

**Research-based
analysis of European
youth programmes**

EXPLORATIVE RESEARCH PROJECT ON THE IMPACT & POTENTIAL OF COOPERATION PROJECTS WITH NEIGHBOURING PARTNER COUNTRIES IN THE EU YOUTH PROGRAMMES (RAY-NPC)

UPDATED CONCEPT NOTE FOR 2023–2024

6 SEPTEMBER 2023

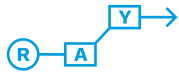


TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	CONTEXT AND RATIONALE	3
2.	AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	3
2.1.	OVERALL AIM OF THE RESEARCH ROJECT	3
2.2.	KEY OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT	3
3.	RESEARCH QUESTIONS	4
3.1.	CORE RESEARCH QUESTIONS OF THE PROJECT	4
3.2.	UNDERPINNING RESEARCH QUESTIONS OF THE PROJECT	4
4.	RESEARCH DESIGN AND INSTRUMENTS	4
4.1.	MODULE 1: ANALYSIS OF MONITORING DATASETS	4
4.2.	MODULE 2: SURVEY OF ORGANISATIONS	4
4.3.	MODULE 3: FOCUS GROUPS WITH ORGANISATIONS	4
4.4.	MODULE 4: THEMATIC MODULE FOR MONITORING SURVEYS	5
5.	RESEARCH SCHEDULE	5
6.	TENTATIVE BUDGET	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
7.	RESEARCH PARTNERS	5
8.	NEXT STEPS	5



1. CONTEXT AND RATIONALE

The EU Youth Programmes have long offered the possibility for cooperation projects between programme countries (EU Member States¹ and third countries associated to the programmes²) and neighbouring partner countries (third countries not associated to the Programme that are neighbouring the EU)³.

Various thematic surveys and studies have been conducted to explore these collaborations, but a consistent analysis of the monitoring datasets of the RAY Network has not yet been undertaken.

Against that backdrop, this explorative research project will analyse cooperation projects with neighbouring partner countries in the existing datasets and develop research instruments to systematically explore key aspects of the collaboration with neighbouring partner countries.

The project will be implemented in close co-operation with the long-term strategic activity on neighbouring partner countries (LTSA NPC) and the regional SALTO Resource Centres.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2.1. OVERALL AIM OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

This research project aims to explore key aspects of collaboration with neighbouring partner countries in the context of the European youth programmes (RAY-NPC).

2.2. KEY OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

The key objectives of this research project are to explore

- effects of projects funded through the European youth programmes on the actors involved, in particular on project teams and project participants, but also their organisations and communities;
- access to the European youth programmes in general and neighbourhood cooperation projects specifically, at the level of young people as well as organisations, networks and groups;
- profiles of project participants and project teams and, to the extent possible, of organisations, networks and groups involved in cooperation projects with neighbouring partner countries;
- needs of project teams and their organisations, networks and groups in relation to working with the European youth programmes generally and in projects with neighbouring partner countries specifically;
- differences, if any, between projects involving organisations, networks and groups in EU Member States and third countries associated to the programmes, on the one hand, and neighbouring partner countries, on the other hand.

¹ Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, France, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden.

² Liechtenstein, Iceland, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Turkey.

³ Third countries not associated to the Programme that are neighbouring the EU have been clustered into several regions, of which this project will cover four: Region 1: Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro); Region 2: Neighbourhood East (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine); Region 3: South-Mediterranean countries (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia); Region 4: Russian Federation (Russia). For other regions, see <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/programme-guide/part-a/eligible-countries>

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

3.1. CORE RESEARCH QUESTIONS OF THE PROJECT

The core research questions of the project are:

- What are the effects of cooperation projects with neighbouring partner countries funded through the European youth programmes on project participants, project teams, and their organisations, networks and groups?
- What is the environment created for cooperation projects with neighbouring partner countries, with respect to access to the programmes as well as funding and support provided?
- What are the needs of project teams and their organisations, networks and groups in relation to working in projects with neighbouring partner countries? How can the environment for these projects be improved? How can their effects be strengthened?

3.2. UNDERPINNING RESEARCH QUESTIONS OF THE PROJECT

The underpinning research questions of the project will be developed collaboratively.

4. RESEARCH DESIGN AND INSTRUMENTS

4.1. MODULE 1: ANALYSIS OF MONITORING DATASETS

In the initial module of this research project, the existing datasets of RAY MON (for Erasmus+ Youth) and RAY SOC (for the European Solidarity Corps) will be analysed in relation to the core research questions of the project, analysing which differences—if any—between general projects and neighbourhood projects exists, and which neighbourhood-specific insights may exist. The analysis will initially focus on the previous programme generation, for which datasets already exist, and will expand to the new programme generation, for which datasets will become available in autumn 2023.

For the initial analysis of the 2020 dataset, which covers the last survey wave of programme participants and project teams in the previous programme generation, conducted in 2019 and 2020, new regional variables will be defined. In the absence of an attribute identifying projects involving partner countries, this analysis will focus on project participants and project teams received by partner countries and use their survey responses as proxy.

For the subsequent analysis of the 2021–2023 dataset, which covers one survey wave of programme participants and project teams in 2023, an attribute has been introduced that clearly identifies projects involving partner countries. This analysis will include and compare responses from all project participants and team members involved in these projects, irrespective of their origin or destination country.

4.2. MODULE 2: SURVEY OF ORGANISATIONS

In the second module of this research project, an English-language survey of organisations in programme countries will be conducted, exploring their perspective on cooperation projects with neighbouring partner countries. The survey will be informed by the analysis conducted in the initial module, but will likely focus on motivations and needs as well as effects and impacts.

4.3. MODULE 3: FOCUS GROUPS WITH ORGANISATIONS

In the third module of this research project, focus groups will be conducted to further deepen the analysis of key findings from the first two modules. The key discussion points of the focus groups will be informed by the analysis conducted in the initial module and the findings of the survey conducted in the second module.

4.4. MODULE 4: THEMATIC MODULE FOR MONITORING SURVEYS

In the fourth module of this research project, a multilingual thematic module for the RAY monitoring surveys will be developed, exploring key aspects of neighbourhood cooperation. The modules will be used in rotation with other thematic modules, and will be addressed to project participants and project teams of neighbourhood cooperation projects.

5. RESEARCH SCHEDULE

The following table provides an overview of main activities⁴ for RAY and the LTSA respectively for the envisaged duration of the research project:

Time period	RAY activities	LTSA activities
01.2023 – 10.2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis of 2019–2020 monitoring datasets (Module 1) Development of survey for Module 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback to analysis findings (Module 1) Feedback to draft survey (Module 2)
10.2023 – 01.2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis of 2021–2023 monitoring datasets (Module 1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback to analysis findings (Module 1)
10.2023 – 11.2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collection for survey (Module 2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of survey (Module 2)
12.2023 – 01.2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial data analysis of responses to the survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback to survey findings (Module 2)
01.2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial key findings from modules 1 and 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback to the initial key findings
02.2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online focus groups with organisations and networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support with focus group logistics, in particular recruitment of participants
03.2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consolidated key findings and research/policy report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback to the findings and the draft reports
04.2024 – 06.2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of thematic module 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support of module development

6. RESEARCH PARTNERS

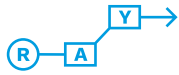
Research partners of this project are the RAY Network partners from Czechia, Finland, France, Germany, Poland and Slovenia.

7. NEXT STEPS

Next steps include:

- Initial analysis of 2019–2020 datasets in August and September 2023
- Survey development kickoff meeting (online) in October 2023 (week 41)
- Draft survey for discussion circulated by October 16, 2023
- Feedback to survey collected by October 24, 2023

⁴ Due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, and in particular its effects on the core activities of the RAY Network, this research schedule remains more tentative than usual.



- Technical setup of survey by October 30, 2023
- Data collection until November 30, 2023
- Analysis of survey responses in December 2023 and January 2024
- Analysis of 2021-2023 datasets between October 2023 and January 2024