. This is another way for you to evaluate the project and its impact on the individuals involved in it. More information about Participant Reports can be found in section *4.3 Participant Reports*.

### 4.1.13 Impact

The European Solidarity Corps Guide defines impact as **“the effect that the activity carried out and its results have on people, practices, organisations and systems”**. In order to be considered as best practice and to support high quality within your project, you should place a focus on impact at all levels throughout the project lifecycle.

#### Why is impact important?

Hopefully making an impact is what has driven your organisation to apply for European Solidarity Corps funding and you wish to improve training practices and provisions in your area, region and the partner

organisations' localities. Impact is also very important because it is one of the key areas against which your project will be assessed by the UK NA, so that we are able to offer support when needed and spread the word about what can be achieved with the awarded funding. As a result, it is imperative that you are clear from the start about what impacts you want to achieve with your project and that you set up appropriate mechanisms to measure these impacts.

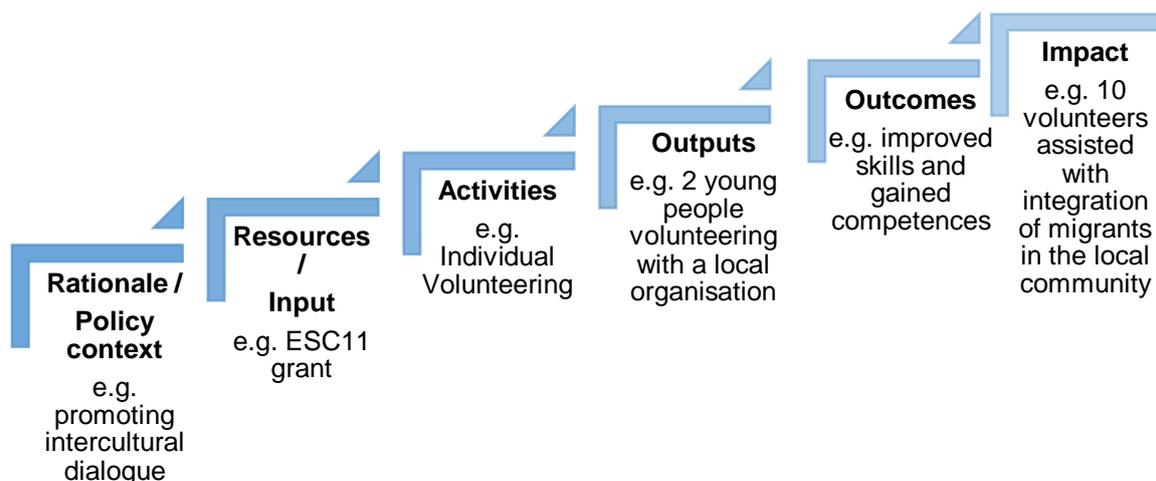
The UK NA will ask for information about your project's impact during UK NA monitoring activities, the Interim Report(s) (where applicable) and the Final Report. Whilst detailed guidance is provided before you submit your Final Report, you should understand that impact (e.g. on participants, on participating organisations, and on a local, national and/or international scales) is one of the three key assessment areas of your project.

### Important note

Do not just wait for the ESC Team to ask about the impact of your project during regular UK NA monitoring activities. Give them a call or email them to let them know about your project successes! They might even put your project forward for a case study which could be promoted on our website or at our events around the UK.

## Creating impact

The model below shows how you can create impact and gives examples to illustrate each step of the process. This starts from identifying the rationale for your project activities, i.e. the needs of your participants and any other relevant stakeholder(s). This also establishes a baseline against which the progress can be measured. You should then make sure that all the project activities and results fit well with your rationale.



You can also use the Impact+ model to help you in considering your project impact and how to measure it. Please see the video and material [here](#) for details.

## How to effectively report on impact at the Final Report stage?

Check your application to remind yourself of the project's expected impact and the methods you planned to use in order to create and capture such impact. At the Final Report stage, you will be expected to report as a minimum on the outcomes of your planned impacts and actions, but feel free to add to your original plans any supplementary information, such as unexpected impact(s).

Avoid copying and pasting any information included in the application form into your Final Report: your report should contain meaningful details about what impacts were **actually achieved**; whether targets were met and, if not, why.

If the timeframe for submitting your Final Report does not allow you to see the medium- or long-term impact of your project, please detail how you intend to evaluate this in the future.

## Measuring impact - Hints and Tips

Here are some practical suggestions on how to evaluate the outcomes and impacts of your project:

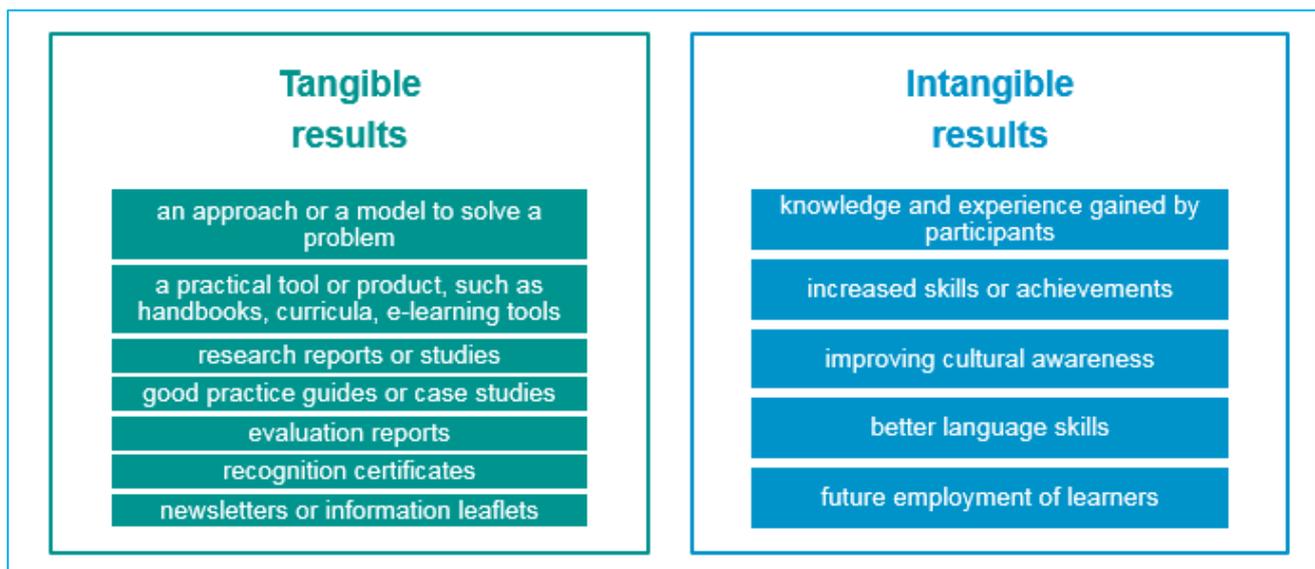
- Use an **evaluation form** that participants can complete to evaluate different aspects of the placement as well as the impact it has had on them. Ask participants to complete forms **at different stages of the project**, so they can better measure any developments and differences. For instance, they can fill in forms before, during and after their placement, as long as the evaluation form contains the same type of questions in order to allow you to draw any comparisons (e.g. on a scale of 1 -10, how confident do you feel?).
- If you have a small number of participants, you could **also interview them** at different stages of your project.
- **Don't involve just your participants, but also others who work with them**, e.g. line managers and the end users. You could also ask a member of staff to observe the training that is delivered before and after the placement.
- For short periods, give participants **daily or weekly diaries**, which ask how the activities undertaken have impacted on their needs and met the aims they have set for themselves. Be clear with your participants that these diaries are not a private account and that they will be shared. A common format would help with this.
- Explore some **innovative evaluation tools** such as **Blobtree**. This tool uses a simple cartoon image of non-specific characters and asks you to consider which character you most identify with. It could be suitable if you are trying to elicit views from participants who may not be comfortable with expressing themselves verbally.
- Use any **existing KPIs** within your department or organisation and link them to your project.

- Don't be shy to engage with **your partners** and ensure that you capture any impact on them, such as an increased capacity to co-operate at European/international levels.
- Although with projects the most immediate impact is likely to be on the participants, don't forget to capture the **full impact** the project has had or will have on other stakeholders and your organisation as well as on people at all levels of the project, including partners and yourself as a Project Manager. Additionally, you will have to look at the impact your project has had on the local community itself and your target groups.

#### 4.1.14 Dissemination

Dissemination is the process of communicating project **results, successes and outcomes** as widely as possible. You should aim to implement the dissemination plan outlined in your application form, while continually building on this. An effective plan encompasses *why, what, how, when, to whom* and *where*.

Dissemination activities should be considered throughout the project lifecycle, including during and after the funding period, and they should link into your evaluation strategy. Dissemination should consist of both **tangible outcomes** and **intangible outcomes**, such as skills and personal experiences that both project organisers and participants have gained.



Dissemination is an integral part of all European Solidarity Corps funded projects and should raise awareness about your project as well as highlight its outcomes. Participants, beneficiary organisations and Host Organisations should all be involved with the dissemination activities. Good practice and lessons learnt should be implemented within participants' own organisations and through wider networks at local, regional, national and/or European levels.

Projects that have good results on a participant level and on a wider scale may be used as case studies featured on the [European Solidarity Corps website](#) and in other media, which is another way of disseminating the outcomes and impacts that your project has had on participants, organisations and the wider community. If possible, it would be beneficial to not only send the UK NA written information, but also photographic evidence and/or videos of the participants on their placements at Final Report.

## European Solidarity Corps Project Results Platform

The [European Solidarity Corps Project Results Platform](#) (ESCPRP) is a web-based dissemination platform which offers a comprehensive overview of all European Solidarity Corps funded projects and highlights good practice examples and success stories. It serves several different purposes:

- transparency, as it will provide a comprehensive overview of all projects funded under the initiative (including project summaries, funding figures, URL links, etc.)
- accountability
- inspiration

The tool is useful in disseminating the outcomes of your project and makes any tangible resources, products, deliverables and outputs that have resulted from projects funded under the Corps (as well as from a selection of projects funded under the previous programmes/initiatives) available to a wider audience. The platform is a potential source of information and serves as a project database and a community for sharing best practice for projects.

The summary of your project, submitted with your application, will be automatically published on the platform and you are encouraged to update the platform with your project outcomes and results, where relevant, during the lifetime of your project. The platform gives more visibility and exposure to particularly high-performing projects, making it a useful tool to find new partners or projects of interest to you. You should review your contact details regularly and ensure these are regularly updated on the platform.

## European Union (EU) Emblem

Whether you are directly responsible for the management of your project or promoting the available funding opportunities, **you are required to use the European Commission's emblem and associated wording** for any project outputs and promotional materials produced by your project, and to publicly acknowledge the support received from the European Union. This also applies to any events, conferences and seminars organised as part of your project.

When acknowledging the received support, there is a range of ways to display the emblem, such as those shown below:



Co-funded by the  
European Solidarity Corps  
of the European Union

Co-funded by the  
European Solidarity Corps  
of the European Union



Downloadable templates and full branding guidelines for European Solidarity Corps projects in the UK are available on our [website](#) together with a guide to using the EU emblem.

## 4.2 Financial Management of your Grant

Your European Solidarity Corps grant is regarded as a **contribution** to your project costs and is not intended to cover the total cost of running your project. Grants are awarded on a per participant basis under the following budget headings:

- Travel
- Exceptional Costs for Expensive Travel (if applicable)
- Organisational Support (Project Management Costs and Activity Costs)
- Inclusion Support (if applicable)
- Pocket Money
- Linguistic Support (only for Individual Volunteering activities lasting longer than 2 months)
- Exceptional Costs (if applicable)
- Complementary Activities (if applicable and only for Volunteering Projects).

Throughout the project lifecycle, you must ensure that you have in place clear financial reporting mechanisms to manage your European Solidarity Corps grant. At the Final Report stage, only evidence for expenditure incurred under Exceptional Costs and Complementary Activities will need to be provided. **The evidence for the other budget headings should be kept in case of an audit or further checks.** You will be required to manage and report on your project finances via MT+ on a regular basis.

### Important note

In line with Annex III (GA and Annex VI to FA), in order to report on activities to claim funds, you will have to ensure there is a proof of attendance in the activity in the format of a **declaration of attendance signed by the participant and the Host Organisation**, specifying the name of the participant, the name of the organisation, place, the purpose of the activity as well as its starting and end dates, to include any interruption periods or periods of virtual activity.

### 4.2.1. Audit Arrangements

It is a requirement that you set up an appropriate accounting system which identifies all sources of funding and expenditure relating to the project and incurred during the contracted period.

The European Commission may request an external audit or wish to arrange a random inspection of your project accounts after the project has been completed. You are, therefore, required to keep all the original documents relating to the implementation and financial management of your project for **a period of three years or up to five years, if your awarded grant exceeds €60,000.00**, after the final payment has been made. However, if your project is subject to checks and audits after the final payment or there are any ongoing appeals and litigations which last longer than the periods specified above, you must keep the project-related documents until these processes have been finalised.

## 4.2.2. Reporting on Mobility Tool+ (budget categories)

### Travel

Travel is based on the distance travelled per participant and is defined as the cost of the **entire (return) journey** from the point of origin to the host destination, including transfers. Travel is calculated according to the **unit cost** rates detailed in Annex IV (GA and Annex VI to FA) but will be automatically calculated for you on the MT+.

You must report **the place of origin and the place of the activity/placement venue** on the MT+ for each volunteer in the placement. By default, the 'place of origin' is the place of residence of the participant and the 'venue' is the place where the Host Organisation is located (registered address). If a different place of origin or venue is reported, you will need to give the reason for this difference in the MT+.

It is important to note that travel bands will be verified at the Final Report stage and if you have incorrectly selected a higher travel band this will be reduced and reflected in your final payment. You can check the correct travel band is selected by using the [European Commission's Distance Calculator](#).

### Exceptional Costs for Expensive Travel

For this budget heading, you would have had to justify at the application stage that the standard funding rules (based on unit costs per travel distance band) do not cover at least 70% of the travel costs of participants. If you had this budget heading approved for a specific participant, it would have replaced their normal funds allocation under the Travel budget. In MT+ this budget heading is generated only if there was an actual request for it at the application stage, which was subsequently approved. If this is the case, at the Final Report stage you will have to provide details on the departure and destination locations, and register the exact amount claimed, along with any invoices/receipts/tickets to evidence this cost.

This budget category covers travel costs from and to outermost regions, including costs for the use of cleaner, lower carbon emission means of transport, which can result in expensive travel costs.

## Organisational Support - Project Management Costs

These funds form a contribution to costs linked to the project's management costs, for example planning, finances, coordination and communication between partners as well as administrative costs. They are calculated based on the number of participants in the project activities, excluding accompanying persons, with the following rates:

- €2,000.00 per Volunteering Team activity
- €225.00 per participant in an Individual Volunteering activity
- A maximum of €4,500.00 per project can be awarded under this budget category.

The above amounts will have been allocated automatically by the system and will appear on MT+ without any option for you to amend them.

## Organisational Support - Activity Costs

These funds form a contribution to any costs directly linked to the implementation of the volunteering activities and can include costs for:

- selection of participants and their preparation (i.e. task-related, intercultural and linguistic)
- monitoring and supporting participants during the activity
- validating learning outcomes
- costs linked to subsistence of participants (excluding Advance Planning Visits).

Organisational Support is provided in a form of a **unit cost** calculated per participant per day of an activity (including any travel days), including accompanying persons. The list of all applicable rates can be found in Annex IV (GA and Annex VI to FA). You also have an option, through agreements with your partners, **to share the awarded Organisational Support funds with those organisations that bear the costs of implementing project activities**.

Note that this budget category will receive 35% of the normal rate of Organisational Support - Activity Costs budget per participant, where a participant is undertaking **virtual activities** in the sending country. For more information, please refer to Addendum on virtual activities to your Grant Agreement.

## Inclusion Support

This budget heading is calculated on a **unit cost** basis per participant (but excluding accompanying people), according to the country of destination and the duration of the activity (including any travel days). The costs are directly linked to the implementation of **volunteering activities involving participants with fewer opportunities, including participants with special needs** (e.g. preparation, reinforced mentorship, monitoring and support of participation), excluding subsistence.

Costs for reinforced mentorship would have been requested in cases where additional mentoring time and meetings are required to support a volunteer with fewer opportunities in completing their volunteering

placement. Reinforced mentorship targets successful implementation of the project by enabling the volunteer to gain as much autonomy in this as possible and may include measures for personal support. All requests for reinforced mentorship costs will need to be justified and the measures to support the volunteer(s) clearly described, with a full costs' breakdown included. Please note that reinforced mentorship is to support participants with fewer opportunities only.

This budget heading is generated in MT+ only if participants have been recorded at the application stage as having fewer opportunities or special needs. Further to this, it is important to note that when recording your volunteers in MT+, you will have to specify if they are with fewer opportunities or special needs and the system will allocate the specific amounts accordingly, based on the unit cost rate for the host country and the actual duration of the activity.

## Pocket Money

The Pocket Money budget heading is defined as the **contribution to additional personal expenses** incurred by your participants during the activity, excluding accompanying persons. It is calculated on a **unit cost** basis and is payable according to the country of destination and the duration of the placement. Travel days should also be included if applicable, in which case you will receive Pocket Money for those days as well, but only if this has been included in your original application and approved by the UK NA, or if this is resulting from a budget transfer.

When making payments to participants, you may do this in the form of a bank transfer, pre-paid payment cards or, if this is not possible, in cash. **Participants must receive all of the Pocket Money funding awarded to them.** Please ensure you keep relevant evidence confirming that funds have been received by your participants, including dates and amounts.

### Important note

Beneficiaries are required to retain evidence of payments to participants in all instances. This may be in the form of invoices for payments made directly by the partners or in the form of receipts/ bank transfers signed by the participants. During On the Spot Checks, the UK NA will require this evidence to be provided, alongside any other supporting materials, to verify the reality and eligibility of undertaken activities.

European Solidarity Corps participants must receive the full amount of Pocket Money calculated for the entire duration of their placement. If cash payments are made to participants, you are required to obtain **signed receipts** from the individuals concerned. For longer-term placements, you should pay Pocket Money allowances directly into participants' bank accounts in **instalments** and keep appropriate evidence of this expenditure.

## Linguistic Support

For languages not covered by the Online Linguistic Support (OLS), Linguistic Support can be claimed for activities lasting at least 2 months. Linguistic Support can only be given to participants who undertook linguistic learning in the language required for their activity.

You should use the MT+ to report whether language preparation was given to each participant using the Linguistic Support funding. The tool will calculate the grant amounts for Linguistic Support, based on the **unit cost** rate at EUR 150.00 per participant.

You can find more information on the OLS and start with the language assessment on its dedicated [website](#).

## Exceptional Costs

This budget category covers the following **actual costs**:

- costs for providing a financial guarantee, if the UK NA asked for it
- visa and visa related costs (e.g., Immigration Health Surcharge, travel to embassy, residence permits, vaccinations and medical certifications)
- costs for personal insurance for in-country activities
- costs connected to boarding and lodging of participants during an Advance Planning Visit
- financial support for expensive travel costs (as explained above under *Exceptional Costs for Expensive Travel* section)
- costs to support the participation of young people with fewer opportunities or with special needs on equal terms as others related to reinforced mentorship, if at least 80% of the cost incurred is not covered by the standard funding rules of Inclusion Support budget heading based on unit cost - if awarded, this Exceptional Cost would have replaced the Inclusion Support grant
- costs to support participation of young people with fewer opportunities or special needs support on equal terms as others related to reasonable adjustments or investment in physical assets.
- COVID-19 related costs. Please note that any costs incurred in relation to the current pandemic will be eligible **ONLY IF** they are necessitated by the relevant national authorities and a pre-requisite for physical activity abroad, but **NOT** when they are a precautionary measure in a situation where borders are already open and physical activities can be conducted as usual.

Up to 100% of eligible costs claimed under Exceptional Costs will be reimbursed (up to the amount awarded for this budget category), on the condition that relevant invoices and receipts are provided to the UK NA.

To claim Exceptional Costs, you should report the type and cost of these expenses in the MT+, within the relevant activity, and comment on what the money was spent on. Please refer to Annex III (GA and Annex VI to FA) for the information on the supporting documentation required for this budget heading.

At the Final Report stage, you will be required to provide proof of payment for the incurred costs. All provided invoices will have to comply to the national requirements. Please ensure your invoices are compliant as per

the following source: <https://www.gov.uk/invoicing-and-taking-payment-from-customers/invoices-what-they-must-include>

In case of Financial Guarantee costs, 75% of eligible costs will be refunded and up to 80% of eligible costs for expensive travel. For the costs related to the Financial Guarantee, you will need a proof of the cost of the Financial Guarantee issued by the body providing the guarantee to the beneficiary, specifying the name and address of the body issuing the Financial Guarantee, the amount and currency of the cost of the guarantee, and the date and signature of the legal representative of the body issuing the guarantee.

It is important to note, that for the Travel and Linguistic Support budget categories, you can either:

- transfer the allowances in full to participants so that they can make their own arrangements, or
- make suitable arrangements on behalf of the participants in order to ensure all relevant costs are covered appropriately.

You may combine the above two options to ensure fair and equal treatment of all your participants.

### 4.2.3. Eligibility of Costs

Throughout your project, you will need to ensure that the costs you incur are in line with the budget approved by the UK NA, as shown in Annex II (GA and Annex VI to FA). If you wish to make changes to your budget during the project lifetime, please double-check which procedure you need to follow:

- The rules set out in the Article I.3.3 (GA)/ Article 3.3 in Annex VI (FA), or
- Submit a Contract Amendment Request to the ESC Team at the UK NA – this will ensure that incurred costs based on your revised budget are eligible.

The Grant Agreement/Framework Agreement and the European Solidarity Corps Guide provide key information regarding the eligibility of costs. The below table points you to the direction of key sections within the documents that you should review.

Topic	Location of relevant information in the Grant Agreement (GA) or Framework Agreement (FA)	Location of relevant information in the 2020 Corps Guide
eligibility of costs incurred under budget headings based on unit cost contributions	Article I.1, Annex III (GA and Annex VI to FA)	N/A
eligibility of costs incurred under budget headings based on reimbursement of actual costs	Article II.1, Annex III (GA and Annex VI to FA)	p. 77 – 78, ‘Eligible costs’
eligibility of project activities	Article III, Annex III (GA and Annex VI to FA)	p. 25-27, ‘Eligibility criteria’

eligibility of Value Added Tax (VAT)	Article II.19.2, Annex I (GA and FA)	p. 78, 'Value Added Tax (VAT)'
ineligible costs	Article II.19.4, Annex I (GA and FA)	p. 78, 'Ineligible Costs'

Please note that VAT only relates to costs incurred under budget headings based on reimbursement of actual costs, i.e. Complementary Activities and Exceptional Costs.

## 4.2.4 Subcontracting

**Your organisation and staff** are expected to complete the project management and implementation of your European Solidarity Corps project. These **core tasks cannot be sub-contracted** as outlined in Article II.11 of the General Conditions contained in Annex I (GA and FA).

The aforementioned article also outlines the additional conditions which need to be followed if you do find that you want to subcontract tasks forming part of the project and those should be read before entering into any subcontracting arrangements.

Page 84 of the 2020 Corps Guide also provides information on sub-contracting and award of procurement contracts.

If your project is not being managed by someone directly employed by the applicant organisation, a Supporting Organisation or a Host Organisation within the project, then the UK NA will consider them a sub-contractor and therefore the applicant organisation must comply with the above articles in order for their activities to be viewed as eligible.

Furthermore, **the activities that a sub-contracted organisation or individual can deliver within the project are also limited to non-core project activities.**

### Important note

#### *Ineligible costs*

Please note that any payments for contributions in kind from third parties are not eligible under the financial rules of the European Solidarity Corps. For example, any work carried out on your behalf to support submitting an application cannot be paid for by any part of the grant from your successful application.

## 4.2.5 Exchange Rates

Please note that the UK NA will make all grant payments in Euro.

You are strongly advised to set up a Euro bank account as any costs incurred because of exchange rates will not be covered by the grant.

For projects that received a pre-financing payment, to convert any costs incurred in currencies other than Euro, as per Article I.4.9 in Special Conditions (GA) / Article 4.6 in Annex VI – Special Conditions (FA), you should use the monthly exchange rate established by the Commission and published on its website ([https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/how-eu-funding-works/information-contractors-and-beneficiaries/exchange-rate-infoeuro\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/how-eu-funding-works/information-contractors-and-beneficiaries/exchange-rate-infoeuro_en)) applicable on the day you received your pre-financing payment from the UK NA. You must use this exchange rate until the date of the next pre-financing payment, where the same process applies.

For projects without any pre-financing, you should use the exchange rate based on the monthly accounting rate established by the Commission and published on its website ([https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/how-eu-funding-works/information-contractors-and-beneficiaries/exchange-rate-infoeuro\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/how-eu-funding-works/information-contractors-and-beneficiaries/exchange-rate-infoeuro_en)) applicable on the day when the agreement is signed by the last of the two parties. You must use this rate until the end of your project.

## 4.3 Participant Reports

All participants undertaking a volunteering activity should complete their own individual Participant Report. Once a volunteer has finished his/her placement and the relevant information is completed on the MT+, the tool will automatically send the Participant Report via email to this young person to complete. Therefore, it is important to keep the MT+ up to date with any ongoing activities details and participant email addresses. Participants should complete their reports as soon as possible upon return from their placement. Therefore, it is a good idea to schedule an event for participants to complete their reports together soon after the end of the placement.

The automatic email from MT+, providing the link to the Participant Report, will state “*Do not reply*” in the title and may go to the participant’s spam folder. It is important to advise your participants of this to ensure that they do not delete this email. If participants do delete this email, you can resend them the link to their Participant Report via MT+. The tool will send the link overnight, so the participant should wait 24 hours for the new link to be received. Please see the [EC Online Guide for using the Mobility Tool+](#) for more information.

A Participant Report is a very simple online questionnaire completed through EUSurvey and it covers the following areas:

- Identification of the Participant and General Information
- General Satisfaction
- Quality of the Corps Activity
- Assessing Impact (overall evaluation)

- Learning Outcomes (including competences developed by participants and professional development)
- Future Prospects
- Linguistic Skills
- Certification and Formal Recognition
- General Comments and Recommendations
- Publication and Usage Rights of the Information and of the Email Address.

## 4.4 Payment Arrangements

Each project will have a different payment structure. A typical payment structure will be as follows:

Payment Structure	First Payment	Second Payment	Final Payment
<u>Standard Structure</u> (for the majority of European Solidarity Corps projects)	70% of the total grant amount	N/A	up to 30% of total grant amount and upon the approval of the Final Report

Organisations that have a weaker financial capacity, poor liquidity, poor track record in terms of repayment of refunds, late reporting, loss of financial documents and/or loss of travel evidence may be subject to a different payment structure at the discretion of the UK NA.

You have been notified of your payment structure when you received your (annual) Grant Agreement, details of which will be contained within.

The first pre-financing payment will be made automatically and no later than 30 days after the contract has been signed by both the UK NA and the beneficiary. The final payment will be made no later than 60 days after submission of a satisfactory Final Report and associated documentation to the UK NA.

Please note that the UK NA will make all grant payments in Euros. You must ensure that your bank account can receive the funds in Euros as the UK NA is not responsible for any delay caused as a result of the bank account’s inability to receive such payment(s). **It is advisable to set up a Euro bank account as costs incurred because of exchange rates or bank transfers will not be covered by the UK NA or your European Solidarity Corps grant.**

If your payment structure is subject to a second and/or third pre-financing payment, you will be required to submit an Interim Report(s) to the UK NA by the date specified within Article 1.4.3 (GA) / Article 4.2 in Annex VI (FA). Any further pre-financing payments will be made no later than 60 days after submission of a satisfactory Interim Report **and** if you have spent at least 70% of your first pre-financing payment. If 70% of your first pre-financing payment has not been spent, your second and/or third pre-financing payments will be made once this condition has been met.

## 4.5 Beneficiary Reports

### 4.5.1 Interim Reports

Some beneficiaries will be asked to complete an Interim Report(s) due halfway through the project lifecycle, as detailed in Article I.4.3 (GA) / Article 4.2 in Annex VI (FA). **For beneficiaries who receive less than 70% of the total grant amount as their first payment, an Interim Report will need to be submitted in order to request the next pre-financing instalment of your grant.**

The Interim Report is a document that asks you to provide **a comprehensive overview** of how the project has been implemented and to provide budget information detailing how the grant has been spent to date, including relevant evidence where applicable.

At present, the Interim Reports are in a Word document format that will be sent to you by the UK NA, along with comprehensive Beneficiary Guidance, in order to complete before it is due. However, the European Commission is currently planning to integrate this into the MT+, so please be aware that you may be asked to complete and submit this report in the same way as your Final Report, i.e. via the MT+.

### 4.5.2 Final Reports

All beneficiaries are required to submit a Final Report via MT+ within 60 days following the end of their contracted project end date, as specified in Article I.4.4 (GA) / Article 4.4 in Annex VI (FA). The period for payment of the balance can therefore only start **after** the project end date, and whilst you are able to view and edit the narrative part of the report, **your Final Report must not be submitted prior to the end of the project's contracted period as specified in Article I.2.2 (GA) / Article 2.2 in Annex VI (FA)**. Although the main placement(s) may be completed in advance of the project end date, other activities are also included in your project, such as the full evaluation of activities and dissemination, and those are expected to take place until the end of your project's contracted period. **Failure to carry out these other activities in full up to the contracted end date of your project may lead to the early submission of your Final Report to be treated as a termination of the project.** It may also result in the quality assessment of your Final Report identifying that your project has been poorly and/or partially implemented, which could result in a reduction to the final grant amount, as detailed below and in Article II.25 of Annex I (GA and FA).

Under the 2020 Call, the beneficiary Final Report must be submitted via the MT+. For more technical guidance on how to access your Final Report, please refer to the comprehensive [EC Online Guide for using the Mobility Tool+](#).

All beneficiaries must also gather and retain all necessary information and supporting documentary evidence for expenditure for certain aspects of your grant. Supporting documentation relating to Exceptional Costs and Complementary Activities (if applicable) needs to be sent to the UK NA electronically. Failure to produce

supporting documentation may result in a given cost being deemed ineligible for funding. Information about the supporting documentation required for the Final Report can be found in Annex III (GA and Annex VI to FA). The UK NA will notify you when your Final Report is due and provide you with a comprehensive Final Report Beneficiary Guidance in good time for you to complete and submit your report by the deadline date.

### Important note

Final Report must be submitted online and on time for the final payment to be released (upon a successful assessment of the report). Failure to report or report correctly will result in some of the European Solidarity Corps funding being withdrawn and/or a request for recovery being issued.

## Final Report content

Your Final Report will be made up of a qualitative and financial sections which will be used to assess the extent to which your project was completed, in line with your initial application. Once the UK NA has assessed your Final Report, you will receive a Final Report outcome letter with the score, along with the amount of the final grant instalment.

Final Report Sections	Volunteering Projects (ESC11)	Volunteering Partnerships – Annual Agreements (ESC13)
General Information	✓	
Context	✓	✓
Project Summary	✓	
Overview of project outcomes	✓	
Impact	✓	
Project Implementation	✓	
Project Activities	✓	✓
Participants' Profile	✓	✓
Learning Outcomes	✓	
Project management and governance	✓	
Future Plans and Suggestions	✓	

Budget	✓	✓
Annexes	✓	✓

## How will my Final Report be assessed?

Your Final Report will be assessed by expert assessors on the basis of quality criteria and scored out of a maximum total of 100 points. If the Final Report scores less than 50 points in total, the UK NA will reduce the final grant amount on the basis of poor, partial or late implementation of the project, even if all activities reported were eligible and actually took place. **Your Final Report should therefore be detailed and provide examples of best practice and achievements**, where possible, and explain any issues experienced and how you tried to overcome them to meet the original aims and objectives of the project.

The Final Report will be assessed using a common set of quality criteria focusing on:

- the extent to which the action was implemented in line with the approved grant application
- the quality of the learning outcomes and impact on participants
- the impact on the participating organisations
- the impact on the local community
- the quality of the practical arrangements provided in support of the placement, in terms of preparation, monitoring and support offered to participants during their placement
- the quality of arrangements for the recognition/validation of the learning outcomes of participants
- the extent to which the grant amounts due to participants were transferred to them in accordance with the contractual provisions set out in the agreement between the beneficiary and the participant, following the template provided in Annex V (GA and Annex VI to FA).

In accordance with Annex I (GA and FA) and Annex III (GA and Annex VI to FA), your final grant amount will be subject to reductions for poor, partial or late implementation of the project, which will be applied to the final grant amount for Organisational Support and may be of:

- 25% if the Final Report scores between 40 and 49 points (both included)
- 50% if the Final Report scores between 25 and 39 points (both included)
- 75% if the Final Report scores between 0 and 24 points (both included).

Poor, partial or late implementation of the project may also be established by the UK NA on the basis of the reports from individual participants taking part in the project activities.

## Desk Checks

Some projects will be selected randomly to receive a Desk Check which will be undertaken after the Final Report is received by the UK NA. If your project is selected for a Desk Check, the UK NA will request original copies of supporting documentation to evidence the 'triggering event' and the eligibility of costs claimed in the Final Report, in order to establish the final approved grant amount. Further documents will therefore be requested from you, which should be sent to the UK NA electronically.

## 5. More Help and Advice

Please remember that this Handbook only covers the main areas of the project lifecycle and that the guidance is supplementary to your Grant Agreement/Framework Agreement and Annexes, which you should always refer to first when checking any contractual requirements. Please continue to refer to the 2020 European Solidarity Corps Guide during your project to ensure that you are managing your grant in accordance with the Corps rules. The ESC Team is on hand to help you with any queries you may have regarding your project. You are advised to contact the team directly and in the first instance, via the contact details that have been provided to you with your countersigned (annual) Grant Agreement. Please quote your project reference number in all correspondence with the UK NA.

You can contact the European Solidarity Corps Team by:

Helpline email: [eusolidaritycorps@ecorps.com](mailto:eusolidaritycorps@ecorps.com)

Office working hours (excluding public holidays):

Monday – Thursday 09:00 – 17:30

Friday 09:00 – 17:00

You can expect a response to your email(s) within two working days.

### Social Media

No further activity will take place on our social media platforms. Nonetheless, you can find further information about the European Solidarity Corps by following these channels:



Sign up to our newsletter - <https://eusolidaritycorps.us18.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=5432ce516969b56fd6ea361cc&id=38f50add9f>



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