

2019 European Solidarity Corps Handbook

Solidarity Projects

Version 1: September 2019

Contents

.....	0
Overview of changes.....	3
1. Introduction.....	4
2. Background.....	4
2.1. The European Solidarity Corps.....	4
2.2. European Solidarity Corps Guide	5
2.3. Solidarity Projects	5
2.4 Participating Countries	6
2.5. Target Groups and Participants	6
2.6. Special rules.....	7
3. What does the UK National Agency do?.....	7
3.1 Contracting Process.....	7
3.1.1 Bank Details.....	8
3.1.2 Grant Agreements and Annexes.....	8
3.2 Quality Assurance	11
3.3 Monitoring Activities	11
3.3.1 Monitoring Calls/Emails.....	12
3.3.2 Audits, Checks and Monitoring Visits.....	12
4. What do beneficiaries do?	14
4.1 Management of your project.....	15
4.1.1 Project Monitoring	15
4.1.2 Roles and responsibilities	15

4.1.3 Health and Safety	16
4.1.4 Risk Assessment	16
4.1.5 Safeguarding	17
4.1.6 Selection of Participants.....	18
4.1.7 Mobility Tool+	18
4.1.8 Evaluation	19
4.1.9 Impact.....	19
4.1.10 Dissemination.....	22
4.2 Financial Management of your Grant	24
4.2.1. Audit Arrangements	25
4.2.2. Reporting on Mobility Tool+ (budget categories)	25
4.2.3. Eligibility of Costs	26
4.2.4 Subcontracting	27
4.2.5 Exchange Rates	27
4.3 Payment Arrangements.....	28
4.4 Beneficiary Reports.....	29
4.4.1 Interim Reports	29
4.4.2 Final Reports	29
5. More Help and Advice.....	32

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.

Page number in previous version	Change	Page number in this version

1. Introduction

The 2019 European Solidarity Corps Handbook for Solidarity Projects is designed as a guide to support UK beneficiaries with the management of their 2019 Solidarity Projects (ESC31).

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 Grant Agreement and annexes, which you should always refer to first when checking contractual requirements. **We also recommend you continue to refer to the [2019 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.

Please note that this document may be subject to change throughout the course of the initiative. Changes will be recorded on page 1 of this document, and the most recent version will be found on our [website](#).

Should any information in this handbook differ from either the Grant Agreement or the 2019 Corps Guide, the content of the Grant Agreement, its annexes, and the 2019 Corps Guide will take precedence.

Important note

Remember, if you have any queries or issues that you cannot find answers to within the Handbook, your Project Officer at the UK National Agency (UK NA) is on hand to help and should be your first point of call for any questions related to your project.

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 range of opportunities across a broad range of areas, such as integration of migrants, environmental challenges, prevention of natural disasters, education and youth activities, and 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 [2019 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 2019 Corps Guide for the year in which they receive funding. **The European Commission can make changes to published documents. To ensure that you use the most up-to-date version of the 2019 Corps Guide you should check the [European Commission’s European Solidarity Corps website](#) and download the 2019 Corps Guide.**

The 2019 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 Solidarity Projects. Please see below a breakdown of the important sections for Solidarity Projects within the 2019 Corps Guide.

Key Sections	Page numbers
General Information about the European Solidarity Corps	Pages 4 – 13
Specific Information about Solidarity Projects	Pages 52 – 57
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. Solidarity Projects

Under the European Solidarity Corps, a Solidarity Project is defined by an in-country activity initiated, developed, and implemented by young people themselves, for a period from 2 to 12 months. A group of a minimum of five young people are given the chance to express solidarity by taking responsibility and committing to bring positive change in their local community, upon identifying a topic that is explored and translated into concrete daily activities.

There needs to be a clear benefit to the community, as the project must address key challenges within the community. A project may also tackle some regional or national issues.

A solidarity project typically consists of the following stages:

- Preparation
- Implementation of the activities
- Follow-up (including the evaluation of the activities and dissemination of project results)

2.4 Participating Countries

The European Solidarity Corps is available to organisations from both **Participating Countries** (Members States of the European Union) and **Partner Countries** (EFTA countries, Candidate countries, and partner countries neighbouring the EU). **Only organisations from Participating Countries are eligible to take part in Solidarity Projects (highlighted in green below).**

Overseas Countries and Territories can take part in solidarity 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, Saint Helena, Ascension Island, Tristan da Cunha, Turks and Caicos Islands, Bermuda, Gibraltar, British Antarctic Territory, British Indian Ocean Territory and British Virgin Islands.



2.5. Target Groups and Participants

The main target group for Solidarity Projects are the **young people that initiate, develop, and implement the solidarity activities**. Alongside this, the projects will have the specific target groups identified within the community, who will benefit from the project’s implementation.

Participants involved in a Solidarity Project must comply with the below criteria to be considered eligible:

Participants	Residency	Age	Additional requirements
The applicant group (min. 5, no maximum)	Residents of one and the same participating country	18 – 30*	To be registered on the European Solidarity Corps Portal

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

For any people involved in the project outside of the main applicant group, there is no requirement for registration on the European Solidarity Corps Portal.

2.6. Special rules

A group of young people who plan a Solidarity Project can seek support from an organisation (any public or private body). An organisation may apply on the group's behalf, but their role should be mainly administrative, to support the group in the project life-cycle with administrative and financial tasks. They can also offer support and guidance in identifying and documenting learning outcomes.

Additionally, **a coach** may support young people implementing a Solidarity Project. This 'resource' person could have youth work experience to accompany groups of young people and support their participation. A coach can play different roles depending on the needs of the group, but will not be part of the group itself. Coaches can be volunteers or professionals and there is no age restrictions for a coach.

3. What does the UK National Agency do?

3.1 Contracting Process

Following the assessment and selection process, and before starting any funded project activity, you must have a signed Grant Agreement with the UK NA. It is essential that you sign your Grant Agreement before committing any funds to project activities.

At contracting stage, your organisation will also be assigned a dedicated Project Officer within the UK NA who will be your main point of contact to support you with any issues relating to the administrative and financial management of your project.

3.1.1 Bank Details

To enable the UK NA to make payments, your organisation must be set up on our financial system. We therefore require the full bank details set up for your groups (or applicant organisation). You will be given a unique vendor number, which should be quoted on all future invoices / payment queries. Given that all payments made under the European Solidarity Corps will be made in Euros, the UK NA advises that applicants use Euro accounts for their European Solidarity Corps projects.

Should your group's (or organisation's) bank details change, please notify your Project Officer immediately.

You must also contact us if:

- your applicant organisation name changes; and/or
- your applicant organisation 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 eligibility for future rounds.

You will be asked to complete a new bank details form and upload it onto the [Participant Portal](#)¹, which we will use 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 correctly. We recommend that you keep a copy of this form for your own records.

3.1.2 Grant Agreements and Annexes

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

The Grant Agreement is the 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.

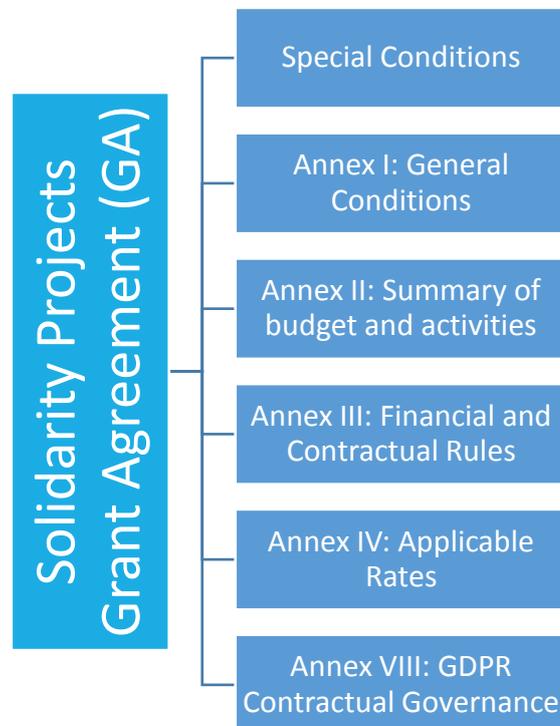
Your agreement is tailored depending on the type of project and activities you have been funded for. All agreements include the Special Conditions followed by several annexes, as applicable to your project.

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

¹A new platform called 'Funding & Tenders Portal' is currently replacing the present Participant Portal. The exact address is <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home>, but you can still access the Education, Audiovisual, Culture, Citizenship and Volunteering Participant Portal at the link provided above.

- Grant Agreement (GA) for Solidarity Projects and Annexes.

Please ensure that you read the entire agreement carefully so that you are familiar with your group's or organisation's contractual obligations.



Special Conditions

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

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

- Article I.2.2 (in GA) – Project start and end dates, and project duration
- Article I.3.1 (in GA) – Maximum grant awarded
- Article I.4.4 (in GA) – Final report and final payment
- Article I.9.1 (in GA) – Mobility Tool+ requirements (reporting)
- Article I.9.3 (in GA) – 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. Any activity that falls outside the project start and end date will not be eligible for funding. This could lead to a reduction in your final grant amount.

Annex I: General Conditions

The General Conditions are standard rules that include information on the legal, administrative, and financial provisions for all European 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

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

The numbers and amounts specified in this annex are fixed. 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.

Important note

For small changes that do not affect the objectives of your project, budget transfers allow you some flexibility to move funds between budget headings within the same activity types (Article I. 3.3 in your Grant Agreement). However, please remember to check this with your Project Officer first.

Annex III: Financial and Contractual rules

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 to provide as evidence of the activity. There is also information about the assessment of the Final Report - which will need to be submitted **after the end date 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.

By signing the Grant Agreement, your group/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 Grant Agreement, your organisation may be required to repay all or part of the grant.

Annex IV: Applicable rates

Here is where you can find the breakdown of all the **applicable unit costs** for the budget headings for your project that were used to calculate individual budget categories. This includes Project Management and Coaching Costs. Information about Exceptional Costs is not included in this document because this budget is based on the actual (real) cost incurred. This document will help you make decisions about any necessary budget transfers, should these be required during the lifetime of your project.

Annex VIII: GDPR Contractual Governance

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

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 and eligibility of planned activities.

You will have a Project Officer at the UK NA allocated to you at the end of the contracting process. 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 your Project Officer will use this to monitor your project's progress against the application form.** You should make sure that you keep in regular contact with your Project Officer so that the UK NA is able to provide on-going help and guidance to ensure that your project is of the highest quality.

You should also ensure that:

- the recruitment and selection of participants is relevant, fair, transparent and inclusive (if applicable);
- the project is relevant to the needs of participants and the community, as well as meeting the objectives of the Corps;
- you have clear management strategies in place, with appropriate personnel responsible for managing the project;
- participants are supported with relevant preparation prior to their involvement in the project and that practical support is available throughout the period of the project;
- there are clear and appropriate monitoring arrangements in place;
- equity and inclusion for participants is promoted; and
- access to participants with disadvantaged backgrounds and fewer opportunities is facilitated.

3.3 Monitoring Activities

Under its contract with the European Commission, The UK NA is required 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 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 to demonstrate clear and transparent management of the projects as this may be inspected by the UK NA and/or the European Commission. Monitoring is also an opportunity for you, as the beneficiary, to ask questions and receive further support from the UK NA.

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, **your Project Officer 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 that 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, you will have the opportunity to provide further information if it was not available at the time of the check and will receive a feedback report. We will give you 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 yourself (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 opportunity for you to take stock of the project achievements and review your progress against the objectives set at the 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 other stakeholders and the participants.** Where possible you should ensure that a participant is available for a short interview with UK NA representatives.

The key areas for discussion are:

- Project management, progress, and implementation
- Recruitment and preparation of participants (if applicable)
- Project evaluation and future activity
- Impact of project
- Dissemination
- Financial information

UK NA representatives will assess if you are delivering your project to **the specifications detailed in your application form, your contract and to the requirements of the European Solidarity Corps** ensuring that your activities are eligible and compliant to avoid any reductions to the grant amount at Final Report and to provide you with advice and support.

Monitoring Visits will explore examples of good practice that you have developed, which 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 – Department for Education - 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 the project implementation. On the Spot Checks verify that the amounts claimed in relation to the agreement are supported adequately by the documentation held by your organisation.

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

- eligibility of participants for the action;
- coherence of participants with application;
- eligibility of activities; and
- quality of activities.

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

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, On the Spot Checks 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.**

Systems 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. This check will also have a strong focus on the overall mechanisms and procedures put in place to run your 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 would 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 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 the project for a period of 3 years (for projects with grants of less than €60,000) or 5 years (for projects with grants of more than €60,000) after the final payment has been made, in line with Article II.27.2 in Annex I (in GA).

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 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 once 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.

4. What do beneficiaries do?

As the beneficiary and Project Manager, **you will be accountable to the UK NA for the implementation of the project, the use of funding awarded and any amounts paid in relation to the project.** Your role for monitoring is also detailed in Article I.4 (in GA) and features throughout the Grant Agreement and annexes. These cover

the activities of your project, the financial management of your project, as well as your project partners and participants.

Your Grant Agreement details what you need to have in place regarding the level of monitoring and support in order to ensure the safekeeping of your participants, and also to help you to understand the expectations that we have of you as the beneficiary. It is essential that you also continue to consult the 2019 Corps Guide to ensure compliance with the European Solidarity Corps rules for the year in which you received the funding.

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 that you are compliant with your Grant Agreement as well as adhering to the roles and responsibilities that you set out in your application and as agreed upon by signing the Grant Agreement.

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.

Monitoring Participants

The monitoring of participants is more about supporting them. You will need to ensure that participants are supported throughout their involvement in the project: before, during and after it. **You may want to set up a Facebook or WhatsApp group to invite participants to join. This way you can monitor them more closely and offer support and advice easily.**

Their participation must be an important non-formal learning experience and it should foster a sense of initiative, active European citizenship and entrepreneurial spirit. Participation in a solidarity project could also be a first step into self-employment or setting up organisations in the solidarity, non-profit and youth sectors.

You will have to ensure that there is efficient coordination and communication between the participants and define clear responsibilities, roles, timeframes, and targets. Working methods should aim to involve all participants of the group in a balanced way through the various phases of the project and activities.

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.

- Act as the intermediary for all communications between the project partners (if applicable), participants and the UK NA.
- 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.
- Establish the requests for payment in accordance with the Grant Agreement.
- Ensure that appropriate payments are made to service providers - all payments should be made directly by bank transfer and appropriate evidence of the amounts transferred should be kept in case of any future checks.
- Provide all the necessary documents in the event of checks and audits initiated before the payment of the balance.
- 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 **participants** are to:

- comply with all arrangements agreed upon for their involvement in the project and do their best to ensure the project is delivered to a high standard and is a success;
- abide by the rules agreed upon, including the code of conduct and rules of confidentiality;
- communicate with the beneficiary about any problems; and
- advisable, but not mandatory - complete and submit an evaluation questionnaire (report) in the specified format (standard template), together with any supporting documentation, at the end of the project (for dissemination purposes).

Please keep in regular contact with your Project Officer 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.

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 ensures the participant has good experience and he/she is safe. **It is essential that you cover all aspects of participants' health and safety throughout the project's duration.** The UK NA recommends that as the beneficiary/coordinator, you ensure there are health and safety rules and/or a code of conduct in place to be followed by all people involved in the project.

4.1.4 Risk Assessment

Risk assessments should be completed on venues, travel arrangements and any other areas you deem appropriate. **A good risk assessment will help avoid incidents and aid the smooth running of the project.**

4.1.5 Safeguarding

Safeguarding can refer to either a person or 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 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](#).

Solidarity 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 the participants will be minors). It is the responsibility of the beneficiary/coordinator 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 beneficiaries/coordinators 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, other countries may not have such structures and procedures in place, but it is important to:

- be aware of situations which may present risks and take appropriate actions;
- make sure that a culture of openness exists between you and the young people 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 National Agency requires projects to sign the European Solidarity Corps Child Protection Checklist at 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 including participants who are under 18 and therefore classed as minors (direct participants or target groups the participants will be working with), beneficiaries will provide:

- a clear line of accountability by having someone who will take leadership responsibility for 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 in place;
- a clear and accessible Child Protection Policy, signed by the most senior person in the organisation (where applicable) and available to all relevant stakeholders, including children;
- a written Code of Conduct describing appropriate/expected standards of behaviour for staff/participants 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/participants;
- safe recruitment procedures to carefully screen applicants and to help prevent unsuitable individuals working with children;
- clear whistleblowing procedures, suitably referenced in staff training and Code of Conduct arrangements which clearly set out the processes for sharing information; and
- appropriate support for staff (where applicable), including undertaking mandatory induction and child protection training.

4.1.6 Selection of Participants

Selection

Solidarity activities are open to all young people, including those with fewer opportunities. Participants should be selected in a fair, transparent and objective way, regardless of their ethnic group, religion, sexual orientation, political opinion, etc.

Furthermore, participants should not be excluded from selection based on their educational level, qualifications, specific experience or language knowledge. **Participation in the project should be free for participants.** You may decide to create a more specific profile, if appropriate, depending on the tasks involved in the solidarity activities or the project context.

4.1.7 Mobility Tool+

[Mobility Tool+](#) is the online management and reporting system all beneficiaries (group or organisation in receipt of the grant) must use to manage their project. The tool should be used to register participants and project activities 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), **at least once a month during the project**, the beneficiary must input and update any new information regarding the participants and the project.

It is important that the Mobility Tool+ 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.

Please note that in order to log in to Mobility Tool+ you need to use the EU Log-In details linked to your email address. The contact person and legal representative for your group/organisation 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 reserved for the 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 system.

4.1.8 Evaluation

Evaluation is a key process within your project as it allows you to measure the extent to which 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?
- Who should be involved?
- What methods should you use to measure progress and outcomes?
- 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 help with your evaluation strategy:

- Involve all parties who had a role in the project, such as participants, and potential organisations.
- Circulate the results of the final evaluation to appropriate people or organisations in order to increase dissemination and impact.
- Identify the key improvements that need to be made in subsequent project activities.
- Identify the key improvements that need to be made in subsequent funding applications, as the assessors of any future application would expect to see that the results of your past evaluations have been taken into account in the planning of that 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 area of the project lifecycle, from the usefulness of your preparatory activities right through to your dissemination techniques.

4.1.9 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 a positive impact is what has driven you to apply for European Solidarity Corps funding, as you wish to improve your community, area, and/or region. Impact is also important because it is one key area against which your project will be assessed by the UK NA; the UK NA can 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 you set up appropriate mechanisms to measure these impacts.

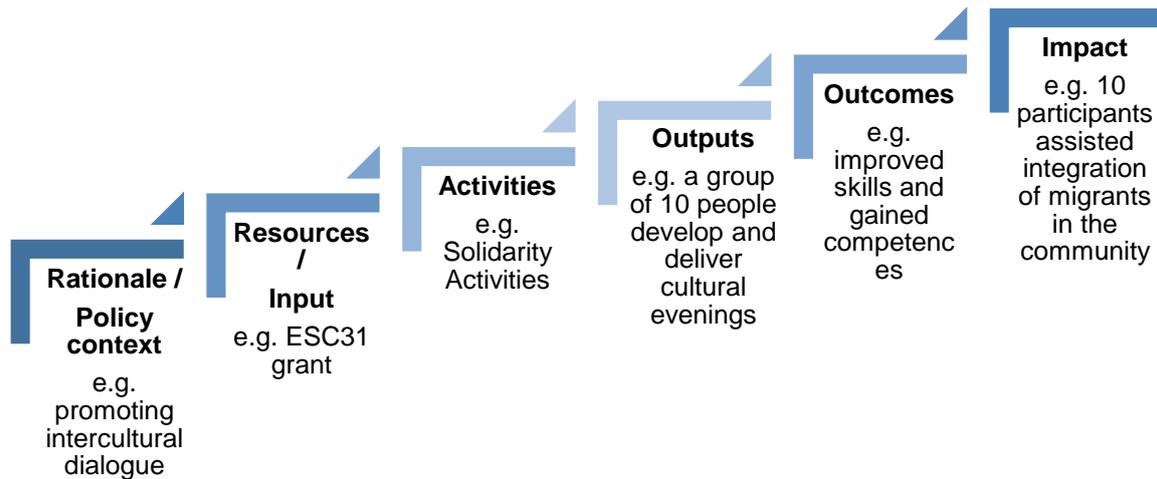
The UK NA will ask for information about your project's impact during UK NA monitoring activities, the Progress/Interim Report (where applicable) and the Final Report. Whilst detailed guidance is provided before you submit your Final Report, you should understand that the impact on participants and on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

Important note

Do not just wait for your Project Officer to ask about the impact of your project during regular 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 establishes a baseline from which progress can be measured. You should then make sure that all the project activities and results fit well with your rationale.



How to report effectively on impact at the Final Report stage

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

Avoid copying and pasting the information included in the application form into your Final Report: your report should contain meaningful detail 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 impact in the medium- to long-term, please detail how you intend to evaluate this in the future to see further impacts and if the impact of the project is sustainable.

Measuring impact - Hints and Tips

Here are some practical suggestions 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 the developments and differences. For instance, they can fill in forms before, during and after their involvement in the project, as long as the evaluation form contains the same type of questions in order to allow you to draw comparisons.
- If you have a small number of participants you could **also interview them** at different stages, for example, to see how they feel they have progressed (e.g. in project management skills, communications skills, team work skills, etc.).
- **Don't just involve your participants, but also other people from the community**, e.g. target group of the project, people from the community that benefitted from your project.

- 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 expressing themselves verbally.
- Measure against any **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** you may have created for your project.
- 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 the community, as well as on people at all levels of the project, be it direct participants of the project or people that were indirectly involved.

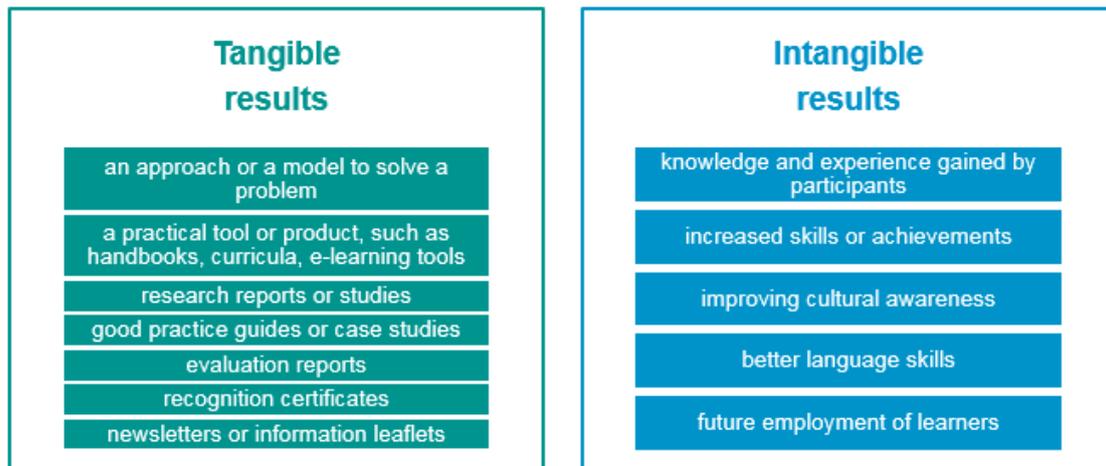
Important note

Given that Solidarity Projects should be directly linked to the local community the participants live in, you will have to ensure impact is measured at community level as well. However, you can also tackle regional or even national issues. As such, it is important that impact is assessed at all levels: local (community based), regional and national (if applicable).

4.1.10 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 participants have acquired.



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 and beneficiaries should all be involved with the dissemination activities. Good practice and lessons learnt should be implemented through wider local, regional, national and/or European networks.

Projects which 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 outcomes and impacts that the project has had on the participants, organisation and the wider community. If possible, it would be beneficial to not only send written information, but also photographic evidence and/or videos of the participants on placement. If you would like to submit a case study to share the story of your European Solidarity Corps experience or to feature in our marketing and promotional materials, please let us know by contacting your UK NA Project Officer or by email at eusolidaritycorps@uk.ecorps.com.

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 will serve 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; and
- Inspiration.

The tool is useful in disseminating the outcomes of your project and makes available 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. The platform is a potential source of information and serves as a project database and a community of practice for projects.

The summary of your project, submitted in 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 regularly updated.

The European Solidarity Corps Project Results Platform is currently under development (and is expected to be launched in 2019). The UK NA will inform you once it is available.

European Union (EU) Emblem

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

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



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 may not cover the total cost of running your project. For Solidarity Projects you will have the following:

- Project Management Costs
- Coaching Costs (if applicable)
- Exceptional Costs (if applicable)

Throughout the project life cycle, you must ensure you have clear financial reporting mechanisms in place to manage your European Solidarity Corps grant, as outline in Annex II of your Grant Agreement. At the Final Report stage, only evidence for expenditures incurred under Exceptional Costs and Coaching Costs need to be

provided. **Evidence for the other budget headings should be kept in case of an audit.** You will be required to manage and report on your project finances via Mobility Tool+ on a regular basis.

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 arrange a random inspection of 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 the **project for a period of three years, or up to five years if your awarded grant exceeds €60,000**, after the final payment has been made. However, if your project is subject to checks and audits after the final payment or there are ongoing appeals and litigations that last longer than the periods specified above, you must keep project-related documents until these processes have been closed.

4.2.2. Reporting on Mobility Tool+ (budget categories)

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, and administrative costs). They are calculated based on the project's duration in months, with the following rates:

- €500 per month

These amounts have been allocated automatically by the system and will appear in Mobility Tool+ without any option to amend it.

Coaching Costs

This budget heading is allocated to cover costs linked to the involvement of a coach in the project (if applicable) and is calculated on a unit cost basis according to the venue country and the number of working days (maximum of 12 days can be requested), with the following rates:

- For the UK, the unit cost for the Coaching Costs is €214.00 per day.

Exceptional Costs

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

- support the participation of young people with fewer opportunities or with special needs on equal terms (please ensure costs requested under this budget are not covered by any other unit cost budget category).

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 and sent by post to the UK NA at Final Report.

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

At the Final Report stage, you will be required to provide the proof of payment for the incurred costs based on invoices specifying the name and address of the body issuing the invoice, the amount and currency as well as the date of the invoice.

4.2.3. Eligibility of Costs

Throughout your project, you 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). If you wish to make changes to your budget during the project lifetime, please double-check which procedure you need to follow: (a) the rules set out in the Article I.3.3 (GA) or (b) submit a Contract Amendment Request to your Project Officer at the UK NA. This will ensure that costs incurred based on your revised budget are eligible.

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

Topic	Location of relevant information in the Grant Agreement (GA)	Location of relevant information in the 2019 Corps Guide
Eligibility of costs incurred under budget headings based on unit cost contributions	Article I.1, Annex III	N/A
Eligibility of costs incurred under budget headings based on reimbursement of actual costs	Article II.1, Annex III	p. 77 - 78, 'Eligible costs'
Eligibility of project activities	Article III, Annex III	N/A

Eligibility of Value Added Tax (VAT)	Article II.19.2, Annex I	p. 78, 'Value Added Tax (VAT)'
Ineligible costs	Article II.19.4, Annex I	p. 78, 'Ineligible Costs'

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

4.2.4 Subcontracting

You 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).

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 2019 Corps Guide also provides information on sub-contracting and award of procurement contracts.

If your project is not being managed by someone in your group, 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. It is important to understand that if an organisation has applied on behalf of an informal group of young people, it will not be considered as a sub-contracting case.

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

Important note

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 costs incurred by exchange rates will not be covered by the grant.

For projects that receive a pre-financing payment, to convert any costs incurred in currencies other than Euro, as per Article I.4.9 in Special Conditions (GA), you should use the monthly exchange rate established by the Commission and published on its website (<http://ec.europa.eu/budget/graphs/inforeuro.html>) on the day you received your pre-financing payment from the NA. You must use these exchange rates until the date of the next pre-financing payment, where the same process applies.

For projects without pre-financing, you should use exchange rates based on the monthly accounting rate established by the Commission and published on its website (<http://ec.europa.eu/budget/graphs/inforeuro.html>) applicable on the day when the agreement is signed by the last of the two parties. You must use these rates until the end of your project.

4.3 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
Standard for a majority of European Solidarity Corps projects	70% of total grant amount	-	Up to 30% of total grant amount on 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 upon receipt of your Grant Agreement, details of which will be contained therein.

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 from 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 pre-financing payment, you will be required to submit an Interim Report to the UK NA by the date specified within Article I.4.3 (GA). The second pre-financing payment

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 pre-financing payment will be made once this condition has been met.

4.4 Beneficiary Reports

4.4.1 Interim Reports

Some beneficiaries will be asked to complete an Interim Report, which will be due halfway through the project lifecycle, as detailed in Article I.4.3 (GA). **For beneficiaries that receive less than 70% of the total grant amount for 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 evidence where applicable.

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

4.4.2 Final Reports

All beneficiaries are required to submit a Final Report via Mobility Tool+ within 60 days following the end of their contracted project end date, as specified in Article I.4.4 (GA). The period for payment of the balance can therefore only start after the end of the project 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 end date as specified in Article I.2.2 (GA)**. Although the main activities may be completed in advance of the project end date, other activities that are included in your project, such as the full evaluation of activities and dissemination, 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 will 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).

Under the 2019 Call, the beneficiary report must be submitted via the Mobility Tool+. 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 of certain aspects of the grant. Supporting documentation relating to Exceptional Costs needs to be sent to the UK NA via registered mail. 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). You should review the documents required before the start of your project.

The UK NA will notify you when the Final Report is due and provide comprehensive Final Report Beneficiary Guidance in good time for you to complete and submit it by the deadline date.

Important note

Your 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 a request for recovery being issued.

Final Report content

Your Final Report will consist of a qualitative and financial section, 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	Solidarity Projects (ESC31)
General Information	✓
Context	✓
Project Summary	✓
Participants of the Group	✓
Impact and Dissemination	✓
Project Implementation	✓
Description of the Project	✓

Budget	✓
Annexes	✓

How will my Final Report be assessed?

The Final Report will be assessed by an assessor 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 local community;
- the extent to which the learning process in the project was reflected upon;
- the quality of the practical arrangements provided, in terms of preparation, monitoring and support; to participants during the project; and
- the quality of the evaluation and dissemination processes.

In accordance with Annex I and Annex III (GA), 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 Project Management and will 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 activities.

Desk Checks

Some projects will be randomly selected 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 (i.e. invoices, receipts, bank statements) to evidence the ‘triggering event’ and the eligibility of costs claimed in the Final Report in order to establish the final approved grant

amount. The UK NA will provide you with Guidance on the documentation required if you have been selected for a Desk Check.

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 and annexes, which you should always refer to first when checking contractual requirements. Please continue to refer to the 2019 European Solidarity Corps Guide during your project to ensure you are managing your grant in accordance with the Corps rules. Your Project Officer is on hand to help you with any queries you may have regarding your project. You are advised to contact them directly and in the first instance, via the contact details that have been provided to you with your countersigned Grant Agreement. Please quote your project reference number in all correspondence with the UK NA. You can contact the wider European Solidarity Corps Team by:

Helpline email: 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 emails and voicemails within two working days.

Social Media

You can also keep up-to-date with the European Solidarity Corps by connecting with us through our social media channels. We advertise events, deadlines and further information through the following channels:



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



Follow us on Twitter - @eucorps_UK / https://twitter.com/eucorps_UK



Like us on Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/EUSolidarityCorpsUK>



View our [European Solidarity Corps UK YouTube channel](#)

