Erasmus+ Online Linguistic Support (OLS) Guidelines for NAs

KA1 Long-Term Mobility: Higher Education – Student Mobility, VET and Youth (EVS Volunteers)

1. Online Linguistic Support (OLS)

1. Erasmus+ Online Linguistic Support (OLS) has been designed to assist Erasmus+ participants in improving their knowledge of the language in which they will work, study or volunteer abroad so that they can make the most out of this experience. The OLS makes linguistic support accessible in a flexible and easy way and contributes to a specific objective of the Erasmus+ Programme, which is to promote language learning and linguistic diversity. The OLS also aims to ensure a better quality of learning mobility, as well as to measure the impact of the programme on linguistic skills.

2. Under Erasmus+, the European Commission contracted an Online Linguistic Support service for participants of long-term mobility activities (i.e. mobilities from 2 to 12 months and, in the case of VET learners, mobilities from 1 to 12 months). NAs shall use the OLS to provide linguistic support to selected mobility participants for their main language used to study, work or volunteer abroad, in accordance with the guidelines provided below.

3. Under the Call 2015, participants in long-term mobility activities under Key Action 1 (KA1) in the fields of Higher Education (student mobility between Programme Countries), VET and Youth (EVS) using English, French, German, Italian, Spanish or Dutch (or other languages as they become available in the OLS) as their main language of instruction, work or volunteering can be supported through the online service. Participants in long-term mobilities under KA1 who need linguistic support in other languages, as well as KA1 VET participants in mobilities of less than 1 month and participants in long-term mobilities under KA2 shall be supported through other means, such as organisational support for higher education institutions or individual grants for other fields. Online linguistic support may be gradually extended to other EU official languages as well as to all long-term mobility participants under KA1 and KA2.

4. The OLS consists of mandatory **language assessments**, which take place before and at the end of the mobility, and of an optional **language course** to be followed in between the two language assessments. The OLS language assessment is compulsory for all the selected participants undertaking long-term mobilities, except native speakers, while OLS language courses are to be awarded to all participants willing to follow them, according to the participant's linguistic needs. For Higher Education students, taking the OLS assessment before departure is a pre-requisite, except in duly justified cases. The results of the OLS language assessment will not prevent participants from taking part in the mobility.

5. Instructions on the use of the OLS system by all the actors involved are detailed in the User Guides for NAs and for beneficiaries, available in the OLS licence management system. For languages for which the online service is not available, support for language learning will be provided either through the organisational support grant (Higher Education) or through specific grants for linguistic support according to the demand included in the application forms (other fields).

Priority should be given to those participants most in need to improve their level in the main language of instruction, work or volunteering. However, provided that the beneficiary has a sufficient number of OLS licences, participants who are native speakers or have a C2 level in the main language of instruction, work or volunteering may use the OLS to improve their level in another language of instruction, work or volunteering, or in the language of the country. A maximum of one language course licence can be awarded to each participant.

2. GUIDELINES FOR THE ALLOCATION OF LICENCES BY NAS TO BENEFICIARIES

1. NAs shall allocate the available licences to the beneficiaries according to the following principles:

    - NAs shall distribute the licences in a transparent way, ensuring fair and equitable treatment of beneficiaries, taking into account the needs, duration and number of mobilities, etc.;

    - the number of allocated licences for language courses per beneficiary cannot exceed the number of allocated assessment licences.

    For Youth (EVS):
    - when granting licences for language *courses*, NAs shall refer to the requests made in the section about Linguistic Support
    - as concerns the language *assessments*, the number of language assessments can be above the number requested in the application form in order to cover all participants doing their volunteering in one of the relevant languages
    - NAs cannot provide unit cost contributions for any of the languages covered by the Online Linguistic Support.

2. The number and the type of allocated licences (assessment/language course) will be included in the grant agreement between the NA and the beneficiary, where necessary. The beneficiary shall ensure that all the allocated licences are properly distributed and used within the required period specified in the grant agreement with the NA.

3. GUIDELINES FOR THE ALLOCATION OF LICENCES BY BENEFICIARIES TO MOBILITY PARTICIPANTS

1. NAs shall instruct beneficiaries to award the licences to the mobility participants according to the following principles:

    - the assessment is compulsory for all participants of long-term mobility activities having as their main language of instruction, work or volunteering one of the available OLS languages, except native speakers, and must take place after participants have been selected; it is a pre-requisite to the mobility for Higher Education students, except in duly justified cases;

    - the licences for online language courses shall be awarded to all participants willing to take the course and according to the participant's linguistic needs;

2. The mobility participant commits himself/herself by signing the individual mobility grant agreement to complete the OLS assessment (before and at the end of the mobility period) and to follow the OLS language course, if awarded.

3. In addition to the OLS language courses, other types of preparation including linguistic preparation for short-term mobility, as well as intercultural, pedagogical and sector-specific language preparation are financed from the budget section "Organisational Support". For Youth, such preparation can also be financed from "Exceptional Costs" when young people with fewer opportunities are involved.

4. MONITORING AND REPORTING

1. Beneficiaries are responsible for monitoring and ensuring the full uptake of licences by mobility participants.

2. On the basis of the information on the use of licences provided by the service provider, beneficiaries report on the number of used assessment and language course licences in their reports to the NA: interim (field of HE) and final (field of HE, VET and Youth). In case of unused or non-allocated licences by beneficiaries, NAs may decide to take this into account in the following calls or selection rounds.

5. CALL 2015 – GENERAL RULES

1. Under the Call 2015, OLS assessment and language courses are available for the following languages: Dutch, English, French, German, Italian and Spanish and are provided in the form of OLS licences to be used by the eligible participants in long-term mobility (KA1 HE student mobility between Programme Countries, VET and Youth (EVS)) having one of the above-mentioned languages (or other languages as they become available in the OLS) as their main language of instruction, work or volunteering.

2. To facilitate the management of OLS licences, in cooperation with EACEA and the service provider, each NA has identified a contact point (person/functional mailbox) for contacts with EACEA and the service provider. The Commission has compiled the list of contact persons and sent it to EACEA and the service provider. *Update procedure for contact points*: upon log-in into the OLS licence management system, NAs are able to update their contact details whenever necessary. Any change of the contact person should be communicated to the OLS functional mailbox at EACEA-EPLUS-OLS@ec.europa.eu.

3. By the deadlines stated in the roadmap (cf. point 7. below), NAs must allocate licences to the chosen beneficiaries and encode them in EPlusLink. NAs should ensure, as much as possible, that the beneficiaries' contact person details (e-mails, telephone numbers) encoded in EPlusLink are complete and correct.

4. The Commission extracts the data on beneficiaries from EPlusLink (numbers of allocated licences, contact persons' e-mail addresses, etc.) and, via EACEA, transfers the data to the service provider. On the basis of the information provided in EPlusLink, beneficiaries receive login credentials from

the service provider and can log into the OLS system using their e-mail address. To facilitate the allocation and management of OLS licences, beneficiaries have the possibility to create additional users (aliases) with the same access rights.
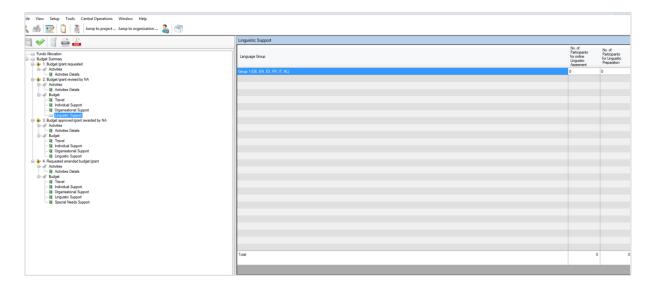
5. All actors must comply with the deadlines set out in this Annex. Where problems arise, the Commission/EACEA must be informed in time of the delay and of the date when the necessary information can be expected.

6. For communication with the EACEA and the Commission regarding Online Linguistic Support, NAs are requested to use the functional mailbox EACEA-EPLUS-OLS@ec.europa.eu.

7. A technical helpdesk for OLS beneficiaries and participants is provided by the service provider within the OLS (section "Report a problem").

6. CALL 2015 – ROADMAP

1. *Information to the NAs on the number of allocated licences*
    The Commission sends the final allocation by NA, by call and by field.

2. *Allocation of OLS licences to selected beneficiaries in EPlusLink (7.4 NA Signature)*
    NAs are requested to allocate the OLS licences to selected beneficiaries following the roadmap below. The number of licences for both assessments and language courses will be included in grant agreements.

Field	*Action*	*Deadline*
Higher Education	NAs must finalise encoding the numbers of awarded OLS licences for assessments and language courses in EPlusLink (3. Budget approved/grant awarded).	By mid-May 2015
VET	NAs must finalise encoding the numbers of awarded OLS licences for assessments and language courses in EPlusLink (3. Budget approved/grant awarded).	By mid-June 2015
Youth	NAs must finalise encoding the numbers of awarded OLS licences for assessments and language courses in EPlusLink (3. Budget approved/grant awarded).	For Round 1: by end of April 2015 For Round 2: by end of July 2015 For Round 3: by end of December 2015

3. *Data extraction from EPlusLink and transfer to the service provider*

For all fields, DG EAC extracts the data from EPlusLink (number of allocated licences, beneficiaries' details including the e-mail address of the 'Contact Person') and transfers it regularly to the service provider. The extracted data refers to the latest allocation encoded in EPlusLink (last budget version). The new projects can only be extracted once the 7.4 NA Signature procedure has been signed. Any changes in the licences allocation will be taken into account in the next extraction following the change.

The service provider uses the e-mail address of the 'Contact Person' to communicate with beneficiaries. Upon uploading the data in OLS, the beneficiary will receive an e-mail with credentials to log into the system. However, the beneficiaries will not be able to see the number of licences allocated to them until the NA has validated their licences in the OLS licence management module (see following step).

4. *Validation of the licences by NAs in the OLS licence management module*

The data uploaded in the OLS licence management system, including the number of licences, have to be validated by the NA so that the number of allocated licences becomes visible to the beneficiary. The NA contact point for OLS logs into the system and checks that the licences have been allocated; after checking, s/he validates.

After validation by the NAs, beneficiaries automatically receive a notification e-mail about the allocated licences. They will be able to log in to the OLS licence management module and to access the screen where they can consult the number of allocated licences.

5. *Identification of mobility participants eligible for online linguistic support*

Beneficiaries can start identifying the selected mobility participants having one of the available OLS languages as their main language of instruction, work or volunteering and invite them to take the first assessment test (with the exception of native speakers).

6. *Allocation of the licences to selected mobility participants in the OLS licence management module*
Beneficiaries insert the e-mail addresses of the identified mobility participants in a dedicated section of the OLS licence management system, indicate the language for assessment and set the deadline for participants to take the first assessment test.

Beneficiaries can extract mobility participants' e-mails from their own systems or directly from Mobility Tool+ and copy them into the OLS licence management system. Beneficiaries indicate in the OLS the language of assessment per participant, the deadline for taking the first test and validate the allocation.

Once beneficiaries have introduced this data in the system, mobility participants will receive an automatic invitation to start the first assessment in the indicated language.
Beneficiaries should ensure that the mobility participants' data is provided to the service provider as soon as possible so that the service provider can assign and send accesses to the participants in time to prepare for mobility.

7. *Participants take OLS assessment tests and, if awarded, follow language courses*
Upon receiving the invitation to take the first assessment, participants are required to take the test within the deadline defined by the beneficiary. Participants will receive their results by e-mail. The beneficiary will have access to assessment results through the service provider's licence management system and, if s/he wishes so, s/he can use them to select participants for language courses. For Higher Education, only the sending institution will have access to the students' test results.

Beneficiaries have access to the screen showing the list of participants who were allocated the assessment licences, who took the test and when, as well as the results of the test.

When the first assessment is completed by participants, the beneficiary will be able to allocate the language licences to the chosen participants in the OLS licence management system. However, the beneficiary will only be able to allocate the language course licences to those participants who have finalised their first assessment. Once licences are allocated, invitations are sent to those participants to follow the course.

The courses are valid from the first login to the online course for the same number of months as the mobility period (e.g. for a mobility of 6 months, if a participant logs in on 10 October 2014, the course licence is valid until 10 April 2015).

Two weeks before the end of the mobility period, all the participants who took the first assessment test will receive an automatic invitation to take the second assessment test, whether they did the language course or not. Participants need to finalise the second assessment within 30 days of the receipt of the invitation.
The beneficiary will be able to see in the OLS licence management system which participants followed the courses and the assessments, the dates when the licences were granted and when the test(s) were completed by the participants, as well as the results of the assessment test(s).

Youth: When the Receiving organisation fills in the Youthpass certificate with the volunteer, the results of the linguistic assessment can be added if the volunteer wishes to. Volunteers receive their results via e-mail and can also download them in pdf format, to attach them to their Youthpass.

8. *Monitoring the use of licences*

The service provider encourages the usage of the licences by sending e-mail invitations and reminders to participants and monitors the progress on his side. NAs and beneficiaries have access to specific screens where they are able to monitor the usage of the licences at the relevant level.