

**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)**

CONCEPT NOTE FOR 2023–2024

7 OCTOBER 2022

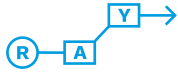
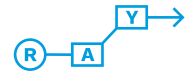


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1. CONTEXT AND RATIONALE

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 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).

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

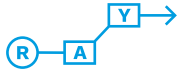
The key objectives of this research project are to explore

- 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 the Programme that are neighbouring the EU have been clustered into four regions: Region 1: Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosova, Montenegro); Region 2: Neighbourhood East (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine); Region 3: South-Mediterranean countries (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestina, Syria, Tunisia); Region 4: Russian Federation (Russia).



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 environments 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 after a first round of feedback and exchange on the draft concept note between the RAY and LTSA teams.

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 cover the previous programme generation, for which consolidated datasets already exist.

4.2. MODULE 2: SURVEY OF ORGANISATIONS

In the second module of this research project, an English-language survey of organisations 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 – 03.2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of 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)
04.2023 – 06.2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collection for survey (Module 2)⁵ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of survey (Module 2)
06.2023 – 08.2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial data analysis of responses to the survey • Summary of key findings for kick-off conference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback to summary of key findings • Thematic conference⁶ and first discussion
09.2023 – 12.2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus groups with organisations and networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support with focus group logistics
01.2024 – 06.2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of thematic module 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support of module development and translations

6. RESEARCH PARTNERS

Research partners of this project are the RAY Network and the long-term strategic activity on neighbouring partner countries (LTSA NPC) from Czechia, Finland, France, Germany, Poland and Slovenia.

7. NEXT STEPS

A working group for the project will be established in early 2023. A final concept note including a refined research design and adjusted research schedule will be developed early in 2023 together with the working group.

⁴ Due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, this research schedule is more tentative than usual.

⁵ The timing of the survey might change for alignment with MON & SOC schedules.

⁶ The timing of the thematic conference might change for alignment with SNAC schedules.