

EVS 2007- 2013 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

For details please consult the Programme Guide for the
EU Youth in Action Programme 2007-2013

1. What are the aims of European Voluntary Service (EVS)?

EVS aspires to develop solidarity and promote tolerance among young people, primarily to reinforce social cohesion in the European Union. It promotes active citizenship and enhances mutual understanding among young people.

2. How important is learning in EVS?

EVS is a "learning" service: throughout non-formal learning experiences young volunteers improve and/or acquire competences for their personal, educational and professional development as well as for their social integration. The learning elements consist of a mutually agreed definition of the expected learning outcomes, processes and methods, the certification of the acquired competences, the participation of the volunteer in the EVS training cycle and the continued provision of task-related, linguistic and personal support, including a crisis prevention and management mechanism.

3. What is an EVS activity?

EVS is implemented through activities organised in partnership between legally established organisations, which send or host volunteers. An EVS activity is composed of:

- Preparation
- Voluntary activity
- Follow up

Volunteers will participate in activities that comply with the following general principles. Activities must:

- Take place in a country other than volunteer's country of residence
- Be unpaid and non-profit making
- Last a limited period (max. 12 months)
- Represent a clear European or international added value
- Serve the benefit of the community
- Not involve job substitution

4. In which areas can activities take place?

An EVS activity can take place in a variety of areas: culture, youth, sports, social care, cultural heritage, arts, civil protection, environment, development cooperation, etc.

5. What is the difference between an individual EVS activity and a group EVS activity?

An individual EVS activity involves only one volunteer, one sending organisation and one host organisation. A group EVS activity allows volunteers to take part collectively in a voluntary activity at local, regional, national, European or international level and to benefit from individual and group learning experiences. Up to 100 volunteers can participate in the same host organisation or split up in smaller sub – groups – in different host organisations.

6. What is an EVS project?

An EVS project is the framework for one or several EVS activities, clustered in one grant application. The combination of individual and group EVS activities in the same project is possible. A maximum of 100 volunteers may participate in one single project. One legally established organisation applies on behalf of the other project partner(s) for Community financing. It is not required that this organisation sends or hosts volunteers in the project. The applicant is the coordinating organisation and it receives the grant if the application is accepted. The coordinating organisation is responsible for the entire project management. A volunteer does not apply directly for Community financing.

7. Who are the partners in an EVS project?

Each EVS project and activity is based on a partnership including the following project partners:

- one or more volunteers
- one or more sending organisations
- one or more host organisations
- one coordinating organisation (applicant), which can be (but does not have to be) one of sending organisations or one of the host organisations

Each EVS project and each EVS activity must involve at least one EU Member State. The number of project partner organisations located in Partner Countries, cannot exceed the number of project partner organisations in Programme Countries in the same project.

8. What are the eligibility criteria for a project partner that sends or hosts a volunteer?

A project partner that sends or hosts the volunteer must be:

- a non-profit organisation or association legally established in a Programme Country or in a Partner Country or
- a local, regional or national authority from a Programme Country or a Partner Country or
- an international governmental organisation established in a Programme country or in a Partner Country.

9. Where can I find a host organisation for EVS?

Host organisations for EVS can be found with the help of sending organisations, National Agencies or in the European database on accredited host organisations in Programme Countries: http://ec.europa.eu/youth/program/sos/index_en.html

10. What are the eligibility criteria for a coordinating organisation (applicant)?

The coordinating organisation (applicant) must be:

- a non-profit making organisation or association legally established in a Programme Country or in a country in South East Europe or
- a local, regional or national authority from a Programme Country or from a country in South East Europe or
- an organising body of an event in the area of youth, sport or culture with non-profit or profit making status
- an international governmental organisation established in a Programme Country or in a country in South East Europe.

11. What is the duration of an EVS project?

The duration of an EVS project must not exceed 24 months, including preparation and evaluation/follow-up. The EVS activity abroad should have a minimum duration of 2 months and a maximum overall duration of 12 months (excluding preparation and evaluation). In the case of inclusion activities with young volunteers with fewer opportunities or for group activities, if duly justified, a minimum duration of two weeks is allowed.

12. What is the age limit to participate in EVS?

EVS is open to all young people between 18 and 30 years old, regardless of their background, legally residing in a Programme country or in a Partner country. (see also question no. 17).

13. Is international cooperation possible within EVS?

Besides EVS between Programme Countries international cooperation is also possible with eligible Neighbouring Partner Countries and with eligible other Partner Countries under Action 2.

14. Who can apply for an EVS project?

The coordinating organisation applies on behalf of the partnership. In projects that involve only one sending and one host organisation, either of them takes over the role of the coordinating organisation (applicant), which applies on behalf of the partnership.

15. How to apply for an EVS project?

Regardless the number of sending /host organisations and volunteers involved, or the number and duration of the activities, there is only one application, one financing decision and one grant agreement per project. Depending on the status of the organisation, the nature of the activities foreseen and the geographic scope, applications should be sent either to National Agencies or to the Executive Agency.

16. What are the deadlines for application?

For projects that are selected at national level, there are five application deadlines a year:

| For projects starting between | Application deadline |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 May and 30 September | 1 February |
| 1 July and 30 November | 1 April |
| 1 September and 31 January | 1 June |
| 1 December and 30 April | 1 September |
| 1 February and 31 July | 1 November |

For projects selected at European level, there are three application deadlines a year:

| For projects starting between | Application deadline |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 July and 30 November | 1 February |
| 1 November and 30 March | 1 June |
| 1 January and 31 July | 1 September |

17. Can younger people with fewer opportunities participate in EVS?

Special efforts are made and incentives given in order to allow young people with fewer opportunities, including young people with disabilities, to participate actively in EVS. These 'inclusion' activities are open to 16-30 year olds, provided that competent and tailor-made preparations, accompaniment and follow-up are provided.

18. How is an EVS project financed?

Community financing of an EVS project is based on the principle of co-funding, with other public and/or private contributions. This means that contributions, in kind or in cash, from the sending and host organisations are necessary to cover the total cost of the project.

EVS provides financial support through the following grant items:

- Travel costs: 100% of actual costs
- Sending activity costs: fixed amount per volunteer
- Host activity costs: flat rate amount per volunteer per month
- Visa costs, visa-related costs and vaccination costs: 100% of actual costs

- Volunteer's allowance: country specific
- Pre-departure training, mid-term meeting and evaluation meeting: 100% of actual costs up to 300 €
- On-arrival training: 100% of actual costs up to 800 €
- Coordination costs: fixed amounts per partner organisation and volunteer for the administration and networking of the project partners by the coordinating organisation. (Not granted in projects with only one host and one sending organisation with one of them being the coordinating organisation).
- Visibility and Valorisation: up to 10% of the project grant
- Follow-up activity of the volunteer: fixed amount per volunteer

19. What is the accreditation of EVS organisations?

Any organisation in a Programme Country or in South East Europe wishing to send or host EVS volunteers or coordinate an EVS project must be accredited. Organisations outside the Programme countries and South East Europe can participate as project partners in EVS without accreditation. Accreditation serves to gain access to EVS and ensure a common quality standard in EVS. All accredited organisations are published in an internet database in order to facilitate partner-finding. In order to be accredited, organisations submit an 'Expression of Interest', which mainly contains the general motivation and ideas for EVS activities.

20. What is the EVS Charter?

The general principles, definition of roles of EVS project partners and the main quality standards of EVS are laid down in the EVS Charter, which is a basis for accreditation. Each EVS organisation adheres to the provisions set out in this Charter.

21. Do I receive any document attesting to my EVS experience?

Every volunteer is entitled to receive a Youthpass, which describes and validates the non formal learning experience. This document can be of great benefit for the future educational or professional pathway of the volunteer. Through the Youthpass the European Commission ensures that the voluntary activity is recognised as an educational experience and a period of non-formal learning and informal learning. The Youthpass is filled in jointly by the volunteer and a representative of the host organisation, is signed by both and handed over to the volunteer directly at the end of the voluntary activity abroad.

22. Where can I share my EVS experience and meet other ex-volunteers?

Any volunteer may choose to become involved in the activities of the national structures of former EVS volunteers during or after the EVS. Contact details of these structures are available on the website: http://ec.europa.eu/youth/program/sos/vh_exvol_en.html