

SOLIDARITY PROJECTS

WHAT IS A SOLIDARITY PROJECT?

A **Solidarity Project** is a non-profit solidarity activity initiated, developed and implemented by young people themselves for a period from 2 to 12 months. It gives a group of minimum five young persons the chance to express solidarity by taking responsibility and committing themselves to bring positive change in their local community. The project should have a clearly identified topic which the group of young people wish to explore together and which has to be translated into the concrete daily activities of the project and involve all the members of the group. Solidarity Projects should address key challenges within the communities, where relevant including those identified jointly in the border regions and it should also present European added value. Participation in a solidarity project is an important non-formal learning experience through which young people can boost their personal, educational, social and civic development.

A solidarity project will typically consist of the following stages:

- Planning;
- Preparation;
- Implementation of the activities;
- Follow-up (including the evaluation of the activities as well as the sharing of project's results).

WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES?

A Solidarity Project should clearly refer to the **European Solidarity Corps' objectives and principles** in particular towards solidarity. This common value provides the necessary unity to cope with current and future societal challenges, which young Europeans are willing to help address by expressing their solidarity in practice. A Solidarity Project could address young people facing situations that make their inclusion in society more difficult. A solidarity project should also consider sustainable and environmental-friendly practices in the planned activities.

The young people should take the initiative to respond to the issues and challenges around them, which is why a solidarity project should be directly linked to the **local community** they live in, although some of them can also tackle regional or even national issues. Some solidarity projects could also tackle common challenges identified jointly in the border regions. A Solidarity Project should have an impact on the local community by addressing local issues, targeting a specific group or developing local opportunities (particularly in communities located in rural, isolated, marginalised or cross-border areas) but also through involving different actors and developing new partnerships. Thus, by setting common goals and cooperating together to achieve them, communities can benefit from a solidarity project.

Together with addressing the local challenges, a solidarity project should also demonstrate **European added value** by addressing priorities identified at European level. A solidarity project should reflect a common concern for topics within the European society, such as for example integrating third-country nationals, climate change or active democratic participation. The European added value can be expressed through any element of a solidarity project that is linked with European issues, values and priorities. The European priorities will also be promoted through sharing of the results of the project. In cases of cross-border projects it should be clear what common challenges are jointly shared by the local communities spread over the border and living in proximity and how a solidarity project could bring benefits to those regions by addressing them⁴⁰.

Participation in a Solidarity Project will also be an important **non-formal learning experience** for young people. It should foster sense of initiative, active European citizenship and entrepreneurial spirit. In particular, young people managing the project could absorb in practice the concept of social entrepreneurship by creating new products or services that benefit local community or society in general and address important societal challenges. By putting their own ideas into practice, meeting unexpected situations and finding solutions for them, trying out innovative and creative measures, young people will learn new skills and develop their capacities, express their own creativity and take responsibility for their action. They will boost their self-esteem, autonomy and motivation to learn. Participation in managing and implementing a solidarity project could be also a first step into self-employment or setting up organisations in the solidarity, non-profit or youth sectors.

⁴⁰ A flexibility is allowed in a definition of cross-border regions which can include also regions spread by a sea, as long as the common challenges that a project will address are clearly identified.

HOW TO SET UP A SOLIDARITY PROJECT?

Young people who want to form a group to run a solidarity project must be registered in the European Solidarity Corps portal. There is no maximum number of the group's members. The activities will take place in the country of residence of the applicant, facilitating in particular the participation of young people who may encounter difficulties to engage in transnational activities.

The group will decide autonomously on the working methods and how the project will be managed. One of the group's members will assume a role of legal representative who will submit the application (unless an organisation applies on behalf of the group). The group will arrange the distribution of tasks and responsibilities, ensure efficient coordination and communication between its members and define the amount of time spent in carrying out the tasks in relation to the goals of the project. Working methods should aim to involve all members of the group through various phases of the project and of activities (preparation, implementation and sharing the results). The phases should be clearly structured with the help of a project's timetable.

A group of young people who plan a solidarity project can seek for support from **an organisation** (any public or private body). An organisation may apply on their behalf for a grant under the European Solidarity Corps. The role of the organisation should be administrative, to support the group in the project life-cycle administrative and financial tasks. However, it can also offer support and guidance in identifying and documenting learning outcomes.

Young people carrying out a Solidarity Project may be supported by **coaches**. A coach is a resource person who could have youth work experience to accompany groups of young people and support their participation through different phases of the project. The coach will remain outside the Solidarity Project, so he/she will not be a member of the group and if needed, can come from an organisation applying on behalf of the group. The coach empowers the group of young people in those areas and topics they need support in, in order to successfully implement the project by themselves and can play different roles based on the needs of the group. This could be done through regular coaching sessions throughout the project period, punctual trainings on specific topics or a combination of both. The coach can provide advice on having quality learning process and assist in identifying and documenting learning outcomes at the end of the project. The group of young people can use the support of one or several coaches depending on their needs. As a principle, the coach works with the applying group of young people, not with the target group(s) of the project.

For example, a coach could be a person to turn to with doubts, questions, conflicts in the group; a trainer to give a workshop on project management; to teach the group certain skills needed for the project; a person supporting and monitoring the learning process.

Through the different phases of the project, the group should reflect on the **learning process**, which they experience and have experienced. During the planning phase of the project, the learning goals should be discussed together with the general aims of the project. During the implementation, regular reflection is encouraged and towards the end of the project, the group should consider measures that make the learning outcomes visible. For recognising and validating these learning outcomes it is recommended to use Youthpass and the related learning process reflection.

The group should reflect together on measures aimed at the visibility of their project and the visibility of the European Solidarity Corps in general. The group should also reflect on **follow-up measures**. This means that the project should be framed within a longer-term perspective and planned with a view to have effects after it ends. In order to make the project and its results more sustainable, the group is expected to carry out a final evaluation. This should make possible to assess whether the objectives of the project have been achieved; the expectations of the group have been met and evaluate the overall success. The group should consider the ways of sharing the results of the project and reflect on with who they should be shared.

PRIORITIES

INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

The European Solidarity Corps seeks to promote equal opportunities and access, inclusion and fairness. Young people implementing Solidarity Projects should design accessible and inclusive activities, taking into account the needs of participants with fewer opportunities. Special funding for the participation of people with fewer opportunities is available both for the members of the group and the target group.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CLIMATE ACTION

Solidarity Projects should promote environmentally sustainable and responsible behaviour among participants, raising the awareness about the importance of acting to reduce or compensate for the environmental footprint of activities. Solidarity Projects should be designed and implemented with environmental consciousness by e.g. integrating sustainable practices such as reducing waste and recycling, using sustainable means of transportation.

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

The European Solidarity Corps supports incorporating the use of digital tools and learning methods in Solidarity Projects. Groups of young people implementing solidarity projects are encouraged to make use of digital tools and learning methods to complement the physical activities and add to the quality of the project.

PARTICIPATION IN DEMOCRATIC LIFE

The European Solidarity Corps supports integrating a participatory dimension in solidarity projects, offering young people relevant opportunities to actively engage and participate in the conception and implementation of project activities as a pathway to discovering the benefits of active citizenship and participation in democratic life.

WHAT ARE THE CRITERIA USED TO ASSESS PROJECTS?

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA AND APPLICATION INFORMATION

Who implements the project?	A group of minimum 5 young people aged between 18 and 30 years ⁴¹ who are legally residing in one and the same EU Member State or a third country associated to the Programme and have registered in the European Solidarity Corps Portal. There is no maximum number of members of the group.
Who can apply?	The group that will implement the project. One of the young people in the group assumes the role of the legal representative and takes the responsibility of submitting the application. Any public or private body, legally established in an EU Member State or third country associated to the Programme, on behalf of the group that will implement the project.
Venue of projects	The project should take place in the country of the applicant. In cases in which the project addresses cross-border challenges, project activities can also take place in cross-border regions of the EU Member States, third countries associated to the Programme and third countries non-associated to the Programme sharing the border with the country of the applicant.
Duration of projects	2 to 12 months.
Where to apply?	To the National Agency of the country where the applicant is legally resident.
When to apply?	Applicants have to submit their grant application by the following dates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 20 February at 12:00 (midday Brussels time) for projects starting between 1 June and 31 December of the same year; ▪ (Optional round) 7 May at 12:00 (midday Brussels time) for projects starting between 1 August and 31 December of the same year; ▪ 1 October at 12:00 (midday Brussels time) for projects starting between 1 January and 31 May of the following year. National Agencies may organise three selection rounds by setting three deadlines as above or only the first (20 February) and the last (1 October) one. This information will be published on the site of each National Agency.
How to apply?	Please see part E of this Guide for details on how to apply.
Exclusion criteria	A Declaration of Honour signed by the legal representative must be annexed to the application form by using the available template.

⁴¹ Participants must have reached 18 and must not be older than 30 at the start date of the project.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Please refer to part E in the guide, steps 2 and 3.

AWARD CRITERIA

To be considered for funding, proposals must score at least 60 points. Furthermore, they must score at least half of the maximum points in each of the categories of award criteria mentioned below.

In ex aequo cases, priority will be given to highest scores for "Relevance, rationale and impact" and then "Quality of project management" and then "Quality of project design".

<p>Relevance, rationale and impact</p> <p><i>(maximum 40 points)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The relevance of the project to the objectives and priorities of the European Solidarity Corps; ▪ The degree to which the project takes into account the European Solidarity Corps principles; ▪ The extent to which the project provides European added value by addressing relevant topics ▪ The relevance of the project to the needs of members of the group; ▪ The relevance of the project to the needs of a target group (if any) and local communities; ▪ The potential impact of the project on members of the group, incl. their personal, entrepreneurship skills and social involvement; ▪ The potential impact on the target group (if any) and on local communities. ▪ The extent to which the proposal is relevant for the respect and promotion of shared EU values, such as respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, as well as fighting any sort of discrimination.
<p>Quality of project design</p> <p><i>(maximum 40 points)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The consistency between project objectives and proposed activities; ▪ The extent to which the project is designed, developed and implemented by young people; ▪ The extent to which the composition of the group permits to reach the project objectives; ▪ The involvement of the members of the group at the various phases of the project; ▪ The clarity, completeness and quality of all the phases of the project (planning, preparation, implementation, evaluation and sharing the results); ▪ The extent to which learning process and learning outcomes in the project is thought through, identified and documented, in particular through Youthpass; ▪ The extent to which the project incorporates sustainable and environmental-friendly practices, accessible and inclusive activities, as well as makes use of digital tools and methods to complement and improve activities.
<p>Quality of project management</p> <p><i>(maximum 20 points)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The practical arrangements, management, cooperation and communication between the members of the group; ▪ The measures for evaluating the outcomes of the project; ▪ The measures for making the project visible to others who are not involved in the project; ▪ The measures for sharing the outcomes of the project.

WHAT ARE THE ELIGIBLE COSTS AND THE APPLICABLE FUNDING RULES?

	Eligible costs	Financing mechanism	Amount	Rule of allocation
Project Management costs	Costs linked to the management and implementation of the project (e.g. preparation, implementation, of activities, evaluation, dissemination and follow-up activities).	Contribution on the basis of a unit cost	630 EUR per month	Based on the duration of the Solidarity Project.
Coaching costs	Costs linked to the involvement of a coach in the project.	Contribution on the basis of a unit cost	€1 per day of work. Maximum 12 days.	Based on the country of the applicant and the working days. Definition of a working day depends on national legislation of the country of applicant. Conditional: The request for financial support to cover coach costs must be motivated in the application form. The duration of coaching is not linked to the project duration.
Exceptional costs	Costs to support the participation of young people with fewer opportunities (members of the group implementing the project). Costs to support the participation of people with fewer opportunities who are a target group of the project.	Real costs	100 % of eligible costs	Conditional: The request(s) for financial support to cover exceptional costs must be duly justified and motivated in the application form and approved by the National Agency. The request for financial support to cover exceptional costs for people with fewer opportunities who are a target group of the project should not exceed 7000 EUR per project.

WHAT ARE THE UNIT COSTS PER DAY OF WORK?

	Coaching Costs (EUR per day)
	B1
Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Lichtenstein, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Sweden	255
<u>Cyprus, Czechia, Estonia, , Greece, Latvia, Malta, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain</u>	227
Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Lithuania, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Türkiye	137