Exercise 3: ten questions to ask for each project proposals

Your university has been contacted by international partners to participate to project proposals within the Erasmus plus capacity building programme. They have shared concepts notes with the main details of the proposals.

➢ Please complete the project assessment template (see below) for at least one of the project concept note provided to you. Some information are available in the concept note, some in the guidelines of the programme that it Erasmus plus Capacity building

➢ Prepare a list of questions you need to ask the donor / partner, and suggestions you might want to contribute to the co-design of the project.

➢ Prepare your notes so that you are ready to make a presentation to your Rector / International Committee or other decision maker to explain why you want to apply for / bid for this project.

➢ Have the courage to make a recommendation *not* to go for the project if you think this is right for your university!

Template

1. **Strategic fit**
➢ How will this project contribute to your University's strategy?
➢ National development goals / Sustainable Development goals?
➢ Is the project focussed on improving:

(a) Teaching
(b) Research
(c) Administration
(d) Community engagement
(e) Some other area or a combination of several areas

2. Benefits
➢ What will be the benefits to your University? Try to quantify as far as possible.
    (a) Academic
    (b) Financial
    (c) Reputational
➢ What will be the benefits to your partner? If you know what your partner wants from the project, it will help you to define your own objectives and ensure that you are both working to a common purpose.

➢ What will be different at your University when the project is complete? This question tries to look further ahead and create a vision for what is possible.

3. Costs
➢ How much staff time will be required from your University? Quantify in estimated person days.

(a) Leadership time (how many meetings must the Rector attend?)
(b) Faculty (Professor / Head of Department, Associate Professor, Lecturer etc.)
(c) Academic support staff (Laboratory technicians, Library staff, IT staff etc.)
(d) Administrative support (Finance, IRO, others?)

How much of the cost of this staff time be covered by the project budget?

➢ What is the financial commitment required of your University? Contributions in kind (meeting rooms, laboratory, equipment usage etc).

4. Governance:
➢ How is the project managed
➢ Who is responsible for what?
➢ Who is the Project Leader / Principal Investigator?
➢ How are disputes between partners resolved?
➢ Do you feel you have sufficient control?
5. Risks
➢ What are the risks associated with the project – finance, people, ethical issues, intellectual property and reputation.
➢ Are the risks acceptable?

6. Evaluation
➢ How will the project be evaluated, and by whom?

7. Reputation
➢ What do you know about the partners?
➢ Are they a good fit for your university?
➢ Will they impose obligations on your university?

8. Communications
➢ What is the communications plan for the project?
➢ How will you inform faculty and students about the project (internal communications)
➢ How will you and / or the partner(s) publicise the project externally – in your country and their country?

9. Questions
➢ As you are completing this assessment, you may find there are questions you cannot answer.

➢ Go back to the donor / partner and ask. All invitations for proposals and from partners will have a system for asking questions. Don't be afraid to ask! It shows that you are really interested in the project and want to gain a deeper understanding.

10. Co-design and making suggestions

➢ You may find that you are happy with parts of the concept note, but other parts do not conform to your needs and objectives. You should make suggestions to make sure the project meets your needs.