

Action Document for EU Trust Fund

Title	Reference: T05-EUTF-REG-SAH-10 Erasmus+ in West Africa
Zone benefiting from the action / localisation	Regional: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal.
Total costs	Total estimated cost: EUR 10,000,000 for 2018-2019 Total amount drawn from the Trust Fund: EUR 10,000,000
Method of implementation	Indirect management Erasmus+ National Agencies, under the oversight of DG Education and Culture (EAC)
DAC Code	11420 – Higher education
Sector of Intervention of the Valetta Action Plan	Legal Migration and mobility:
Indicator(s) of the Valetta Action Plan	A44. Use the Erasmus+ annual call and relevant national programmes of EU Member States and associated countries to support mobility of students and university staff between Europe and Africa partner countries
Sector of intervention of the Trust Fund	Improving Migration Management
Objective(s) of the Operational framework	1. Preventing irregular migration and forced displacement and facilitating better migration management and returns
Sub-objective(s) of the Operational framework	1.1. Creating economic employment opportunities to prevent irregular migration 1.3. Contributing to better migration management all along the migratory routes in West Africa
Length of implementation	Decision: 64 months Contracts and activities: 52 months
Beneficiaries	200 West Africans young teachers and administrative staff 2,000 High Education (HE) students in Africa 30 HE institutions in West Africa

1. SUMMARY OF THE ACTION AND ITS OBJECTIVES

In the framework of the Valletta Summit on 11-12 November 2015, European and African leaders discussed the European migration situation. The Summit resulted in the adoption of a Political Declaration and Action Plan with over 90 actions including 16 flagship initiatives. One of these 16 flagship initiatives agreed upon at the Summit consisted in doubling "*the number of scholarships for students and academic staff through the EU supported Erasmus+ programme in 2016 compared to 2014*". Further to the success of this flagship initiative, it is anticipated to increase significantly the number of beneficiaries through the international dimension of Erasmus+.

The external dimension of Erasmus+ aims to support Partner Countries (i.e. countries in the world that participate in some actions of Erasmus+ without contributing financially to the programme) to deal with the challenges facing their higher education institutions and systems, including those of quality, relevance, equity of access, planning, delivery, management, governance and internationalisation by offering a balanced mix of actions addressing individuals, institutions and higher education systems.

Through its international credit mobility – ICM action (student mobility between 3 and 12 months to obtain credits in a partner host institution, which are then recognised by the country home institution and; staff mobility), Erasmus+ has an impact on the personal development and employability of students but also a structured and sustainable impact on universities.

This action improves the quality of higher education in partner countries, thus contributing to sustainable development by equipping young people with the transversal and technical skills they need to be active citizens and have quality employment. Furthermore, the action accelerates the use of transparency and recognition tools and helps institutions develop better services to send and receive foreign students and researchers. This in turn builds trust between universities in Europe and Africa and supports further mobility, the recognition of qualifications and brain circulation.

This initiative will support mobility of 2,200 students and university staff between Europe and Africa partner countries. **Building on existing practices and mechanisms under Erasmus+, the creation of a specific window will finance additional mobility flows for targeted countries, as opposed to creating a brand new action.**

2. JUSTIFICATION AND CONTEXT

2.1. Regional context

By 2050, according to UN projections, Africa's population will be 2.4 billion of predominantly young people. Undoubtedly these trends will lead to profound societal and economic developments. In this perspective, creating opportunities for young people is absolutely crucial as they will be the drivers of development and change, in particular on the African continent. Education is therefore a major tool for economic development (entrepreneurship, employability) as well as societal issues (development of human resources, active citizenship) in Africa. With internal high disparities within countries and regions, inclusive education has been an elusive target.

With an estimated population to be 1.04 billion in 2011¹, Africa scores the lowest higher education participation rate in the world with less than a quarter of the global average. The average gross rate of tertiary education enrolment was 8% in 2011² which is significantly less than the average rates of between 20 and 40% for developing countries.

In Western Africa, the countries statistics on higher education³ (2016) show very varying gross enrolment rates in tertiary education (% of population): Burkina Faso (5.56), Cameroun (17.46), Chad (3.45) Côte d'Ivoire (9.16), Gambia (3.1), Ghana (16.2), Guinea (10.85), Mali (6.8), Mauritania (5.34), Niger (1.7), Nigeria (10.2), Senegal (10.39), with a female parity ration ranging from 0.34 in Niger to 0.70 in Nigeria⁴.

At the same time, Sub-Saharan Africa reaches the highest annual growth rate: enrolment in tertiary education grew faster in this region than in any other region over the last four decades, a more than 20-fold increase. Indeed, the figures in tertiary education are rising rapidly (Ghana student enrolment has doubled in the past 10 years) and all of the countries concerned face pressures of quick expansion and enormous infrastructure challenges.

The rapid enrolment expansion channelled students disproportionately in the less expensive 'soft' disciplines and siphoned off research funding to cover the costs of more students. In 2004, just 28% of tertiary students were enrolled in science and technology fields. Likewise, research output fade as Africa devoted just 0.3% of GDP to research and development, and the number of professional researchers fell. Scientific output is still little more than 2% of global total. One sample of African universities in 2015 found only 17 capable of producing more than 20 published scientific articles a year⁵.

In addition, a private sector has rapidly developed in many countries, with an explosion of the number of private tertiary institutions in response to a decline in public higher education and to labour market demands. The rapid enrolment expansion in the tertiary education in West Africa has not been supported by an increase in the quality of higher education. With the exception of some countries, public funding as well as foreign aid was drastically cut. This led to overcrowded campuses with deteriorating physical facilities, out-dated libraries, decaying research infrastructure, and brain drain as the highly qualified faculty flee to better working conditions.

Despite some progress made, academic failure still remains a major issue and the results are not sufficient in terms of graduates' employability in Western Africa. The main causes are the low level of quality of education and training, a dysfunctional governance of education systems, and the inadequacy of the training provided with labour market needs. In a number of countries (including Nigeria), university education is still often following the philosophy of "training for (government) jobs, rather than training for personal and community development and creation of wealth and self-employment.

In view of these challenges, EU policy response needs to focus on strengthening the higher education systems, including developing teaching, research and management capacity,

¹ AfDB Data portal.

² 5% female rate and 8% male rate – World Bank database.

³ UNESCO – UIS – the most recent rate available – generally 2014, 2015 or 2016 – Gambia and Niger 2012

⁴ The only country in Western Africa with full female gender parity is Cape Verde

⁵ <http://www.alvaro-sobrinho.com/2014/05/25/science-and-technology-must-be-the-foundations-of-africas-post-2015-world/>.

harmonising educational structures to facilitate mobility and comparability, quality assurance, recognition of qualifications and the links to the labour market.

2.2. Sectorial context

Inadequacies in quality in education systems and inadequate linkages between education and training on one hand and the labour market on the other hand are significant contributors to high youth unemployment rates, even though access to tertiary education is still too low on the continent. In recognition of this situation, Africa's Agenda 2063 calls for an education and skills revolution alongside creation of new job opportunities while the continental education strategy for Africa proposes paradigm shifts that will greatly enhance quality of education, strengthen links with industry and promote production of innovators and entrepreneurs above job seekers.

At continental level, the African Union's Continental Education Strategy for Africa 16-25 (CESA 16-25) highlights how reorienting enrolments, post-graduate education, research and innovation linked to economic, social and industrial development remain a challenge. The capacity to absorb the massive number of graduates of the secondary education systems necessitates building additional modern infrastructure and providing innovative delivery, such as distance and open/virtual learning, using ICTs and other available means. Indeed, as aforementioned the higher education participation and enrolment has expanded considerably, particularly since the late 1970's. The number of students enrolled in higher education by 2030 is forecast to rise from about 100 million in 2000 to 400 million in 2030.

Tertiary education in Africa is also faced with an aging population of professors and trainers. A sizeable number of the most experienced and better trained faculties will be retiring soon. There is therefore an urgent need for renewal of the teaching force. The working and living conditions of both faculty and students also need to be improved in order to attract more young people.

The mounting cost of tertiary education is also a key challenge. Continental and sub-regional integration schemes (e.g. harmonization) combined with private sector involvement hold a key to expanding access and promoting relevance and advancing quality. CESA also underlines the need to:

- strengthen quality (post)graduate and post-doctoral education to cater for expanding tertiary education as well as meet demand for high level human capital;
- promote international research and development cooperation based on continental interest and ownership;
- expand competitive grants and awards and other support mechanisms to nurture young academics and accomplished researchers.

The Joint Communication for a renewed impetus of the Africa-EU Partnership also highlights that increased investment in people is necessary to provide better quality of education, and more generally enhance the relevance of curricula through innovative and learner-centred approaches. This action is supporting these objectives.

The higher education systems in the 15 ECOWAS countries are largely based on the former colonial systems (French, British and Portuguese). Current developments in the EU under the Bologna process are reflected in West Africa where the countries have a similar organisational base that can communicate but where levels differ still and a uniform credit transfer system does not yet exist.

The two current Africa-EU harmonisation of higher education initiatives are focusing on enhancing the compatibility of the African higher education systems so as to facilitate mobility across the region/continent and also with Europe. The Tuning Africa initiative has drafted an African Credit Transfer System (compatible with the European system) which is to be adopted by Heads of State in 2018. The HAQAA initiative has drafted African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in higher education, which are currently in consultation and will also be adopted at African Union level. These two initiatives involve the main higher education regional bodies in West Africa, namely the Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'Enseignement Supérieur (CAMES), ECOWAS and the recently established Association of West African Universities.

3. LESSONS LEARNT AND COMPLEMENTARITY

3.1. Organisation's experience and lessons learnt

As a response to the challenges aforementioned, and working on the assumption that international mobility of staff and students can facilitate brain circulation among the participating Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and countries, the EU opened the Erasmus+ programme to countries in Africa for mobility and cooperation between Europe and Africa and launched the Intra-ACP and then the Intra-Africa Academic Mobility Scheme to promote the mobility of students and academic staff within Africa.

This experience⁶ has shown that **mobility actions in the HE sector have an impact on the personal development and indirectly on employability of students but also a sustainable impact on HE institutions**. It appeared in particular that, in order to ensure a high level of quality in terms of preparation, mentoring and recognition of the outcomes for the individuals by the institutions involved, mobility needs to take place in the framework of institutional agreements. Mobility also has a positive impact on the quality of higher education by promoting the design of internationalisation strategies, thus contributing to regional and continental policies for the harmonisation of higher education on the African continent, supported by the EU⁷.

In this context, short-term Erasmus-type mobility provides the incentive and enables institutions which need to develop better services to send and receive foreign students, compare and upgrade curricula, support the harmonisation of programmes, improve teaching and strengthen their institutional leadership and management to gain international visibility.

3.2. Complementary actions

The project is consistent and complementary with existing programmes in the area of higher education in the ACP countries:

- mobility scheme (international credit mobility – ICM) within Erasmus+, which aim to support mobility between the EU and partner countries across the world. The ICM action of the Erasmus+ programme is to be carried out in the context of the priorities identified in

⁶ See "Mid-term evaluation of Erasmus + and ex-post evaluation of predecessor programmes" (currently being finalised) and "Evaluation of the EU Development Co-operation Support to Higher Education in Partner Countries (2007-2014)"

⁷ Addis Convention and PAQAF - Pan African Framework for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework

the communications “Increasing the impact of EU Development Policy: an Agenda for Change” and “European Higher Education in the World”.

- joint degree programmes within Erasmus+, namely Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters Degree and Erasmus Mundus Joint Doctorates, which have promoted cooperation and exchanges in higher education between the EU and the rest of the world.
- capacity building in higher education (former EDULINK) within Erasmus+, which aims to foster capacity building and regional integration in the field of higher education through institutional networking, and to support a higher education system of quality, which is efficient and relevant to the needs of the labour market, and consistent with ACP socio-economic development priorities.
- the Intra-Africa (former Intra-ACP) Academic Mobility Scheme and the Mwalimu Nyerere African Union Scholarship Scheme which aim to support and promote mobility of students and staff within Africa.
- The Pan-African University (PAU) which aims to establish centres of excellence and promote cooperation at continental level.

The project is also consistent with current and future higher education projects in North African countries which are covered by the European Neighbourhood Instrument.

The Agenda for Change underlines the importance of supporting inclusive and sustainable growth for human development through support for quality education to give young people the knowledge and skills to be active members of an evolving society. It also refers to the importance of exchange of knowledge and the development of capacity. International donors, including the EU, promote a comprehensive approach to education, a balanced development of the whole sector, building on the gains made in primary and basic education in the last decade.

This means extending the focus and promoting better opportunities for secondary, vocational, technical and higher education to provide job opportunities and to meet the demands every country has for higher-order competencies.

3.3. Synergy and coordination of actors in the zone of intervention

The programme is consistent with and complementary to ongoing and planned programmes in the area of higher education in African countries.

The developments in Africa mirror closely those that have and are taking place in the EU and the fact that the two continents are going through similar processes and have mutual interests in sharing practice is characteristic of the higher education partnership under the Africa-EU Strategy. The links and consistency with EU development and internationalisation objectives in higher education and programmes contributing to this are very clear.

In the table below, the overall policy reforms in both the EU and Africa are described, with the related policy initiatives supporting these reforms and the instruments and programmes available. This table situates the Erasmus+ programme and other related programmes in the contextual landscape, highlighting in this way the complementarity and synergies between instruments.

EU	<i>Development and internationalisation of higher education</i>	Africa
Lisbon Recognition Convention (EU, Council of Europe, UNESCO)	<i>Agenda for Change and EU Higher Education in the World</i>	Addis (former Arusha) Recognition Convention (AU, UNESCO)
Bologna Process (European Higher Education Area – EHEA)		AU Harmonisation Strategy (African Higher Education and Research Space - AHERS)
European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) and ENICs/NARICs (Member state QA and Recognition bodies)		Pan African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework (PAQAF) – establishment of a continental agency, regional and Member state QA and Recognition bodies)
Tuning Educational Structures in Europe/European credit transfer system/CALOHEE – Measuring and Comparing Achievements of Learning Outcomes in Higher Education in Europe (EU)		Africa-EU Harmonisation and Tuning initiative (Tuning): degree programmes, competences, learning outcomes and African credit system
European Standards and guidelines (ENQA, EUA, ESU, EURASHE)		Africa-EU Harmonisation, Quality and Accreditation initiative (HAQAA): support to PAQAF, standards and guidelines for QA and capacity building at institutional, national and regional level (AAU, AfriQAN etc)
Institutional Evaluation Programme (EUA)		African Quality Ranking Mechanism (AQRM - AU)/Quality Connect institutional evaluation (AAU/EUA)
'Traditional' Erasmus (intra-EU)	<i>Erasmus+: capacity building and South-North/North-South mobility</i>	Intra-Africa Mobility
	<i>Former (phasing out) EU programmes (Edulink and Erasmus Mundus): capacity building and South-North/North-South mobility</i>	Mwalimu Nyerere AU Scholarship Scheme (focus: STEM, women, vulnerable groups)
	<i>Member States bilateral programmes : capacity building and South-North/North-South mobility</i>	Pan African University (regional centres of excellence and intra-Africa scholarships)

Some EU Member States (see above table bilateral programmes) also have North-South/South-North scholarship programmes with Africa (full degrees, shorter credit mobility or sandwich programmes, summer schools, etc.): DAAD (the German Academic Exchange Service), the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie, the British Council, NUFFIC (the Netherlands organisation for international cooperation in HE), CIMO (the Centre for International Mobility, Finland), Programkontoret Sweden, Campus France.

The "Study in Europe" website, which is an entry point for international students looking for scholarships in the EU, also provides relevant information in this respect (<http://ec.europa.eu/education/study-in-europe/>).

Other international organisations such as Carnegie also operate scholarship programmes.

Donor coordination

Through the Erasmus+ programme and bilateral programmes in the field of education, the EU as well as a number of EU Member States, international organisations as well as other countries support cooperation in the field of higher education, capacity building and student and academic mobility with Africa. A number of fora both in the EU and Africa are used to share information on strategies, priorities and activities of the different actors to ensure complementarity (the Donor Harmonisation in Higher Education group meets on an annual basis and information on cooperation with Africa is regularly shared through the network of Erasmus+ National agencies a number of whom are responsible for programmes in higher education at Member state level). The Association of African Universities (AAU), as the main implementing body for higher education for the African Union, also promotes coordination amongst donors.

4. DETAILED DESCRIPTION

4.1. Objectives

The **overall objective** of the action is to promote sustainable development and ultimately contribute to poverty reduction by increasing the availability of trained and qualified high-level professional manpower in West Africa. More specifically the programme aims at improving the skills and competences of students and staff, through enhanced access to higher education.

The **specific objectives** are:

- support West African learners in the acquisition of learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competences) with a view to improving their personal development, their involvement as considerate and active citizens in society and their employability;
- support the professional development of West Africans who work in education, with a view to innovating and improving the quality of teaching and training;
- increase the capacities, quality, attractiveness and international dimension of participating organisations so that they are able to offer activities and programmes that better respond to the needs of individuals and contribute to the harmonisation of programmes and curricula;

In addition, ERASMUS + will contribute to enable students and staff to benefit linguistically, culturally and educationally from the experience gained in the context of mobility to another country as well as ensure a better recognition of competences gained through the learning periods abroad. The programme will also raise participants' awareness and understanding of other cultures and countries, offering them the opportunity to build networks of international contacts and to actively participate in society;

This type of mobility is a vector of internationalisation and is therefore good for the quality of higher education and represents an important catalyst in the reform of higher education systems. Universities participating in Erasmus+ will have an opportunity to open up to new influences and new ways of thinking and functioning.

4.2. Expected results and main activities

Expected results⁸:

1. Improved and enhanced mobility of 2000 HE students in Africa;
2. Increased participation of 30 HE institutions, and its students and staff from partner countries in Erasmus+, including opportunities for women and socially disadvantaged individuals;
3. Reinforced capacity for 200 West African young teachers and administrative staff (linguistically, culturally and educationally) and their institutions in managing mobility flows within the frame of inter-institutional exchanges and enhanced capacity in international cooperation e.g. through an increased number of bi- or multi-lateral cooperation agreements with other universities;

In general, this action will facilitate cooperation on recognition of studies and qualifications which will contribute to the improvement of the quality of HE through the promotion of internationalisation, and progress in the harmonisation of programmes and curricula within participating institutions. The participating institutions will increase their international visibility and examples of good practices will be shared.

Main activities:

For participating organisations:

Participating organisations from Programme⁹ and Partner Countries¹⁰ involved in the mobility project assume the following roles and tasks:

- Applicant organisation from a Programme Country: in charge of applying for the mobility project, signing and managing the grant agreement and reporting.
- Sending organisation: in charge of selecting students/staff and sending them abroad. This also includes grant payments (for those in Programme Countries), preparation, monitoring and recognition related to the mobility period.

⁸ The targets will be subject to close monitoring by the National Agencies as the mobility data is gradually input into the Erasmus+Mobility tool by the HEIs. Should there be wide deviations, corrective measures will be introduced within the lifetime of the project (interim phase).

⁹ Programme Countries are those countries participating fully in the Erasmus+ programme. To do so, they have set up a National Agency and contribute financially to the programme. The 33 Programme Countries are the 28 EU Member States, and; Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey. Partner Countries are all other countries in the world.

¹⁰ The Partner countries specifically targeted by this action

- Receiving organisation: in charge of receiving students/staff from abroad and offering them a study/traineeship programme or a programme of training activities, or benefiting from a teaching activity.

For mobility between Programme and Partner Countries, only higher education institutions from Programme Countries can apply and administer the payments for inbound and outbound mobility.

The sending and receiving organisations, together with the students/staff, must have agreed on the activities to be undertaken by the students - in a 'Learning Agreement' - or by staff members - in a 'Mobility Agreement' - prior to the start of the mobility period. These agreements define the target learning outcomes for the learning period abroad, specify the formal recognition provisions and list the rights and obligations of each party. When the activity is between two higher education institutions (student mobility for studies and staff mobility for teaching), an 'inter-institutional agreement' has to be in place between the sending and the receiving institutions before the exchanges can start.

Higher education institutions in both Programme and Partner Countries commit themselves to comply with all the principles of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) to ensure mobility of high quality, including linguistic preparation. Partner Country higher education institutions are not eligible to sign the ECHE however, therefore details of the linguistic support offered to mobile participants are made explicit in the inter-institutional agreement.

In all cases, beneficiaries will be contractually obliged to deliver such high quality services and their performance will be monitored and checked by National Agencies, taking into account also the feedback provided by students and staff via Mobility Tool+ and directly accessible to the National Agencies and the Commission.

For Erasmus+ National Agencies:

- Preparation and implementation of communication strategy targeting the potential applying higher education institutions;
- Preparation of guidelines for call for proposals (scope of the call, eligible entities and partnerships, grant amount and number of mobility flows, conditions for organisation and implementation of mobility by the partnerships, etc.);
- Evaluation of the proposals;
- Selection of proposals and award of grants;
- Preparation and signature of grant agreements with the applicant/coordinating HEI;
- Follow-up and monitoring of projects;
- Results and quality assessment of the projects: impact on the region and country, on the institutions (e.g. number of staff, cooperation/partnerships established), and on individual students (e.g. return of students to the institution, increased employability and full fulfilment of the period of mobility).

As mentioned previously, the creation of a specific window will consist in additional mobility flows for the group of countries targeted by this action and which are already participating in Erasmus+, i.e. building on existing practices and mechanisms, as opposed to create a brand new action, thus ensuring economies of scale and coherence.

4.3. Targeted groups and final beneficiaries

ICM foresees three possible types of activities under this action:

- Student mobility for studies to/from Partner Countries;
- Student mobility for traineeships from Partner Countries;
- Staff mobility to/from Partner Countries

Student mobility:

- **a study period** abroad at a partner higher education institution (HEI);

Students undertake a short term study period (between 3 and 12 months) abroad in another higher education institution. A study period abroad may include a traineeship period as well. Such a combination creates synergies between the academic and professional experience abroad and may be organised in different ways depending on the context: either one activity after the other or both at the same time. The combination follows the funding rules and minimum duration of study mobility.

To ensure high-quality mobility activities with maximum impact on the students, the mobility activity has to be compatible with the student's degree-related learning and personal development needs. The study period abroad must be part of the student's study programme to complete a degree at a short cycle, first cycle (Bachelor or equivalent), second cycle (Master or equivalent).

- **a placement or traineeship** at a partner higher education institution (HEI) or workplace;

Traineeships abroad at a workplace are also supported during short cycle, first, second, third cycle studies and within a maximum of one year after the student's graduation. This also includes the 'assistantships' for student teachers. This type of activity is expected to be introduced for Partner Countries under the Erasmus+ 2018 call, with a deadline for applications in early 2018 and will therefore be eligible for this action also.

Student mobility can be in any subject area/academic discipline.

Staff mobility:

- **training periods:** this activity supports the professional development of West African HEI teaching and non-teaching staff in the form of training events abroad (excluding conferences) and job shadowing/observation periods/training at a partner HEI, or at another relevant organisation in Europe¹¹.

A period abroad can combine teaching and training activities. As already mentioned, ICM has an impact not only on individuals, but also on institutions which need to develop better services to send and receive foreign students, compare and upgrade curricula, improve teaching and strengthen their institutional leadership and management to gain international visibility.

¹¹ Staff mobility from Europe to Western Africa is also eligible if the purpose of the mobility is to support the mobility activities of the project and mentor the students.

4.4. Stakeholders analysis

In line with the commitments made under the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) since 2008, the EU has been supporting the HE sector through various programmes. The Erasmus+ programme is now the main programme for EU-Africa cooperation in higher education, covering both credit and degree mobility and capacity building. Both the Intra-ACP Mobility Scheme and Mwalimu Nyerere AU Scholarship Scheme have aimed, with different modalities, at contributing to the generation and retention of high-level African human resources through scholarships in key areas relevant to Africa's social and economic development.

The EU Commission and the AU Commission work together on the harmonisation of higher education in Africa and the AU Commission is an important relay for the success of this action. The African Union's Continental Education Strategy for Africa 16-25 for 2016-2015 is underpinned by communication, governance and implementation frameworks for its delivery at the national, sub-regional and continental levels and the partnership between the EU and the AU involves all continental and regional stakeholder association in charge of higher education. They are kept updated on all developments in the Erasmus+ programme and will be tasked with supporting this action. The EU is a strategic partner of the Association of African Universities (AAU) and sponsored their triannual conference in Accra in June 2017. Presidents of all constituent universities attending the event were updated on Erasmus+ and the AAU is a continuous relay of information to universities.

At regional level, ECOWAS has made a strong commitment to the harmonisation of higher education across the sub-region. It has established a Western African mobility scheme which is implemented by the Association of African Universities (launched formally at the EU-sponsored International Conference on Quality Assurance in higher education held in Abuja in September 2016). The new Association of Western African universities (AWAU) has been established to support the tertiary education sector in the region. Both ECOWAS and AWAU are members of the Advisory Boards of the Joint Africa-EU harmonisation of higher education initiatives (Tuning Africa and HAQAA) and are important regional relays for the success of this action.

The Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'Enseignement Supérieur (CAMES) is the authority for regulating higher education in francophone countries, a number of whom are targeted by this action. The EU and CAMES have a solid relationship through the Joint Africa-EU harmonisation initiatives and CAMES will be tasked to promote this action within its constituency of universities in West Africa and also in Burkina Faso where it is based. The Presidents and Vice Chancellors of the universities in the region will be alerted to the action through CAMES and AWAU).

At national level, policy dialogue activities and awareness raising at national level are also taking place on a regular basis. Cooperation in Erasmus+, recognition of qualifications and the harmonisation of higher education are on the dialogue agenda between the EU and the Nigerian University Commission which has offered to promote the programme in the country. The EU organised a fair in Senegal in May 2015 and has had contacts with the main universities there (and participation increased significantly in the last application round). The EU Delegation, with the support of the Erasmus Mundus alumni organised an awareness raising event in Chad and discussions are also starting in Niger. The EU organised a Structured dialogue with students, alumni, academics and associations in Côte d'Ivoire on 16-17 October 2017 in association with the Université Felix University Félix Houphouët Boigny

and the Université Nangui Abrogoua, including a Study fair, manned by Erasmus Mundus alumni from Western Africa ,offering information on the Erasmus+ scholarship opportunities to students from the different campuses in Abidjan. The DAAD (which is also the Erasmus+ National Agency for Germany) is also promoting Erasmus+ and the harmonisation initiatives in their work with Western and Central Africa. Regular dialogue is also taking place with authorities in Cameroun and the two main universities are important participants in the Joint Africa-EU harmonisation initiatives. The Erasmus Mundus alumni are also actively promoting the programme in the francophone countries as participation tends to be lower. The EU Commission is also providing regular information, guidance and training sessions to EU Delegations so that they can offer support to their universities in the targeted countries.

A mix of further policy dialogue with national authorities, promotion through the regional bodies and at ground level through the universities and the alumni will be required for countries which are participating less in Erasmus+ to ensure that they take up the opportunities offered by this action. A letter informing the Ministries of Education will be drafted for EU Delegations to send, asking the Ministries to disseminate to all public and private HEIs in the respective country.

4.5. Risks and assumptions

Risk	Level (H/M/L)	Mitigation measure
1. Low take-up of the new programme by HE institutions	L	Information provided to stakeholders, awareness raised to encourage participation
2. Non-return of scholarship holder	L	The scholarship holder must return to complete the degree (so risk is minimised). Risk evaluated at student selection stage and learning agreements ("contracts") signed by student before mobility
3. Non transparent selection procedure for students and staff	M	Clear selection process put in place with objective criteria
4. Difficulties for scholarship holders to leave their country and entering the host country/ies	M	Information provided to embassies to facilitate the visa application process
5. Under-performing students and risk of non-completion of the mobility	M	Mentoring/support system put in place in host universities
6. Lack of experience of HE institutions in managing large scale scholarship schemes	M	Information and guidance provided; obligation to involve "technical" partners
7. Non-absorption of the grant awarded in particular in fragile and LDC countries	H	Close monitoring of the projects and use of smaller grants

The assumptions for the success of this project and its implementation are:

- a) Cooperation among HEIs from different HE systems support the internationalisation process and the design of internationalisation strategies, thus contributing to regional and continental policies for the harmonisation of HE;
- b) Development and approval at appropriate levels by the national/regional bodies of the policy papers and processes that would permit HEIs to develop and implement mobility schemes;
- c) Mobility has an impact on the personal development and employability of mobile individuals as well as on the HE sector improving the quality of the HE systems as a whole;
- d) Mobility of staff and students facilitate brain circulation among the participating HEIs.

The risk of low take-up of the new programme is mitigated by the information provided to the relevant institutions and HE authorities in Africa. This contributes to creating awareness of the new programme and to boosting demand for mobility.

Furthermore, the experience of the first two calls of Erasmus+ open to the countries concerned has been positive. Active information provision will enhance the absorption rate further.

After their selection, it is assumed that scholarship holders will be authorised to leave their country and to enter the host countries. In order to ease the visa application process, embassies of the hosting countries will be sensitised about the programme.

Another risk is that candidates will not complete the mobility for which scholarships were granted. To that end, host universities are expected to have a mentoring/support system to prevent or address under-performing students and will monitor the mobility.

The universities will also assess the risk of a student not-returning at selection stage and students will be asked to sign learning agreements ("contracts") signed before starting their mobility.

The lack of experience of HEIs in managing large scale scholarship schemes might be a challenge to a smooth implementation of the programme. Information and guidance will be provided to the HEIs and to the grant beneficiaries in case of none or limited experience of some of these bodies in a) managing and hosting international students and b) fulfilling their contractual obligations in the context of the programme. Thorough guidance material already exists for Erasmus+ with examples of good practice and will be made available to participants.

There is a risk of non-absorption of the grants awarded in particular in fragile and least developed countries or regions within countries characterised by weak institutions and unstable environment. In those fast changing contexts, a close monitoring and smaller amounts granted should limit the risks of non-full absorption. National Agencies in Member States will be providing advice and guidance to the partners of the project and are well versed in cooperation with the countries concerned through Erasmus+ and Member State bilateral programmes where they exist.

4.6. Cross-cutting issues

In line with other programmes, ICM will address gender equality by promoting a balanced participation of women (both staff and students) and disadvantaged groups in mobility.

A clear selection process respecting minimum objective criteria (academic merit, disadvantaged background, gender balance and favourable treatment of students with

disability) will be put in place by the partnerships to ensure a transparent and fair selection of students and staff. Universities will sign inter-institutional agreements which clearly lay out the quality requirements in this respect.

5. IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

5.1. Implementation modality

The action will be implemented under indirect management by Erasmus+ National Agencies through a delegation by the Commission in accordance with Article 28(3) of Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013 establishing 'Erasmus+.

National Agencies will be responsible for the management of the call for proposals, and for the assessment and management of grant awards, contracting and monitoring of the awarded projects.

5.2. Indicative operational implementation period

The indicative period of operational implementation of this action is 64 months from the adoption by the Operational Committee; the period during which the activities will be carried out and the corresponding contracts and agreements will be implemented, is 52 months. Two calls (one per year) for projects lasting 26 months.

The start and end dates of the activities can vary; the only principle is that the start and end dates of all mobilities foreseen by the project must fall within the start and end dates of the project.

5.3. Implementation components and modules

As already mentioned, the ICM foresees three possible types of components focussing on student mobility for studies to/from Partner Countries; student mobility for traineeships from Partner Countries and staff mobility from and to Partner Countries through call for proposals.

Incoming (to the EU)	Outgoing (to West Africa)
Short cycle	N/A
1 st cycle (Bachelor or equivalent)	N/A
2 nd cycle (Master or equivalent)	N/A

3 rd cycle (doctoral cycle)	3 rd cycle (doctoral cycle) ¹²
Staff training	Staff mobility/preparation ¹³

The awarded grants will fund the organisation and implementation of student and staff mobility as well as the provision of education/training and other services to international students, teaching/training, research assignments and other services to staff.

The amounts of the individual grants may vary depending on the number, type and duration of the individual mobility flows planned in the project proposals.

The grants will be calculated on the basis of lump-sums to cover the organisation of mobility and on unit costs for the implementation of mobility. The use of reimbursement on the basis of lump-sums and unit costs has shown to considerably simplify the calculation of the grant amounts in comparison to the budget-based system leading to a significant decrease of the workload of the contracting authorities and to an accelerated payment procedure for beneficiaries. The rates are made available to participants in the Erasmus+ Programme Guide and its amendments.

An organisational support grant is included in the grant amount. It is a contribution to any cost incurred by the institutions in relation to activities in support of student and staff mobility, both inbound and outbound, to comply with the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education in Programme Countries, and with the principles of the ECHE as reflected in the inter institutional agreements with the Partner Countries involved for activities such as:

- organisational arrangements with partner institutions, including visits to potential partners, to agree on the terms of the inter-institutional agreements for the selection, preparation, reception and integration of mobile participants; and to keep these inter-institutional agreements updated;
- provide updated course catalogues for international students;
- provide information and assistance to students and staff;
- selection of students and staff;
- preparation of the learning agreements to ensure full recognition of the students' educational components; preparation and recognition of mobility agreements for staff;
- linguistic and intercultural preparation provided to both incoming and outbound students and staff, complementary to the Erasmus+ Online Linguistic Support when available;
- facilitate the integration of incoming mobile participants in the HEI;
- ensure an efficient mentoring and supervision arrangements of mobile participants;
- specific arrangements to ensure the quality of student traineeships in enterprises;
- ensure recognition of the educational components and related credits, issuing transcript of records and diploma supplements;

¹² If the individual is assimilated as "staff" of the HEI and the assignment is strictly linked to supporting the quality of the mobility of African students/mentoring

¹³ if the assignment is strictly linked to supporting the quality of the mobility of African students/mentoring

- support the reintegration of mobile participants and build on their acquired new competences for the benefit of the HEI and peers.

The organisational support grant is calculated on the number of all supported outbound mobile participants from Programme Countries and all inbound mobile participants from Partner Countries.

The rates relative to those financing modalities have been defined for the **Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility action** and the same rates could be applied for the call for the proposals of this Action..

After the evaluation of proposals, grant agreements will be signed with the coordinating institution of the partnership. The grants awarded under this call for proposal may cover multiple rounds of individual mobility applications (e.g. selection rounds - or cohorts - that take place in different academic years).

Eligibility conditions

The **partnership** will be composed of the applicant/coordinating Higher Education institution (HEI), and the partner(s.)

The applicant/coordinating HEIs must be:

- a HEI established in a Programme country and awarded with an Erasmus Charter for Higher Education.

The partner country institution(s) must be:

- a HEI (private or public) which provide courses at tertiary level leading to a qualification recognised by the competent authorities in their own country. They must be accredited by relevant national authorities in an African country and may be called “University” or bear any other relevant name (e.g. “Polytechnic”, “College”, “Institute”, etc.).

Under each grant agreement, only the applicant/coordinating HEI will be a beneficiary while the other partners involved will be sub-grantees.

Eligible individual students must be nationals or residents of a Programme or Partner country enrolled in at least the second year of a HEI included in the partnership. Staff must work or be formally associated with a HEI involved in the partnership as a partner.

The indicative duration of the grant implementation period is of 26 months.

The HEI in the Programme Country applies for a grant to its National Agency on behalf of all the Partner Countries HEIs with whom it will be organising mobility. A HEI can apply only once per selection round for a mobility project.

Essential selection and award criteria

The essential selection criteria are the financial and operational capacity of the applicant.

The essential award criteria are relevance of the proposed action to the objectives of the call, design, effectiveness, feasibility, sustainability and cost-effectiveness of the action¹⁴:

The applicant will explain how the project meets these four criteria from the point of view of its own institution (or institutions in the case of applications submitted by consortia) and the Partner countries' institutions.

To be considered for funding, proposals must score at least 60 points in total, with a minimum of 15 points for "relevance of the strategy". The mobilities planned with each Partner Country will be listed in order of merit in a regional ranking in order to allocate the available budget. The grant awarded will depend on the number of mobility flows applied for, the budget allocated to the region and the geographical balance within the region.

Where possible and in addition to the overarching criteria of order of merit, the National Agency will strive to ensure geographical balance within a region and to spread the available budget widely to avoid dominance of a small number of HEIs. The National Agency will strive to be as inclusive as possible, maximising participation of stakeholders without undermining quality, geographic balance or the minimum critical size per mobility project to ensure feasibility.

Maximum rate of co-financing

In accordance with Article 192 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012, the maximum possible rate of co-financing for grants under this call is 100%. Full funding is indeed essential for the action to be carried out, since parallel co-financing by the partners is not foreseen at the time of application but possibly during the implementation of the activities.

The financing mechanism under the Erasmus+ programme provides grants based on the reimbursement on the basis of contributions to unit costs. These types of grants help applicants to easily calculate the requested grant amount and facilitate a realistic financial planning of the project. Special provisions applying to the grants are laid out in the Erasmus+ Programme Guide and its amendments.

Indicative timing to launch the call

Last trimester 2017 (first call) and last trimester 2018 (second call).

5.4. Indicative budget

The indicative budget for the action is EUR 10,000,000. The totality of this amount will be allocated to the grant agreements for the mobility projects. Given the nature of this action and the fact that it is decentralised to National agencies and integrated to the existing Erasmus+ International Credit mobility action, no costs are required for management/coordination, communication, evaluation and audits.

National Agencies receive a share of the 5 main external budget headings for the implementation of the International Credit Mobility on the basis of population. The dedicated

¹⁴ Subject to any slight modifications that may be introduced to the 2018 Annual Erasmus+ Work Programme and made known to applicants through the Erasmus+ Guide and its amendments

budget for this action will be shared between National Agencies who choose to accept this dedicated funding for the region in addition to the other funding available.

National Agencies will ensure that the budget is only used for the countries targeted by the action and is considered as additional to the budget already made available under the programme and for which the countries concerned are eligible to benefit.¹⁵

Components	Amount (EUR)
1 st Call for ICM	4,000,000
2 nd Call for ICM	6,000,000
Management and coordination (Foreseen by DG EAC and National Agencies)	-
Evaluation and Audit (Foreseen by DG EAC and National Agencies)	-
Total of the Action	10,000,000

5.5. Organisational structure and governance of the action

Once the programming approved, this action will follow the organisational and governance structure of the Erasmus+ programme.¹⁶ The Erasmus+ programme will ensure conformity with the Agreement establishing the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa and its internal rules for the implementation of this specific action.

The action will be decentralised to the Erasmus+ National Agencies. The modalities and requirements of implementation are laid out in the Delegation agreements between the European Commission and the National Agencies.

On the basis of the compliance requirements for national agencies referred to in the Erasmus+ regulation, the Commission reviews the national management and control systems, in particular on the basis of the ex-ante compliance assessment provided to it by the national authority, the national agency's yearly management declaration and the opinion of the independent audit body thereon, taking due account of the yearly information provided by the national authority on its monitoring and supervision activities with regard to the Programme.

After assessing the yearly management declaration and the opinion of the independent audit body thereon, the Commission addresses its opinion and observations thereon to the national agency and the national authority.

In the event that the Commission cannot accept the yearly management declaration or the independent audit opinion thereon, or in the event of unsatisfactory implementation by the

¹⁵ 11th EDF

¹⁶ Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing 'Erasmus+': the Union programme for education, training, youth and sport and repealing Decisions No 1719/2006/EC, No 1720/2006/EC and No 1298/2008/EC Text with EEA relevance

national agency of the Commission's observations, the Commission may implement any precautionary and corrective measures necessary to safeguard the Union's financial interests in accordance with Article 60(4) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012.

The Commission organises regular meetings with the network of national agencies in order to ensure coherent implementation of the Programme across all Programme countries.

5.6. Performance monitoring

The Commission, in cooperation with the Member States, shall ensure the overall consistency and complementarity of the action, as it does for the Erasmus+ Programme.

The Commission is responsible for the supervisory controls with regard to the actions and activities managed by the national agencies. It sets the minimum requirements for the controls by the national agency and the independent audit body.

The National Agency is responsible for the primary controls of grant beneficiaries for the Programme actions and activities. Those controls shall give reasonable assurance that the grants awarded are used as intended and in compliance with the applicable Union rules.

The objectives, results and progress of the action will be communicated and updated on a regular basis by the implementing partners via the trust fund monitoring platform.

With regard to the Programme funds transferred to the national agencies, the Commission shall ensure proper coordination of its controls with the national authorities and the national agencies, on the basis of the single audit principle and following a risk-based analysis. This provision shall not apply to investigations carried out by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF).

5.7. Evaluation and audit

5.7.1. Evaluation and audit by the European Commission

The Commission may decide to undertake a final evaluation of this action and, if deemed relevant, a mid-term evaluation for one or more of its components. Evaluations will be carried out via independent consultants. The mid-term evaluation will be carried out for problem solving in the concerned components.

The evaluation reports shall be shared with the partner country and other key stakeholders. The implementing partner and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, in agreement with the partner country, jointly decide on the follow-up actions to be taken and any adjustments necessary, including, if indicated, the reorientation of the project.

Without prejudice to the obligations applicable to contracts concluded for the implementation of this action, the Commission may, on the basis of a risk assessment, contract independent audits or expenditure verification assignments for one or several contracts or agreements.

5.8. Reporting, communication and visibility

Communication and visibility of the EU is a legal obligation for all external actions funded by the EU.

The Commission, in cooperation with Member States, shall ensure the dissemination of information, publicity and follow-up with regard to all activities supported under this action.

Beneficiaries of the projects supported through this action and activities should ensure that the results and impacts obtained are properly communicated and disseminated. This may include the provision of peer-to-peer information in relation to mobility opportunities.

The National Agencies have developed a consistent policy with regard to the effective dissemination and exploitation of results of activities supported under the actions they manage within the Erasmus+ Programme, and assist the Commission in the general task of disseminating information concerning the Erasmus+ Programme, including information in respect of actions and activities managed at national and Union level, and its results, and shall inform relevant target groups about the actions undertaken in their country. This action will be included in their communication and dissemination.

The public and private bodies covered by this action shall use the brand name 'Erasmus+' for the purpose of communication and dissemination of information.

The working arrangements¹⁷ as well as the note on "ERASMUS+ reporting and visibility" of 20 June 2017 (B4/ALM) developed by DEVCO will provide the frame for daily collaboration as well as the reporting, communication and visibility modalities and outputs. In addition in the frame of the EUTF, a specific reporting will have to be done by the national agencies or DG EAC in the reporting web portal AKVO.

Without prejudice to the obligations applicable to contracts concluded for the implementation of this action, the Commission reserves the right to publish the results, indicators and targets of the project.

¹⁷ Working Arrangements for the international dimension of the higher education programme 'Erasmus+' between the External Relations Directorates General of the Commission and the European External Action Service on the one hand and the Directorate General for Education and Culture on the other hand (Ares(2014)438827 - 21/02/2014).

ANNEX 1. AREAS OF INTERVENTION OF THE TRUST FUND

Area of intervention 1: Greater economic and employment opportunities	Primary target	Secondary target
Support for entrepreneurship, SMEs and the informal sector, particularly for youth and women	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support for the development of economic growth areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strengthening the professional and technical skills and improving employability of girls and boys	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
Area of intervention 2: Strengthening Resilience	Primary target	Secondary target
Food and nutritional security	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Production, productivity, valuation and marketing of Agricultural products	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local infrastructures (opening-up, water management for agricultural purposes etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sustainable management of natural resources and adaptation to climate change	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Access to drinking water, hygiene and sanitation, living conditions and access to basic services (health, education etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Area of intervention 3: Improving migration management	Primary target	Secondary target
Prevention of irregular migration and fight against human trafficking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asylum, legal migration and mobility	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
Synergies between migration and development (supporting initiatives of diasporas)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support for return and reintegration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Border management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Area of intervention 4: Improved governance and conflict prevention	Primary target	Secondary target
Strengthening the rule of law	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Preventing conflicts and radicalisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Capacity building to support security	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

ANNEX 2. LOGFRAME MATRIX OF THE PROJECT

Activities, deliverables and all indicators with their targets and reference values contained in the logframe matrix are provided for information only and may be updated during the implementation of the Action without changing the funding decision. The logframe matrix should evolve during the project lifetime: new lines can be added for listing new activities as well as new columns for intermediary targets (milestones) when it is relevant and values will be regularly updated in the column foreseen for reporting purpose.

	Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Targets
Overall objective: Impact	The overall objective of the action is to promote sustainable development and ultimately contribute to poverty reduction by increasing the availability of trained and qualified high-level professional manpower in West Africa.			
Specific objective(s): Direct outcome(s)	<p>SO1: Support West African learners in the acquisition of learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competences) with a view to improving their personal development, their involvement as considerate and active citizens in society and their employability;</p> <p>SO2: Support the professional development of West Africans who work in education, with a view to innovating and improving the quality of teaching and training;</p> <p>SO3: Increase the capacities, quality, attractiveness and international dimension of participating organisations so that they are able to offer activities and programmes that better respond to the needs of individuals and contribute to the harmonisation of programmes and curricula;</p>	<p>% of student beneficiaries of ERASMUS+ that benefit from positive learning outcomes of mobility in particular related to their personal development and employability</p> <p>% of staff beneficiaries that improved their quality of teaching and training</p> <p>% of participating organisations that has increased in their capacities, quality, attractiveness and international dimension to respond to the needs of learners</p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p>	<p>70%</p> <p>80%</p> <p>90%</p>

Results	1. The mobility of high education West Africans students to Europe has increased	Number of young students and young staff undertaking mobility (disaggregated by gender at final report level and including number of students with fewer opportunities);	340 mobile students and staff (2016)	2000 High Education (HE) students in Africa
	2. The exchanges and mobility of staff between West Africa and Europe has increased.			200 West Africans young teachers and administrative staff
	3. The Participation of HE institutions from partner countries in Erasmus+ has increased	Number of HE institutions that participated	36 universities from countries targeted by this action awarded grants (2017 selection)	30 additional HE institutions (+ 10 additional universities in 2018 selection and + 20 additional universities in 2019 selections)