

March 2008



ASSESSMENT HANDBOOK FOR NATIONAL AGENCIES AND EXPERTS

LIFELONG LEARNING PROGRAMME ERASMUS Intensive Language Courses

Proposal Deadline 14 March 2008

Table of contents

1. INTRODUCTION	3
2. GENERAL ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE	4
2.1 Introduction to the assessment	4
2.2 Objectives of the Erasmus Programme	4
2.3 Definition and objectives of EILC	5
2.4 The different sections of the assessment sheet	6
2.4.1 Formal eligibility check	6
2.4.2 Quality Assessment	6
2.4.3 Assessment Conclusion	7
2.4.4 Comments and Recommendations	7
2.4.5 Printing and signature	7
2.5 Reconciliation of assessment	7
2.6 Final score, list of EILC and final decision	8

1. INTRODUCTION

You have been appointed to assess proposals submitted for funding in the frame of the **Erasmus Intensive Language Courses (EILC)** applications. The task of the assessors is to assist the **National Agency** in the assessment of applications that were submitted by 14 March 2008.

All information on the assessment is to be treated as **CONFIDENTIAL**. No information on the submitted projects or (provisional) results of the assessment or selection may be made public to any other person. For this purpose, you are requested to sign the Declaration of the prevention and disclosure of conflicts of interest (see Annex II. a of the Guide for National Agencies).

The assessment has to be completed within the deadlines agreed upon with the National Agency. The timing has been carefully planned and the calendar must be respected by all persons concerned.

The tools which will allow you to perform the assessment exercise are:

- The LLP Call for Proposals 2008 and the LLP Guide for applicants
- The present assessment handbook
- EILC application form and its instructions

Please note that the final decision on the selection of EILC is the responsibility of the National Agency.

2. GENERAL ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE

2.1 Introduction to the assessment

Assessment is generally done in two stages:

- 1) Formal eligibility check by the staff of the National Agency
- 2) Quality assessment by two persons, at least one of them an external expert

Your work as an expert will address the quality assessment of EILC applications. Each application will be assessed by two different experts. Both of them will do the assessment independently and complete an electronic assessment sheet in Word format. If the assessment scorings differ greatly, the two experts will then have to reconcile their assessments.

After the National Agency's final decision on the selection of EILC, a feedback sheet will be sent to the rejected applicants. It will indicate the assessment comments and recommendations of the experts. You are therefore requested to give **clear feedback** on the quality of the EILC and **clear recommendations** on how to improve it. Your comments and recommendations should be **carefully phrased and well justified**.

2.2 Objectives of the Erasmus Programme

The **specific objectives** of the Erasmus programme, as set out in Article. 21.1 of the LLP programme Decision, are:

- (a) to support the achievement of a European Area of Higher Education;
- (b) to reinforce the contribution of higher education and advanced vocational education to the process of innovation.

The **operational objectives** of the Erasmus programme, as set out in Article. 21.2 of the LLP programme Decision, are:

- (a) to improve the quality and to increase the volume of student and teaching staff mobility throughout Europe, so as to contribute to the achievement by 2012 of at least 3 million individual participants in student mobility under the Erasmus programme and its predecessor programmes;
- (b) to improve the quality and to increase the volume of multilateral cooperation between higher education institutions in Europe;
- (c) to increase the degree of transparency and compatibility between higher education and advanced vocational education qualifications gained in Europe;
- (d) to improve the quality and to increase the volume of cooperation between higher education institutions and enterprises;
- (e) to facilitate the development of innovative practices in education and training at tertiary level, and their transfer, including from one participating country to others;
- (f) to support the development of innovative ICT-based content, services, pedagogies and practice for lifelong learning.

2.3 Definition and objectives of EILC

The Erasmus Intensive Language Courses (EILC) are specialised courses in the less widely used and less taught languages organised in the countries where these languages are spoken. Countries involved in organising EILC are: Belgium (Flemish Community), Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Turkey.

The EILC give Erasmus students visiting these countries for studies and placements the opportunity to study the language concerned for up to six weeks (with a minimum of 60 teaching hours) with the aim of being prepared for the Erasmus mobility period.

Supplementary mobility grants for Erasmus students participating in EILC are awarded and paid by the respective sending higher education institutions. Erasmus students may not be charged a study fee for participation in an EILC course.

The selection of the EILC organising institution is carried out by the National Agency (NA) in the country where the course is to be organised, on the basis of a call for proposals published by the NA in complement of the general LLP Call for proposals.

Participants of EILC can be students registered in a higher education institution holding an Erasmus University Charter, who have been selected for an Erasmus study/placement period. Students whose main subject of study is the language of the country organising the EILC are normally not eligible participants. Comenius Assistants may also participate, provided that there is a surplus of places on a course.

Students apply for an EILC through their home institution. The selection of EILC students is joint responsibility of the EILC organising institutions and the NA in the host country.

2.4 The different sections of the assessment sheet

2.4.1 Formal eligibility check (section I)

The formal eligibility check for EILC applications is done by the National Agency in accordance with the Guide for National Agencies.

EILC applications are not eligible for funding if:

- they are submitted **after** 14 March 2008;
- the applicant did not submit the **correct application form**;
- the form is not **completed in full**;
- they are **not** signed and dated by the legal representative;
- the **Organising Institution** is not a higher education institution that holds an Erasmus University Charter OR an other organisation specialised in language training in the less widely used and taught languages of the country;
- have an **ineligible duration**: EILC should have a duration of 2-6 weeks, with a minimum of 60 teaching hours in total and at least 15 teaching hours a week.

When deciding on the formal eligibility there are two possibilities:

Yes – If the proposal is eligible (yes to all the points in section I of the assessment sheet)

No – If the proposal does not comply with any of the above criteria it should be declared ineligible. Ineligible proposal can not be further assessed.

2.4.2 Quality Assessment (section II)

EILC applications that have passed the formal eligibility check will undergo a thorough quality assessment by the experts based on different award criteria.

The award criteria reflect on sections 3.1 and 3.2 of the application

Evaluators will use a rating scale from 10 to 0 points to assess each award criterion. Scores are defined as follows:

- **very good** 10 to 9 points.
- **good**: 8 to 7 points
- **fair**: 6 to 5 points
- **weak**: 4 to 0 points

You are asked to complete the box for the explanation of your assessment.

2.4.3 Assessment Conclusion (section III)

The overall score for the proposal is the sum of scores given to the different criteria, maximum 100 points.

The threshold (minimum number of points) that an application must attain to be considered for funding is 50 points. The threshold must be applied at the overall score, there is no threshold set for the award criteria. Failure to reach the threshold will exclude the application.

2.4.4 Comments and Recommendations

In the final section of the assessment form, the National Agency asks you to provide two kinds of comments:

1. The comments on the proposal should be done on the basis of the outcome of the quality assessment. They should be supported by clear arguments. Comments should be related to the assessment criteria and emphasise the assessment conclusion reached.
2. The recommendations to the applicant should consist of advice for the applicant to enhance their next application.

We remind you that your Comments and Recommendations will be sent to the applicants to inform them in more detail about the result of the assessment of their project.

Please make sure that they are very **clear, precise, transparent and coherent** and as detailed as possible. They should relate to your assessment of the strengths, weaknesses and potential of the proposals, relative to the selection criteria. Both comments and recommendations must justify the assessment conclusions.

2.4.5 Printing and signature

Each assessment sheet, once completed, is to be printed out and signed by the expert who has done the assessment for this project. The expert has to check it carefully to make sure that all required information is present.

It is also recommended that the two experts concerned meet briefly for all common applications in order to ensure that the **final comments and recommendations** given to the applicants are in line and are not contradictory.

2.5 Reconciliation of assessment

The National Agency will verify if there is a significant discrepancy between the two assessments. If assessment scoring in section III of the assessment sheet differs significantly, the two experts will try to agree on a smaller gap and adapt their assessment results after a conciliation meeting. If no agreement can be reached, the National Agency will decide on how to proceed and possibly consult other experts.

2.6 Final score, list of EILC and final decision

The National Agency will calculate the average of the scores of the two experts to get the final score for each EILC application. Then the NA makes a ranked list according to section 3.6.2.2 in the Guide for National Agencies.

All applications with a final score **lower than 50** are rejected automatically.

The final decision on the selection of EILC is the responsibility of the National Agency.