



ProBleu

**Promoting ocean and water literacy
in school communities**

Call HORIZON-MISS-2022-OCEAN-01

Call for Proposals **4th ProBleu call**



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**Innovate
UK**

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1. Introduction and background

This is a call for proposals under the [ProBleu](#) project - *Promoting ocean and water literacy in school communities*, funded by the European Union within the Horizon Europe Programme. The central theme of ProBleu is the restoration of our ocean and waters by promoting education and the close connection between humans and the environment among children and youth.

This call for proposals describes the conditions of the ProBleu funding support scheme for students and school projects addressing education for blue sustainability and the protection of marine and freshwater ecosystems.

Why is there a ProBleu support scheme for schools?

The ProBleu funding support scheme presented in this call encourages the growth of the **Network of European Blue Schools (NEBS)** and contributes to the **EU mission "Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030"** by supporting schools' innovative projects.

The EU mission "[Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030](#)" (from now on referred to as "the Mission") aims to reverse the degradation of oceanic, coastal, and inland waters caused by human activities (such as climate change, ocean acidification, unsustainable resource exploitation, pollution with plastic, nutrients, and chemicals, and habitat destruction). The Mission aims to protect and restore ecosystems, prevent and eliminate pollution, and increase the circulation of the blue economy. The Mission's success is influenced by ocean and water literacy and the resulting environmental responsibility. In this regard, the Network of European Blue Schools (NEBS), founded as part of the [EU4Ocean](#) Coalition for Ocean Literacy, must develop and be supported in order to meet the Mission's objectives.

The **Network of European Blue Schools (NEBS)** connects diverse organisations, projects and people contributing to ocean literacy and the sustainable management of the ocean. The NEBS aims to inspire teachers, school directors or staff of education services to challenge their students to develop a "Find the blue" project that links them to the ocean or the sea. By successfully completing the project and sharing its results, schools will receive the European Blue School label.

2. Objectives, Activities and Topics

2.1. What types of projects can be supported?

The ProBleu funding scheme aims to support primary and secondary schools to mobilise and engage with children, youth, and the school community in the education for blue sustainability and the protection of marine and freshwater ecosystems.

ProBleu invites schools to propose **projects** that contribute to:

- Develop and implement ideas that contribute to achieving **the objectives of the Mission "Restore our ocean and waters by 2030"**;
- Enlarge and strengthen the **NEBS**, contributing to the work of the EU4Ocean Coalition;

- Engage students, youth, teachers, school leaders and the wider school community in the pursuit of **ocean and water literacy and sustainability**.

2.2. Who can apply? Who can be involved in the projects?

This call is directed at **primary and secondary schools (including vocational schools) providing education from ISCED level 1 up to level 3¹ of the EU-27 Member States and the third countries associated with Horizon Europe** (see the list of eligible countries in section 4 of this call for proposals).

ProBleu grants will be formally awarded to schools as legal entities (and not to teachers or students individually). However, it is expected that students, teachers, school leaders and eventually other stakeholders also actively participate in the preparation of the applications.

The school projects should foster the engagement of different stakeholders in the Blue Sustainability topics. When preparing a project, applicant schools are encouraged to:

- Include **collaboration among various stakeholders** inside and outside the school community: teachers, parents, ocean professionals (for example, researchers, marine scientists), NGOs, visitor centres, maritime companies, authorities (including municipalities), the wider community (civil society);
- Search for **collaborative approaches with other schools**, teachers and students (during and after the grant period). We encourage **twinning among schools from different locations**;
- Ensure equal opportunities for participants **with fewer opportunities** (please see in the annex the list of potential barriers associated with a situation of “fewer opportunities”).

If the school does not have legal autonomy, the application can be submitted by the entity that legally represents the school (e.g. a municipality). In this case the application must include supporting documentation confirming this arrangement/status. This documentation must also include a declaration stating that if the project is approved, the ProBleu funds will be used exclusively for carrying out the activities described in the project proposal by the school (this must be annexed as a third document in the online application form).

2.3. Which topics should school projects address?

The calls will support school projects covering a wide variety of topics within the theme of Blue Sustainability. Projects can focus on ocean/marine literacy or freshwater literacy.

Each project must address **at least 1 and at most 3 topics listed in the table below**. If the activities of your project address more than 3 topics, please choose the 3 topics that are more directly addressed by the proposed activities.

| Topics | |
|--------|--|
| 1 | The European Ocean Coalition (EU4Ocean) - each European is a citizen of our ocean and waters |
| 2 | Open access data on marine and freshwater |
| 3 | Protected waters |

¹ ISCED level: see a more detailed explanation here: https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/Table_III_Qualifications.pdf

| | |
|----|---|
| 4 | Using ecosystem-based services and nature-based solutions to protect the coast and seas |
| 5 | De-damming European rivers |
| 6 | Ending destructive fishing practices, e.g. overfishing |
| 7 | Removing single-use plastic / generate zero plastic litter |
| 8 | Reduce pesticides in seas and waters |
| 9 | Reduce micro pollution – zero spill |
| 10 | Reduce underwater noise pollution |
| 11 | Reduce CO2 emissions from the shipping sector |
| 12 | Promoting renewable ocean energy |
| 13 | Eat less fish, more algae - zero-carbon aquaculture |
| 14 | Create blue biotechnology |
| 15 | Carbon neutral marinas |
| 16 | Ocean and water governance |
| 17 | Biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction |
| 18 | Other (please specify) |

Please consult the ProBleu website for examples of projects about each topic.

2.4. *What types of activities can be included in the projects?*

Your project may include the following types of activities:

- **Activities to apply for or renew the accreditation as a member of the NEBS:** projects funded through the ProBleu are automatically eligible to apply to become a member of the NEBS.
- **Organisation or participation in events and activities with student involvement (inside and outside the school premises):** workshops, meetings, conferences, training, field trips, exhibitions, local expeditions, technical trips, virtual educational activities, boat activities, virtual laboratories, laboratory trips, museum trips, technical field trips. Applicants are encouraged to design Open Schooling activities in collaboration with the local community and with external stakeholders. However, these types of activities cannot constitute the core of your project.
- **Development of in-classroom lessons and exercises** to promote ocean and water literacy. These lessons and exercises shall cover more than one school subject. Applicants are encouraged to design Open Schooling activities in collaboration with the local community and with external stakeholders.
- **Development of practical lessons and exercises** to promote ocean/marine and water literacy outside the classroom using citizen-science methodologies. Projects are encouraged to cover more than one school subject. Applicants are encouraged to design Open Schooling activities in collaboration with the local community and with external stakeholders.

- **Research-based activities**, including e.g. laboratory testing and analysis of results. Applicants are encouraged to design Open Schooling activities in collaboration with the local community and with external stakeholders.
- **Communication, promotion and engagement activities**: activities for promoting the learnings and results at the school level and within the wider community. Applicants are encouraged to promote the project impacts as widely as possible.
- **Organisation or participation in competitions**: Competitions among students to promote their ocean and water literacy. These competitions can be used to stimulate collaborative and group work in the same classroom, at the school level and between schools (through twinning). Applicants are encouraged to design Open Schooling activities in collaboration with the local community and with external stakeholders.
- **Twinning**: Activities linking a school with other schools (twinning). Applicants are encouraged to design Open Schooling activities in collaboration with the local community and with external stakeholders.
- **Other Open Schooling activities**: Other activities promoting collaboration with the local community and with external stakeholders.

The projects can also carry out activities using teaching support for ocean and water learning provided by ProBleu: this provides educators with tools and interfaces to translate scientific data into a better understanding of the freshwater and ocean/marine environments and into teaching materials, with core elements provided to inspire co-creation within the network. For the first call, we invite educators to co-design these materials with us. Examples are creating maps of ocean change (temperature, acidity, currents, etc) derived from scientific models, explaining how we observe water on Earth from satellites, and running simulations of aquatic food webs.

Important Note

At the end of the projects, schools **must upload** all reusable educational materials to the [ProBleu platform](#). These materials will be included in the ProBleu catalogue of ocean and water literacy teaching aids, available to other schools. Examples include documents, videos, software, images and others.

2.5. What is the duration of the projects?

The maximum duration of each project in this call is **7 (seven) months** and the minimum duration is **3 (three) months**. Projects will start from the 1st of September 2025 and must be concluded maximum by the 31st of March 2026.

3. Timetable and budget

3.1. *When can my school apply? When will projects start?*

The indicative schedule for the different stages of the procedure is as follows:

| What? | Timing |
|--|--|
| Call opening | 21/03/2025 |
| Deadline for submission | 23/05/2025 17h00 CET (Central European time) |
| Evaluation ⁽¹⁾ | 26/05/2025 to 30/07/2025 |
| Announcement of results ⁽¹⁾ | 05/08/2025 |
| Contract signature ⁽¹⁾ | 29/08/2025 |
| Project start date | 01/09/2025 |
| Project end date (maximum ending date) | 31/03/2026 |

Note: ⁽¹⁾These dates might suffer slight modification if the number of applications received causes management constraints.

3.2. *How much funding is available to support the school projects?*

The overall available budget for this call is € 152,500 (one hundred and fifty-two thousand, five hundred euros) and we aim to provide support to at least 36 schools.

ProBleu wants to provide funding opportunities to a wide range of schools across different regions. Therefore, this call includes a distribution of available funds per groups of countries. The aim is to prioritise countries which:

- currently do not have schools as members of the Network of European Blue Schools; and
- have not received funding from ProBleu.

Geographic origin of the applicants

| Group | A | B | C |
|---|--|---|---|
| Maximum available funding | 95.000€ | 47.500€ | 10.000€ |
| Approximate number of projects to be funded | 20 projects Maximum 6 projects of 7.500€ Maximum 6 projects of 5.000€ Minimum 8 projects of 2.500€ | 12 projects Maximum 2 projects of 7.500€ Maximum 3 projects of 5.000€ Minimum 7 projects of 2.500€ | 4 projects All projects of 2.500€ |
| Countries | Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Kosovo, Luxemburg, Malta, Montenegro, Norway, Slovenia, Ukraine. | Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Chequia, Croatia, Faroe Island, Finland, Georgia, Hungary, Israel, Moldova, Netherlands, Serbia, Slovakia, Sweden, Tunisia. | Albania, Armenia, Estonia, France, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Marroco, North Macedonia, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Cyprus, Romania, Spain, Türkiye, UK. |

For more details on the financial provisions, please see **section 5** of this call for proposals.

4. Eligibility conditions

4.1. What are the minimum conditions to participate?

Eligible applicants (schools): For this call, “applicant” is a school with a recognised legal status (according to the national applicable law) that applies for financial support.

A school that is a member of an official “school cluster” may submit their application individually, provided that the applicant school has its legal personality.

To be eligible, proposals must be presented by a single applicant (school) meeting **all the requirements of the table:**

| Requirement | Description |
|--|---|
| Type of organisation | <p>The applicant is a primary or secondary school (including vocational schools) providing education from ISCED level 1 to level 3.</p> <p><u>If the school does not have legal autonomy</u>, the application can be submitted by the entity that legally represents the school (e.g. a municipality). In this case the application must include supporting documentation confirming this arrangement/status. This documentation must also include a declaration stating that if the project is approved, the ProBleu funds will be used exclusively for carrying out the activities described in the project proposal by the school (this must be annexed as a third document in the online application form).</p> |
| Geographic location | <p>The applicant must be located in one of the EU-27 Member States and the third countries associated with Horizon Europe.</p> <p><u>Eligible countries:</u> Albania, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Faroe Islands, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Morocco, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Cyprus, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Serbia, Tunisia, Türkiye, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom.</p> |
| Relation with the Network of European Blue Schools (NEBS) | <p>The applicant is a member of the NEBS at the time of application and aims to renew its accreditation.</p> <p>If the applicant is <u>not</u> a member of the NEBS, it will be automatically integrated in the NEBS and requested to accept the respective code of conduct.</p> |
| Restrictive measures | <p>The applicant is not subject to EU restrictive measures under Article 29 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) or Article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU)</p> |
| Declaration of Honour | <p>The applicant submits a Declaration of Honour according to the template provided and duly signed and stamped by the legal representative.</p> <p><u>The legal representative (or the legal representatives) must be the person/person who legally binds the organization and will later (in case of approval of the project) sign the contract.</u></p> |

Eligible applications:

Applications must be submitted electronically via the [ProBleu website](#) and follow the instructions in section 9 of this document: How to apply. All potential applicants must note that:

- Applications not submitted via the online application form will not be considered eligible.

- Applications that do not use the provided Project Description Form and/or surpass the maximum number of pages (21 pages) will not be considered eligible. One templates in Word format is provided.
- The declaration of honour must be signed and stamped following the template provided.

A total of 4 ProBleu calls are organised between 2023 and 2025:

- Call 1: applications closed on the 19th of January 2024.
- Call 2: applications closed on the 30th of April 2024.
- Call 3: applications closed on the 21st of November 2024.
- **Call 4: The call opens on the 21st of March 2025 (see table in section 3 above).**

Applicants (schools) who are not funded in one past call are eligible to apply to the other calls. Applicants (schools) who receive funding from ProBleu, from SHORE (<https://shoreproject.eu/>) or from BlueLightS (<https://blue-lights.eu/>) projects are not eligible to apply in later calls.

Eligible activities:

Eligible activities are the ones set out in section 2.4. above.

Exclusion:

Applicants are requested to declare that all information shared in their application is correct, complete, and legitimate and that the legal entity fully complies with the eligibility criteria set out in the call. ProBleu will not award a grant to an applicant who:

- is in an exclusion situation established in the terms of the Declaration of Honour; or
- has misrepresented the information required as a condition for participating in the procedure or has failed to supply that information; or
- was previously involved in preparing documents used in the award procedure, which entails a breach of the principle of equal treatment, including distortion of competition, that cannot be remedied otherwise; or
- has received a grant from previous ProBleu, SHORE or BlueLightS projects' calls.

5. Financial Provisions

What type of expenses can be supported in my school project? How will the payments work?

Form of the grant and budget categories:

Applicants shall propose a budget based on a **simplified estimation of costs** that summarises the direct costs associated with the school project proposed. The grant takes the form of a lump sum grant in one of the following categories:

- For small-scale projects: up to € 2.500 (mandatory for applicant schools located in countries from Group C)

- For medium-scale projects: up to € 5.000
- For large-scale projects: up to € 7.500

All applicants may choose from any of the three lump sum categories, except for schools located in countries from Group C, which can only apply for the small-scale lump sum (€2,500).

Note: The scale of the project is not necessarily connected to its duration but to the lump sum category, i.e. for example a large-scale project does not need to have a duration of 7 months.

The next table describes the **categories of eligible costs**, as well as examples of types of costs within each category – the examples are not exhaustive.

| Category of cost | Examples |
|--|--|
| Travel, accommodation and subsistence | Travel, accommodation and subsistence for students and/or teachers to visit exhibitions, museums, laboratories, research centres or other venues justified within the project activities. Note: The maximum amount for travel, accommodation and subsistence costs is 50% of the lump sum requested. |
| Purchase and renting of equipment | Purchase or renting of lab equipment, photographic equipment, specialised software, and equipment for the development of resources. |
| Other goods, works or services | Purchase of consumables and supplies for the development of project activities. Promotion, dissemination, publications. Registration in conferences, training, or other events. Membership to other initiatives, such as GLOBE. |
| Subcontracting | Fees for external services, e.g., experts/professionals who give workshops at the school as part of the project activities or support the development of specific project activities. Translation services (including translation of in-classroom and practical lessons and exercises developed or any other ProBleu resources). Note: The maximum amount for subcontracting costs is 30% of the lump sum requested. |

The following types of costs are **NOT** eligible:

- **Personnel costs:** human resources working for the applicant organisation.
- **Purchase or renting of real estate, construction works.**

To be eligible, the costs of school projects must be duly justified and relate to work carried out following the description of the activities of the project as set out in the contract, and during the eligibility period stated.

The grant takes the form of a lump sum grant linked to the completion of work. This means that beneficiaries (schools) will receive the full lump sum approved and set out in the Contract when the activities defined in the contract are completed. Thus, they will not be calculated based on the costs actually incurred.

Payment arrangements and conditions

The schedule for grant payment is as follows:

- 80% of the grant will be made available upon contract signature.

- 20% balance payment after project completion, against the validation and acceptance of the final report.

Payments will be made in Euro to the bank account indicated by the beneficiary (school). The legal representative of the beneficiary will sign the contract and take complete responsibility for executing the proposed activities.

6. Quality & merit evaluation - award Criteria

How will my project application be evaluated?

Eligible applications will be assessed and scored **up to 100 points**. The minimum score necessary for a project to be considered for financial support (threshold) **is 70 points**. Each application will be evaluated by two experts selected by the ProBleu consortium.

The applications will be evaluated in three dimensions with different criteria:

1. Quality of the project and outcomes (maximum 35 points; threshold: 20 points)

| Criterion | Description |
|--|--|
| Topics addressed and EU Mission objectives | - The project adequately addresses one or more topics stated in section 2.3 of the call document, contributing to the implementation of the EU Mission “Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030” objectives and targets. |
| Type of activities and expected outcomes | - The type of activities planned are suitable to achieve the objectives of the project. - The expected outcomes contribute to meet the objectives of the project and of the call. |
| Quality and feasibility of the work plan | - The work plan is feasible, realistic and adequate to the size and complexity of the project. |
| Features of the outputs | - The project will produce outputs in open editable formats (highly recommended; applicants should justify when this is not possible). - The outputs, particularly the developed teaching material, will be published in English and at least one local language (if applicable). |
| Links to the school curricula and school activities | - The planned activities and results will be integrated into the school curricula and school activities, i.e. will add new resources to existing curricula and/or introduce new topics. |

2. Engagement and impact (maximum 35 points; threshold: 20 points)

| Criterion | Description |
|--|--|
| Involvement of students | - Number/proportion of students to be directly involved in the activities of the project (i.e. actively contributing for the project implementation) considering the size of the school community. - Number/proportion of students indirectly involved in the activities of the project (i.e. attending events about the project) considering the size of the school community. |
| Involvement of the wider school community | - The project involves the wider school community. For example: families, other students, teachers, companies, public authorities, NGOs, etc. |
| Accessibility and inclusion | - The project grants equal access to its activities for all students. |

| | |
|--|---|
| | - The project includes specific measures to grant access to students (or other targets) with fewer opportunities (see annex). |
| Exploitation/ reproducibility of outcomes | - The project will produce clear outputs and teaching material reproducible by other schools in the future. - There are clear plans to expand the use of the outputs to other schools or other contexts. |

3. Criteria defined by Horizon Europe (maximum 30 points; threshold: 18 points)

| Criterion | Description |
|---|--|
| Cooperation/ Twinning | - The project entails a proposal for cooperation and/or twinning with other schools, in particular with the NEBS and those aspiring to become accredited members of the NEBS. |
| Commitment to a Climate Pact Pledge | - The project entails a commitment to a Climate Pact Pledge leading to decarbonisation or at least carbon neutrality of the project and of the proposed school activities. |
| Innovation, Open Schooling and Citizen Science | - The project entails strong and innovative ocean and/or water literacy activities aimed at students, teachers and parents of the school(s). - The project promotes methodologies of Open Schooling, engaging with the community. - The project integrates citizen science methodologies and platforms, encouraging active participation in scientific research and data collection. |

Rules for breaking ties

In case of tie between two or more applications, the following rules apply.

| Criterion | Description |
|---|--|
| 1 - Score in the dimension of engagement and impact | In the case of a tie: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (in each country group) the applications receiving more points in the dimension of engagement and impact will rank first. |
| 2 - Score in the dimension quality of the project and outcomes | If still a tie: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (in each country group) the applications receiving more points in the dimension quality of the project and outcomes will rank first. |
| 3 - Score in the dimension Horizon Europe | If still a tie: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (in each country group) the applications receiving more points in the dimension Horizon Europe will rank first. |
| 4 - Lowest grant requested | If still a tie: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (in each country group) the applications requesting the lowest grant amount will rank first (this criterion is transversal to the process of untying). |

If the total budget allocated to the selected projects in Group A does not reach the maximum available amount (€95.000), the remaining funds will be transferred to Group B. Similarly, should the total budget for Group B (€47.500) not be fully utilised, the unspent portion will be transferred to Group C.

7. Visibility

Beneficiaries must properly acknowledge the European Union's contribution in any publications or activities that employ the funds provided. Beneficiaries are expected to display the emblem and disclaimer of the European Union on all publications and other products created under the financed action. They should also use the ProBleu visuals where applicable. Guidelines will be provided to the successful applicants with the signature of the contracts.

8. Processing of Personal Data

To respond to a call for proposals, personal data (such as name, e-mail address, and address) must be recorded and processed. Such information will be handled under [Regulation \(EU\) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016](#) on the protection of natural people concerning the processing of personal data and the free movement of such data. Unless indicated otherwise, the questions and any personal data requested that are required to evaluate the application following the call for proposal will be processed solely for that purpose by the consortium.

9. How to Apply

Project applications must be submitted by **23rd May 2025 at 17h00 CET** (Central European Time), by completing the application online [Available on the ProBleu website](#). Any proposal submitted after that moment will not be considered.

Each applicant can only submit one application. If the same applicant submits more than one application, the last application submitted within the valid deadline will be the one considered.

A project application is composed of the following elements (compulsory):

- **Online application form:** Information about the school, project summary, checklist - Applications not submitted via online application form will not be considered eligible.
- **Project description:** Word form to be completed using the template provided on the ProBleu website. The project description must be attached to the online application form and comply with the limits of pages (21) indicated in the form. Applications not using the provided Project Description Form and/or surpass the maximum number of pages will not be considered eligible.
- **Declaration of Honour:** Using to the template provided on the ProBleu website, signed and stamped by the legal representative (to be attached to the online application form).
- **Other document:** applicants can submit any other document that confirms their legal status.

All mandatory documents and an informative factsheet for applicants are available in the **applicants' toolkit** on the ProBleu website.

Applicant schools are strongly advised to **submit their proposals well in advance** to ensure they won't be affected by potential internet/other technical issues close to the deadline. Late applications will not be evaluated. Once the proposal is submitted, you will receive a confirmation email. If you do not receive this confirmation email, it means your proposal has

NOT been submitted. If you believe this is due to a fault in the submission system, you should notify us via helpdesk@probleu.school, explaining the circumstances and attaching a copy of the proposal (and, if possible, screenshots to show what happened). If the confirmation email is received but the submission was after the call closing time, the application will not be accepted. Please note that the ProBleu team will not provide technical support to the submission process via email or any other channel during the last 24 hours before the deadline.

Language of the Application: All parts of the application must be submitted **in English**. **Projects will not be judged on writing quality, but the objectives and activities must be clearly stated.** The online application form and the project description template contain a translation function to translate text into more than 100 languages. Applicants may prepare the application in their own language, but the information on both the online application form and the Project Description Form must be submitted in English.

Need help?

If you have doubts about the application process, please check the [FAQ \(Frequently Asked Questions\)](#) on the ProBleu website. If you still have questions, you can send an email to probleucall@probleu.school before the 20th of May 2025. We cannot guarantee that emails will be answered after this date.

Three information days will be organised. To register, please send an email to probleucall@probleu.school. The recorded sessions or a summary of it will be available on the ProBleu YouTube Channel.

- **1st Info Day:** on the **9th of April 25** – Information session on application procedures.
- **2nd Info Day:** on the **16th of April 25** – Focused on project conceptualisation, showcasing project examples, and our catalogue.
- **3rd Info Day:** on the **7th of May 25** – Focused on project conceptualisation, showcasing project examples, and our catalogue.

All sessions will take place at 10:00 CET (Central European Time).

Annex 1 – Participants with fewer opportunities

List of potential barriers that may configure a situation of “fewer opportunities” (adapted from the [Erasmus+ Guide 2023](#)):

- **Disabilities:** This includes physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder someone’s full and effective participation in society on the same footing as others.
- **Health problems:** Barriers may result from health issues including severe illnesses, chronic diseases, or any other physical or mental health-related situation that prevents from participating in the programme.
- **Barriers linked to education and training systems:** Individuals struggling to perform in education and training systems for various reasons, early school-leavers, NEETs (people not in education, employment or training) and low-skilled adults may face barriers. Although other factors may play a role, these educational difficulties mostly result from an educational system which creates structural limitations and/or does not fully take into account the individual’s particular needs.
- **Cultural differences:** Cultural differences may represent significant barriers to learning in general, all the more for people with a migrant or refugee background (especially newly arrived migrants), people belonging to a national or ethnic minority, sign language users, people with linguistic adaptation and cultural inclusion difficulties, etc. Being exposed to foreign languages and cultural differences may limit the benefits of participation and even prevent potential participants from applying for support.
- **Social barriers:** Social adjustment difficulties such as limited social competences, anti-social or high-risk behaviours, (former) offenders, (former) drug or alcohol abusers, or social marginalisation may represent a barrier. Other social barriers can stem from family circumstances, for instance being the first in the family to access higher education or being a parent (especially a single parent), a caregiver, a breadwinner or an orphan, or having lived or currently living in institutional care.
- **Economic barriers:** Economic disadvantages like a low standard of living, low income, learners who need to work to support themselves, dependence on the social welfare system, long-term unemployment, precarious situations or poverty, being homeless, in debt or with financial problems, etc., may represent a barrier.
- **Barriers linked to discrimination:** discriminations linked to gender, age, ethnicity, religion, beliefs, sexual orientation, disability, or intersectional factors (a combination of two or several of the mentioned discrimination barriers).
- **Geographical barriers:** Living in remote or rural areas, on small islands or in peripheral/ outermost regions, in urban suburbs, in less serviced areas (limited public transport, poor facilities) or in less developed areas may constitute a barrier.