

# National evaluation of Erasmus+ in the Netherlands (2014-2020/ 2021-2027)

Final Report

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## List of abbreviations

AE	Adult Education
ADR	Auditdienst Rijk
BIP	Blended Intensive Programme
BM	Beneficiary Module
CERV	Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme
EACEA	European Education and Culture Executive Agency
EC	European Commission
ECEC	Early Childhood Education and Care
ECVET	European Credits system for Vocational Education and Training
EPALE	Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
ESCi	European Student Card initiative
ESF+	European Social Fund+
ESL	Early school leaving
EU	European Union
EUI	European Universities Initiative
EVS	European Voluntary Service
EWP	Erasmus Without Paper
FTE	Full-time equivalent
HE	Higher education
IaH	Internationalisation at Home
IFO	Internationalisation Grant School Education
KA	Key Action
MDT	Maatschappelijke Diensttijd (Civic Service)
MT+	Mobility Tool+
NA E&T	National Agency Education & Training
NA Youth	National Agency Youth
NAU	National Authority
NEET	Not in education, employment or training
OCW	Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap (Ministry of Education, Culture and Science)
RAY	Research-based Analysis of Youth in action
SE	School education
SNAC	Strategic National Agency Cooperation
TCA	Transnational Cooperation Activities
VET	Vocational education and training
VWS	Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport (Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport)
MYW	Mobility of Youth Workers

## Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of the national evaluation of the Erasmus+ programme in the Netherlands. It covers both the evaluation of the previous programme period (2014-2020), as well as the midterm evaluation of the current period (2021-2027).

### What is going well?

The evaluation presents a positive assessment of the implementation of decentralised actions in the Netherlands. The available programme budget is fully utilised, with demand for funding exceeding availability across most sectors and actions. While the commitment and budget realisation figures were negatively affected during Covid-19, they quickly returned to pre-pandemic levels. In some years, not all budget allocated for KA2 in VET was committed, and commitment levels for KA2 projects in the Youth sector have generally been lower in recent years due to the low quality and/or relevance of many applications.

Project objectives are generally achieved, and KA2 outputs are often integrated into regular policies and practices. The supported projects demonstrate a significant impact on the internationalisation strategies of participating organisations, as well as on the quality of their offerings, staff, and participants. Most beneficiary organisations report noticeable changes across various aspects of their learning offerings, including the adoption of the programme's horizontal priorities. Consequently, most beneficiaries indicate that the benefits of Erasmus+ clearly outweigh the administrative costs incurred.

The proactive approach taken by National Agencies (NAs) to strengthen the programme's impact appears to be appreciated by beneficiaries. Erasmus+ has also successfully reached a wide range of beneficiary types across all sectors in the previous and current programme, driven in part by the Inclusion and Diversity Strategy. The inclusion top-up is particularly valued in HE and VET (EQF 1 and 2), and there is interest expressed in expanding this top-up to other sectors as well. Positive experiences have also been reported with virtual and Blended Intensive Programmes (BIPs) in HE, as these attract participants with fewer opportunities.

Beneficiaries generally express satisfaction with the programme and NA support. Positive feedback is provided on recent innovations in the programme, such as the introduction of Small-Scale Partnerships, mobility opportunities for adult learners and pupils, a wider variety of short-term mobility options, and the accreditation of beneficiary organisations. Additionally, simplification measures introduced for 2021-2027, such as lump sums for KA2, are generally appreciated.

The objectives of the Erasmus+ programme continue to be regarded as relevant to the Dutch context, with the four horizontal priorities perceived as well-chosen and aligned with topics already of high importance in education and training curricula and programmes. Stakeholders and programme beneficiaries from all fields provide positive feedback on the internal and external coherence of the Erasmus+ objectives. No alternatives to Erasmus+ are identified that offer similar opportunities at the national, regional, and sectoral levels.

### What could be improved?

Summarising, four important areas of improvement can be identified for the current programme and future programme.

#### (1) Strengthening the inclusiveness of Erasmus+

There are still challenges in reaching out to all types of organisations and individual participants in each sector. As a result, it is recommended to increase the budget for KA1 mobility and KA2, as the demand for funding in most sectors and actions is much higher than the allocated budget available, not making the programme accessible for all who submitted high quality applications. Secondly, it is recommended that the NAs continue their active approach to assure the strengthening of the inclusiveness of Erasmus+. The EC should explore mainstreaming the inclusion top-up to VET (EQF 3 and 4) and other sectors. The EC should also consider providing more financial

support for coaching and mentoring to facilitate the mobility of vulnerable groups, as well as providing funding for hosting organisations to ensure the quality provision of mobility and support newcomers to the programme who do not yet have established cooperation partners. Additionally, virtual mobility and BIPs have proven to facilitate opportunities for inclusion target groups and need dedicated financing, as costs associated with organising digital programmes and virtual mobility are not adequately covered by the programme. Finally, the NAs should strengthen cooperation and set up alliances with sectoral and professional organisations, as well as online platforms like EPALE, to better promote funding possibilities of the programme and reach non-participants. Regarding the limited uptake of KA1 mobility for adult learners, more guidance should be provided to potential users (e.g. roadmaps and sharing good practice examples), besides acknowledging that it takes time for the sector to build up capacity for new types of actions.

## **(2) Strengthening the impact of the programme**

Despite the positive impact of participation in Erasmus+ at the organisation and individual levels, the evaluation shows that the impact of participation in KA2 of Erasmus+ is often limited beyond their own organisation. To expand the impact at the systemic level, it is recommended that the NAs continue their impact strategy and related activities. It is further recommended that the programme and NAs provide more support in rolling out developed outputs and further promote (through awards) and monitor good practices over the years. The EC could consider giving promising projects extra financial support in their dissemination, beyond the lifetime of the project. It is further recommended that the programme and NAs should do more to encourage organisations to learn from each other's experiences with KA2 projects, by facilitating short Peer Learning Activities around specific themes or by grouping organisations into thematic and cross-sectoral networks and strengthening alignment with policymakers. Inspiration can be drawn from the EQUAL Community Initiative that was financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) within the 2000-2006 programming period, having a specific mainstreaming approach and budget for facilitating National Thematic Networks. The EC should also reconsider allocating more budget for TCA for the NA E&T, since the budget for E&T is the same as the allocated budget for the Youth sector solely and therefore too limited to adequately support all education sectors. It would also be beneficial to complement the output-oriented programme indicators with quantitative and qualitative impact indicators of Erasmus+ projects.

## **(3) Simplify the programme**

Beneficiaries are generally critical of the supporting IT tools of the EC and administrative processes, which hamper the implementation of their projects and increase the administrative burden for project coordinators. Simplification measures introduced for 2021-2027 are generally appreciated, but there is still a lack of clarity about the justification for the use of lump sums. It is recommended that the EC should provide more explanation to beneficiaries about rules and reporting requirements, as well as justifications of expenses, from the start of the programme period. Timely information about upcoming Calls, application forms, and guidance documents should also be provided so that beneficiaries have sufficient time to familiarise themselves with the Call. The EC should also ensure that existing digital tools and systems used for the programme's management and implementation are user-friendly and work properly. IT tools should be user-tested by the EC before their further implementation. Additionally, application forms and reporting formats should be more compact and reduce overlap in questions, with more differentiation between types of actions proportional to the size of projects. In the future, the EC should consider other ways to justify funding, such as sharing outputs or videos of events, instead of writing reports, along the principles of result-based funding.

## **(4) More guidance on the horizontal priorities**

While beneficiaries generally appreciate and support the horizontal priorities, they also caution against prioritising them at the expense of the programme's central objectives. Additionally, they

express concerns about the growing administrative burden associated with accommodating an increasing number of priorities. Furthermore, beneficiaries suggest that the programme and NAs could provide clearer expectations regarding how the horizontal priorities should be addressed in projects. Clear and realistic frameworks are needed at the national level to guide beneficiaries in translating horizontal priorities into concrete actions. This will help in monitoring how these horizontal priorities are addressed but will also enhance visibility and foster positive attitudes towards Erasmus+ and its strategic goals.

#### **Considerations for the future Erasmus+ programme**

In addition to the recommendations described above that could be implemented in the current programme, there are also points to consider for the future programme. First and foremost, the evaluation shows a strong consensus that the EC should ensure continuity between programmes as much as possible, so that beneficiaries do not need to adapt their policies and practices to new (administrative) requirements and actions ('evolution instead of revolution'). Furthermore, stakeholders emphasize the need for a stable volume of budget for mobility actions over the whole programme period, especially for established actions that have been running for a longer time and where demand is high (instead of the current allocation reflecting the overall Multiannual Financial Framework of the European Union). New actions can follow a more gradual increase in budget, allowing time for beneficiaries to become familiar with them. Lastly, over the years, both NAs have experienced an increase in their tasks, roles, and expectations, resulting in changes in the implementation costs for the programme. As a result, the EC and National Authorities (NAUs) should reconsider increasing the management fee for NAs.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction to Erasmus+

Erasmus+ is the EU flagship programme for education, training, youth, and sport in Europe. The programme offers mobility and cooperation opportunities in the following six main areas: higher education (HE); vocational education and training (VET); school education (SE) (including early childhood education and care – ECEC); adult education (AE); youth; and sport.

Beneficiaries of its funding can be individuals, including students, (teaching or training) staff, pupils, trainees, adult learners, youth, and youth workers. There are also funding opportunities for organisations, which can be used for development and networking activities, strategic improvement of staff professional skills, organisational capacity building, creating transnational cooperative partnerships with organisations from other countries to produce innovative outputs, and the exchange of best practices.

In 2021-2027, as with the previous programme, Erasmus+ comprises three Key Actions (KAs). Some Actions are managed by the European Commission (EC) level, either directly or through the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Other Actions are managed at the decentralised level through Erasmus+ National Agencies (NAs) appointed by the National Authorities (NAUs). Their role is to promote the programme, disseminate information nationally, support applicants and beneficiaries, and manage the selection process for funding as well as the qualitative and financial monitoring and the evaluation of projects. Additionally, they work with other NAs and the EC, for example by sharing high quality practice and project achievements. Decentralised actions are:

- KA1: learning mobility of individuals
- KA2: partnerships for cooperation (Cooperation partnerships and Small-Scale Partnerships)

The Erasmus+ programme for the programming period 2021-2027 recognizes several key priorities to which subsidy applications must contribute: inclusion & diversity, digitalisation, participation, and Green Erasmus+ (sustainability, environment, and climate). In addition to the aforementioned four overarching priorities, it is important for Erasmus+ Youth that methods based on 'non-formal learning' are utilised and contribute to increasing competencies and skills of youth and strengthening the quality of youth work. In the ongoing 2021-2027 Erasmus+ programme, the Netherlands places particular emphasis on two national priorities: inclusion and digitalisation. In contrast, the focus in the previous programme was on inclusion and professionalisation. At the same time the NAs are dedicated to enhancing the impact of the programme and projects by assisting them in strengthening their impact strategy through advice, training, and support with impact tools.

The decentralised actions in the Netherlands are implemented by two NAs: Nuffic as NA Education & Training (appointed by the National Authority Ministry of Education, Culture and Science) and the Dutch National Youth Institute (Nederlands Jeugdinstituut: NJI) as NA Youth (appointed by the National Authority Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport). In the previous programme period of 2014-2020, the NA E&T was implemented through a collaboration between two organisations: EP-Nuffic<sup>1</sup> and CINOP. EP-Nuffic was responsible for the SE and HE sector and being the lead organisation of the NA, while CINOP was responsible for the VET and AE sector in the Netherlands. Since January 1, 2021, the responsibility for VET and AE in Erasmus+ has shifted from CINOP to Nuffic. As a result, Nuffic now oversees all fields of education & training.

Figure 1.1 shows that most of the Erasmus+ budget is allocated to HE in the Netherlands. The second-largest recipient is the VET sector, followed by the SE, Youth and AE sectors. The chart also indicates

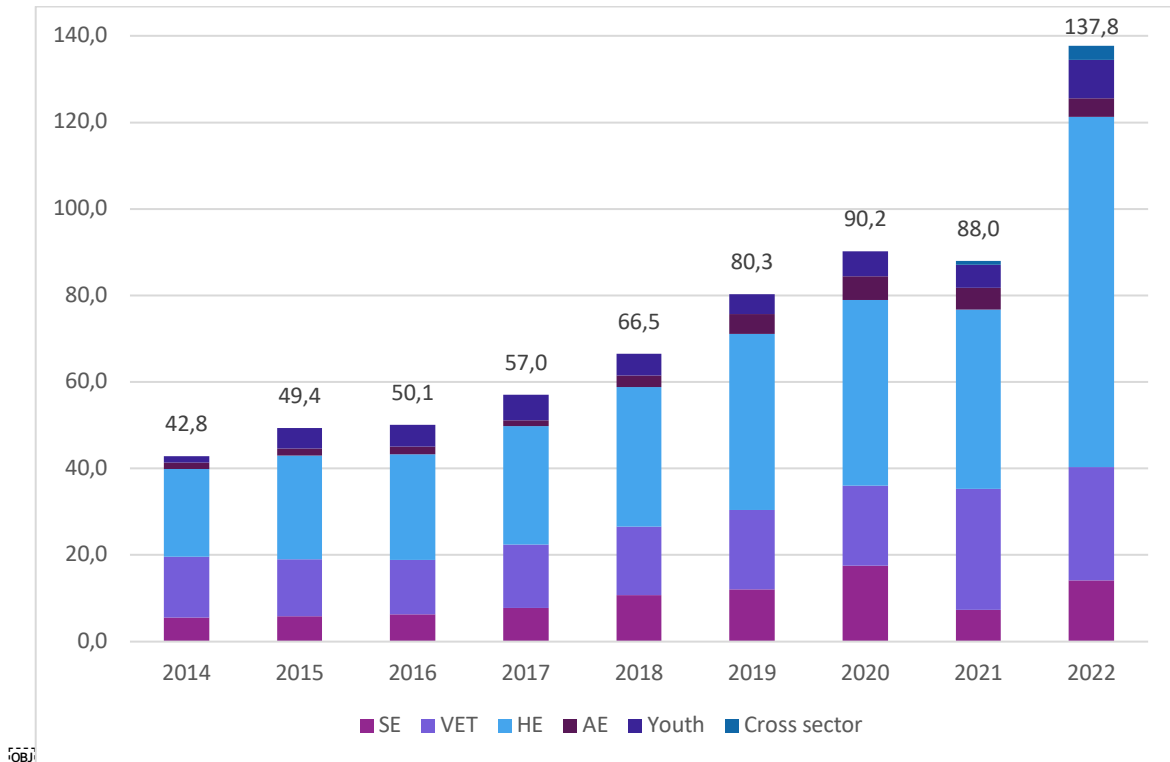
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<sup>1</sup> Note that in 2015, Nuffic merged with the European Platform, which had a similar objective to strengthen internationalisation of Dutch education for primary and secondary education. From 2015 to early 2017, the organisation was therefore called: EP-Nuffic. From March 2017, it is again: Nuffic.



that the absolute budget of Erasmus+ has significantly increased over the years within the previous programme 2014-2020. The budget for the 2021-2027 program saw a notable increase, beginning from 2021 onward. In the previous programme period, approximately 71% of the grant budget was allocated to KA1 mobility, with 29% going to Cooperation Projects. However, in the initial years of the current program (2021-2022), these percentages were more evenly divided between KA1 and KA2, with a 50/50 split.

FIGURE 1.1 GRANTED BUDGET (IN MILLION EURO) ERASMUS+ NETHERLANDS 2014-2022



Source: based on Erasmus+ programme country factsheets produced by the EC

## 1.2 The assignment

The EC<sup>2</sup> has requested the Netherlands to submit a national report on the implementation and impact of Erasmus+ for the Mid-Term Review (Erasmus+) of the programme, as well as for the evaluation of the previous programme (Erasmus+ 2014-2020).

The focus of the national report is on the decentralised actions and activities of the programme, implemented at national level by the NAs. The activities related to sports within Erasmus+ have recently commenced and is not part of the evaluation.

The report provides a comprehensive overview of the Dutch situation based on rigorous research, with a focus on various substantive policy areas. Additionally, the report offers concrete recommendations for the current and future programme, based on a strengths and weaknesses analysis of the current programme.

This final report builds on an interim report delivered in January 2024, allowing relevant programme stakeholders and the European Commission (EC) to be informed about preliminary conclusions and recommendations at an earlier stage of the EU-wide Erasmus+ evaluation. This interim report

<sup>2</sup> Article 24(3) of the Erasmus+ Regulation requires the Member States to submit to the European EC, by 31 May 2024, a report on the implementation and the impact of the programme in their respective territories, by submitting a national report. See: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/817>

contributed to further reflections on the current and future programme, which are incorporated into this final report.

### 1.3 Methodology

To gather sufficient evidence to address all the evaluation questions as outlined in the European Commission's (EC) 'guidance note', the study used existing information available through the National Agencies (NAs) - including yearly reports, monitoring data, and other relevant internal studies and documentation - along with studies and evaluations undertaken during the previous and current programmes. Additional research activities, such as interviews, focus groups, online surveys, and a validation workshop, were conducted to fill data gaps not covered by monitoring and existing research. A mix of quantitative and qualitative research methods was applied, including:

- **Desk research**, including a review of Yearly Reports of Erasmus+, NA Work Programmes, and a review of review of existing (impact) studies (including analysis of RAY research data related to Erasmus+ Youth)
- Analysis of **programme (monitoring) data**
- Analysis of **survey data from the RAY-network** for respondents of the Netherlands
- An **online survey amongst project beneficiaries in HE in the previous and current programme**. Surveys among project beneficiaries in other sectors have recently been undertaken by the NA E&T as part of ongoing impact monitoring of the programme (see Annex G), as well as in the context of the RAY network for the Youth sector (see Annex H and I). This data adequately covers the indicators in this evaluation. Therefore, no new surveys were carried out in other sectors to minimise the administrative burden for beneficiaries. In total, 35 project coordinators completed the online survey.
- **Interviews with key programme stakeholders**. 12 interviews with representatives of the NAs, 5 interviews with the responsible ministries (NAU), 7 interviews with sectoral E&T organisations, 3 interviews with sectoral youth organisations, and 7 interviews with representative organisations of students and teachers (total 34 interviews)
- **Interviews with non-participants**: 9 interviews for SE, 6 for VET, 4 for HE, 4 for AE; 4 for youth (total 27 interviews)
- **5 Sectoral Focus groups with project coordinators**: SE with 6 participants, VET with 8 participants, HE with 9 participants, AE with 6 participants, Youth with 7 participants (total 36 participants)
- **Interviews with individual participants (teacher/student/youth (worker))**: 6 interviews conducted for SE, 6 conducted for VET, 6 conducted for HE, 4 conducted for AE and 5 conducted for Youth (total 27 interviews)
- **A validation workshop with key stakeholders**: Erasmus+ E&T with 11 participants, and Erasmus Youth with 6 participants (total 17 participants).

Member States have been requested to address each of the five evaluation criteria, and the subsequent evaluation questions that fall under each respective criterion. A Member State could opt not to address a particular evaluation question, provided they offer an explanation as to the reason why this question was not addressed. Annex C provides an overview of the manner in which the evaluation questions were addressed.

### 1.4 Structure of the report

The report is structured along the five evaluation criteria of the Better Regulation Guidelines. In the first chapter, a brief introduction is provided on the Erasmus+ programme, the Dutch approach to the implementation of the programme and the methodology applied to carry out this evaluation. Subsequently, in chapter 2, the main conclusions are presented by evaluation criteria. In addition, related policy pointers for strengthening the current and future programme are identified.

The report is supported by a series of annexes as included in the table below:

<b>Annex A</b>	Overview of the research methodology
<b>Annex B</b>	List of interviewees and participants of focus groups
<b>Annex C</b>	Overview table of evaluation questions and answers in the report
<b>Annex D</b>	Bibliography
<b>Annex E</b>	Overview of programme indicators (target versus achievement)
<b>Annex F</b>	Online survey amongst project coordinators in the higher education sector
<b>Annex G</b>	Evidence on impact of Erasmus+ from existing studies
<b>Annex H</b>	Results RAY-surveys for the Netherlands in reports of Ray-network (E+ Youth Programme, 2015- 2020)
<b>Annex I</b>	Results RAY-surveys for the Netherlands (E+ Youth Programme, 2021 - 2023)
<b>Annex J</b>	Main outcomes of the stakeholder interviews and focus groups

## 2. Evaluation findings

### 2.1 Effectiveness

**Conclusion 1: The organisational integration of internationalisation has improved with the support of Erasmus+, particularly due to Erasmus+ accreditation. However, smaller beneficiary organisations still face specific challenges, often relying too heavily on a few active individuals to sustain internationalisation within the organisation.**

Impact studies of Erasmus+ in different sectors show that organisations participating in Erasmus+ benefitted by clearly strengthening their internationalisation strategies (see Annex G). This is often done by: defining a clear vision and strategy on internationalisation, providing a support structure for internationalisation activities, providing a clear financial framework for internationalisation, facilitating staff members in their internationalisation, and being engaged in international networks.

Interviews with project beneficiaries point out that especially the mobility charters for KA1 mobility in the previous programme helped HEIs and VET colleges improve their internationalisation policies and strategies. This is also the case for SE, AE, and Youth in the current programme period. The application for accreditation helped these organisations to reflect on their internationalisation policies and aims, and how to create an enabling environment for internationalisation in their organisations.

Nevertheless, interviews illustrate that internationalisation is not embedded in all organisations yet, especially in smaller organisations in SE, AE, Youth, and specific faculties/education programmes within VET and HE. In these cases, internationalisation activities are highly dependent on a few active staff members, who do not always feel sufficiently supported by their management in their engagement with these activities (particularly due to concerns related to time allocation and recognition). This makes these organisations vulnerable when these active persons leave the organisation. Especially for the AE and Youth sector beneficiaries – often being smaller organisations - indicate that participation in Erasmus+ contributed to further professionalisation of the organisation, by strengthening project management skills and communication/ cooperation with other partners.

#### Policy pointers

- The EC and NAs should continue promoting the added value of international activities and related strategies as well as sharing good practices. Both NAs could offer a guide to organisations to stimulate the institutional embedding of internationalisation (also for the non-accredited organisations).

**Conclusion 2: Project objectives are generally achieved, and KA2 outputs are often integrated into regular policies and practices. This integration is driven by several factors, including the quality of the outputs, internal factors, time and capacity, external recognition, practical applicability, and support from the NA. However, additional resources are required by the programme to facilitate the mainstreaming of project results beyond the project's lifespan.**

Overall, the vast majority of participating organisations and individual participants noted that the projects and exchanges carried out also led to the desired results (ResearchNed, 2018; Sardes, 2018; Ockham IPS, 2022; Ockham IPS 2023, Nuffic, 2020, Dialogic & Ockham IPS, 2024).<sup>3</sup> Project beneficiaries generally claim that their project objectives are (over)achieved, while only a smaller group of beneficiaries indicate that the objectives are mostly or partly achieved. Sectoral studies on the impact of Erasmus+ on the (educational) offer of beneficiary organisations show that

<sup>3</sup> A more general comment in this context is that project leaders can have a certain positive bias when answering questions about the effects of their projects. This can also play a role for participants, who have chosen to participate themselves and are therefore expected to have a positive attitude towards the project.

developed outputs (mostly curricula, training modules, courses, or pedagogical concepts) are often mainstreamed in the existing (learning) offer of organisations. Most beneficiary organisations report visible changes in a wide diversity of aspects in their (learning) offer, including embracing the horizontal priorities of the programme (see Annex G). Beneficial factors for successfully mainstreaming outputs in regular practices as identified in impact studies, as well as interviews with beneficiary organisations, are:

- **The quality of the outputs developed:** in case the output is tested and validated with good results, the chance for mainstreaming is higher.
- **Internal factors:** internal 'boosters' in the organisation play a role in promoting and implementing developed products. Success is frequently achieved when one individual is in the lead to implement the outputs, combined with a critical mass of colleagues who will work with the developed products and insights. Mainstreaming depends heavily on the commitment, enthusiasm, and idealism of colleagues. Beneficiaries also point on the risk that the outcomes are not shared widely enough in their organisation. Consequently, not all colleagues and students benefit from the outcomes.
- **Available time and capacity:** Integration into the curriculum and education/ youth programmes is frequently mentioned by beneficiary organisations interviewed as an important factor for the active use of the developed outputs. Adapting a curriculum often takes a long time, especially when learning outcomes are addressed that fall outside the qualification dossier, as in the case of VET and SE. The involvement of few staff members also makes the sustainable embedding of developed outputs vulnerable, should the staff member concerned leave or no longer take on the role of product owner. Limitations in the available time and capacity of colleagues also plays a role in the success or failure of integrating new insights and products.
- **External recognition and awareness:** Receiving recognition as best practice by Erasmus+ is seen as a strong incentive for usage, as well promotion of impact stories by the programme through publications (such as the Erasmus+ Magazine), websites, and social media. In addition, respondents indicate that efforts should be made both internally and externally to raise awareness of the developed products. It appears that interest from the sector and identification of financial support are important factors in stimulating the use of these products. Conversely, the lack of external incentives hinders the dissemination of outputs beyond one's own organisation. Dissemination is often carried out at the end of the project (such as during multiplier events), but there is little focus on further outreach once the project is finished. For many youth organisations, the importance of follow-up support and financing is even greater because their continuity is less guaranteed, making them more dependent on changing and less stable funding streams.
- **Practical applicability:** Both lack of involvement of teachers or staff who were not involved in the project and language barriers can limit internal acceptance and use. One obstacle mentioned is that outputs are often written in English, which is not preferred by all teachers and staff. Highly theoretical outputs are also not easily adopted. Additionally, outdated outputs and a lack of urgency or clear utility can make the products unattractive for use.
- **Support from the NAs on strengthening the impact:** both the NAs implemented several activities to improve the impact of supported projects (e.g. impact tool and guidance for applicants and projects). The NAs and beneficiaries indicate that projects benefitted from this support, putting more emphasis on the importance of dissemination and impact in their project design and implementation (see conclusion 5).

While these factors can be stimulating, their absence hampers the mainstreaming of programme outputs. Beneficiaries interviewed indicate that the programme could provide more incentives to stimulate uptake, even after projects are finalized, since it takes time for outputs to be embedded in regular practice or to have a system-wide impact.

#### Policy pointers

- The programme and NAs could provide more support in rolling out developed outputs and further promote (by awards) and monitor good practices over the years as NAs. The EC should consider giving promising projects extra financial support in their dissemination in the programme.

**Conclusion 3: Erasmus+ strengthened the competences of staff, learners, and youth. The impact depends on factors such as the duration and purpose of the mobility, the quality of preparation and supervision for students, and the level of management support for staff. Additionally, the recognition, reward, and quality of cooperation partners play significant roles.**

There is an abundance of evidence showing the impact of participating in Erasmus+ on staff, learners, and youth in all sectors (see Annex G).

#### Students, pupils, learners and young people

Common outcomes for students, pupils, and learners in all education sectors can be summarised in five categories: gaining intercultural competences, international career orientation, gaining cognitive and social skills, self-development, and personal development (ResearchNed, 2018, 2020, 2021; Oberon, 2020; Ockham IPS, 2022; Nuffic, 2022b; Dialogic, 2024). The studies report that participants see increased self-reflection and independence, language skills and broader interests after participating in a KA1 mobility or eTwinning activity.

Studies on higher education (HE) students who participated in mobility programmes, compared to those without such experiences, show that students are often more flexible after an international visit, become more trusting towards others, and have a more international outlook (ResearchNed, 2020). Furthermore, recent longitudinal research (ResearchNed, 2024) in the Netherlands shows that participation in student mobility in HE continues to have a significant impact on their professional lives five years later and on their personal lives to date. The impact also depends on the duration and purpose of the mobility. The longer the students were abroad, the higher they scored regarding the impact on their personal lives. Finally, respondents who engaged in multi-purpose experiences abroad (such as combining study with an internship or research for a thesis) report a higher average impact on their current professional and personal lives than those who went abroad for only one purpose.

Boomkens et al. (2017) report about results for participants of projects financed by the NA Youth of the Netherlands. The results suggest that participation enhances youth's self-awareness and skills development. These skills stimulate to become more involved in society. They have a clearer idea about their educational and professional career. The change in participation in democratic and political life have a relatively lower score. Such positive effects on individual competencies are reflected in both young people and youth workers (Boomkens et al., 2017). Similar results can also be found in the RAY-surveys among participants in the current programme (2021-2023) (see Annex H and I). Effects are very clear on personal competences like self-confidence and independence, cooperation skills, and the ability to empathize with others.

Factors that have made KA1 mobility successful for pupils and students are close to the motivations and experiences of the activity, such as new contacts, improved language skills and personal development. Other success factors are good financial and practical preparation for the trip and good supervision during the study trip (ResearchNed, 2018, 2021; Nuffic, 2022b). Differences in the organisation of mobility activities are large. Some students take the initiative and arrange everything themselves, other schools do so in consultation or arrange everything for the student. Lack of knowledge of foreign languages, money, dealing with other cultures, administration, tension, and homesickness are barriers.

## Staff

A common goal for staff participation in Erasmus+ is professionalisation (ResearchNed, 2018; Sardes, 2018; Oberon, 2018; Ockham IPS 2022, Nuffic, 2020). The various impact surveys show that a large proportion of participants are satisfied with the results and impact of their KA1 and KA2 Erasmus+ activities (Boomkens et al, 2017, Sardes, 2018; Nuffic, 2020; Ockham IPS, 2022; 2023). Specifically for staff this means, for example, gaining language or pedagogical skills, international orientation, and/or knowledge exchange. For teachers/professionals, an important side effect mentioned by a few respondents is the team building and professionalisation collaboration between internal staff or partners in KA1 and KA2 activities. Furthermore, respondents mention the continued contacts with exchange or cooperation partners as an important result. The RAY survey results for the Netherlands (see Annex H and I) indicate that the personal competencies of project leaders of youth projects are being strengthened (see Genkova and others, 2019). Boomkens et al. (2017) show that these positive effects apply to both project leaders in youth mobility and the mobility of youth workers. Many competences are mentioned, such as communicating with people in another language, knowing your own strengths and weaknesses, planning work, independence, creating media content yourself. The results of the RAY-surveys of project teams in the current programme confirm the positive effects on their own competences in youth work (see Annex I). Participation in Erasmus+ activities often aims to ensure that the acquisition or further development of staff skills also contributes to the organisation's goals. Strengthening the quality of their curriculum, activities or learning offerings or developing new products is often a common goal of Erasmus+ participation. KA2 participants frequently invest resources in disseminating results in their own organisations and networks, which makes interest from new foreign partners outside of their network a surprising side-effect of their dissemination efforts.

Earlier studies and interviews with beneficiary organisations reveal several success factors for mobility of staff. Firstly, the quality and effectiveness of mobility actions is enhanced when principals and Executive Boards are involved. This happens by, for example, drawing up a development plan for KA1 applications or facilitating mobility and recognising international mobility in staff appraisals. Schools are subsequently prompted to consider a long-term strategic approach and apply monitoring and evaluation (Ecorys, 2017; Sardes, 2018; Nuffic, 2020). It is also important that the right people are found to be a fit for any given project or professionalisation activity, as one often needs to be able to complete the preparation, implementation and completion alongside other primary processes (Nuffic, 2020). Furthermore, using the existing Erasmus+ network is a success factor, such as choosing partner organisations with which there have been previous cooperation experiences (Sardes, 2018; Nuffic, 2020.).

Earlier studies and interviews with beneficiary organisations reveal several success factors for staff mobility. Firstly, the quality and effectiveness of mobility actions are enhanced when principals and Executive Boards are involved. This can be achieved by, for example, drawing up a development plan for KA1 applications or facilitating mobility and recognising international mobility in staff appraisals. Schools are subsequently prompted to consider a long-term strategic approach and apply monitoring and evaluation (Ecorys, 2017; Sardes, 2018; Nuffic, 2020). It is also important to find the right people who fit any given project or professionalisation activity, as one often needs to be able to handle the preparation, implementation, and completion alongside other primary processes (Nuffic, 2020). Furthermore, using the existing Erasmus+ network is a success factor, such as choosing partner organisations with which there have been previous cooperation experiences (Sardes, 2018; Nuffic, 2020). Several interviews also reveal that organisations sometimes explicitly prefer shorter mobilities for KA1 and Small-Scale Partnerships for KA2 because of perceived lack of capacity and time. Furthermore, participating organisations indicated that the responsibility of being a coordinator is perceived as a burden because the experience of finding and driving cooperation for the application and implementation of projects varies. Choosing new cooperation partners was identified as a barrier because finding suitable organisations abroad requires pre-investment, and the (financial) capacity for this is often lacking or not present in the organisation.

Another beneficiary noted that there is a financial risk for the project coordinator, as it is difficult to renegotiate funding with partners during a project if they fail to meet deadlines or agreements.

**Conclusion 4: There is room for improvement in the impact of KA2 projects beyond beneficiary organisations, particularly within the Education and Training (E&T) sectors. Beneficiaries often report a lack of resources to conduct extensive promotional and networking activities and express a desire to share more knowledge between projects. Experience from NA Youth suggests that the TCA budget has significant potential to address this need. Additionally, there is untapped potential in utilising sector organisations, professional associations, and platforms to further disseminate developed outputs and promote the programme within the sector.**

Impact studies in all education sectors show that the impact of participation in KA2 of Erasmus+ beyond their own organisation is still limited (see Annex G). As the dissemination and mainstreaming of Erasmus+ outcomes is an important part of the Erasmus+ programme, this remains an area of concern.

For Erasmus+ Youth, the organisations involved are different in character and, in terms of their organisational objectives, are much more concerned with impacts on their environment. In line with this, project leaders in the RAY survey report positive benefits for the community of their projects (see results in Annex I, based on Genkova et al., 2019). The NA Youth also attaches great importance to having a transformative effect at the system level. Here, the NA participates in several European partnerships, in the context of the Strategic National Agency Cooperation (SNAC), with a focus on strengthening youth work and youth participation. This is funded by the TCA (Training and Cooperation Activity) budget in the current programme.

Interviews with project beneficiaries and sector organisations show that applicants experience difficulties in translating results into general policy or other contexts (see also Annex J). Integrating outputs of projects into external non-participating organisations proves difficult, as most beneficiaries indicate that several obstacles prevent freely sharing outputs. These obstacles include language barriers (outputs being made available in English instead of Dutch), outputs becoming outdated by the time of project completion, and competitiveness with similar organisations. Multiple programme stakeholders noted that there are currently insufficient resources (i.e. funding and staff capacity) to undertake extensive promotional and network activities for programme beneficiaries towards like-minded organisations, policy makers and other regional or national interested parties (Panteia & SEOR, 2020). Joint dissemination events could save beneficiaries time, as often the same target groups are defined as dissemination partners. A desire was also expressed by participating organisations to share more knowledge between projects, especially between thematic related projects. At the same time, organisations experience little time and resources within the project to do this. This is even a greater concern when projects are finalised. Beneficiary organisations also report more critical opinions towards the support provided by the programme and the NA in further disseminating project results at programme level. They would like to see greater efforts from the programme and the NA in disseminating programme results (see Annex J).

The TCA budget is utilised in the Youth sector to promote international exchange of knowledge and practices to strengthen youth policy (source Yearly Reports). The NA Youth attaches great importance to this budget for having a transformative system effect. In this context, activities are carried out to strengthen infrastructure and cooperation (trainings, partnerships, exchanges), which in turn better address the strategic agenda of youth work. Concrete examples on how this TCA budget is used are: by training youth workers on how to work with an inclusion target group, developing digital youth work, or organising a European seminar on youth work and the European Youth work agenda. This helps the NA to fulfil its role as a knowledge broker. The NA Youth welcomes the extra budgetary space to further shape the TCA through its own staff. It is expected that this can be used to strengthen access to the programme and to further increase the quality of projects, for example about horizontal priorities and non-formal learning. Since 2021, the NA E&T has also been



able to use the TCA funding instrument. It is positive about this budget's ability to facilitate (cross-border) knowledge and exchange between NAs and beneficiary organisations. However, the TCA budget for E&T is the same as the allocated budget for the Youth sector. Consequently, the NA E&T indicate that the budget is too limited to adequately support all education sectors.

According to interviews with sector and professional organisations there is still untapped potential using sector organisations and professional associations to further disseminate developed outputs and promote the programme in the sector, as well as online platforms like Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe (EPALE) for the adult learning sector. Their current role promoting the (outcomes) of the programme is still limited and often ad hoc.

#### Policy pointers

- The NAs and the EC could do more to encourage organisations to learn from each other's experiences with KA2 projects, by facilitating short Peer Learning Activities around specific themes, or by grouping organisations that are working on similar topics in thematic networks (could be cross-sectoral). Per group/ network, lessons can be identified to strengthen policies and practices in the sector (issuing thematic reports; appointing an ambassador per thematic group to link policy and practice; bundle innovative project outputs in one accessible place, organise thematic project fairs and yearly festivals where good innovative practices are shared).<sup>4</sup>
- EC should reconsider allocating more budget for TCA for the NA E&T, since the budget for E&T is the same as the allocated budget for the Youth sector and therefore too limited to adequately support all education sectors.
- Strengthen the cooperation and set up alliances with sectoral and professional associations/ intermediary organisations as well as EPALE, for better promoting the outcomes - and funding possibilities - of the programme.

#### **Conclusion 5: Having a dedicated impact strategy by the NAs helps strengthen project designs. However, beneficiaries still encounter challenges in operationalising impact within their project applications and thus require ongoing support of the NA to enhance their impact.**

The Dutch NAs are proactive and hold supportive attitudes towards project applicants and implementers to strengthen the impact of their activities. Both NAs implemented several activities to improve the impact of supported projects, such as by strengthening the capacities of own staff and applicants by providing training, by addressing the importance of impact during information meetings and monitoring visits, as well as by the development of an Impact Tool<sup>5</sup>. Both agencies were at the basis of the development of the impact tool. The NA E&T has a dedicated impact strategy, workplan and coordinator. The NA Youth developed impact training on project design and incorporated the impact thinking in their workshops for informal groups of young people where they support young people to come from an idea to a project. Due to Covid-19 and the departure of an employee who had this in portfolio, the provision of impact training has faded somewhat into the background at NA Youth. Proper use of the impact tool in the Youth sector requires an adjustment to the tool and/or additional materials to support organisations to make use of the tool (e.g. cards with questions), which NA Youth wants to work on in the coming period.

Although the effectiveness of activities on impact is not directly measurable, these activities do appear to be appreciated by participants in Erasmus+ projects in the field of E&T. A recent study

<sup>4</sup> Inspiration can be drawn from the EQUAL Community Initiative that was financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) within the 2000-2006 programming period. This initiative had a specific mainstreaming approach making sure that the activities and ideas continued to have an impact beyond the lifetime of EQUAL (and financial support for National Thematic Networks to facilitate horizontal and vertical mainstreaming of project results to policy makers). See: [https://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/\\_consolidated/index.html](https://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/_consolidated/index.html)

<sup>5</sup> See <https://www.erasmusplus.nl/impacttool-mobiliteit>

(Panteia & SEOR, 2020) shows that most project beneficiaries in the different E&T sectors are aware of their NA's understanding of the requirements regarding impact and consider this as clear. The study also shows that beneficiaries consider the support from their NA as very useful for better addressing impact in their project, especially provided by the information and knowledge sessions, webinars, workshops and seminars, good practices and the impact tool. According to this study, around half of KA1 project leaders in the field of E&T indicated that they would not have addressed impact (or to a lesser extent) without the support of the NA, indicating the added value of these support measures. KA2 project leaders also indicated they were less likely to include impact without NA support than their KA1 counter parts. In the focus group and interviews with project leaders, it was indicated that the support from the NA Youth for strengthening the impact of projects is also appreciated. Beneficiaries interviewed especially see the impact tool as useful, increasing their awareness of applying the 'theory of change' to their projects (source: Annex E).

Nevertheless, there are still some challenges in further developing the impact approach. Beneficiaries of the programme who were interviewed indicate that they still face challenges with operationalising impact in their project applications. They express a need for more concrete tools and approaches to strengthen the impact of their work both within and beyond their organisations at the societal level, as well as to monitor this impact. A few respondents mentioned that the application format for KA2 in the previous programme better guided applicants in setting realistic objectives for impact by making a clear distinction between expected and desired impact. They advocate for the reintroduction of these terms in the format. Simultaneously, these respondents call for more proportionality in setting impact objectives, depending on the type of action and the size of the projects. NA Youth indicates that an impact tool is available for projects on the website, but its actual usage can still be improved by simplifying it. While it is certainly used internally, the NA aims to enhance the uptake of the impact tool further. Simplifying the tool slightly could lower the threshold for its usage. NA Youth works closely with NA E&T in further developing the impact strategy.

Since 2022, the NA E&T has also played a guiding role at the EU level in leading the Long Term Activity on impact, with NAs in other Erasmus+ participating countries mainstreaming the Dutch Impact approach in their own programmes. The NA has undertaken several training activities on programme design and impact since 2022, with approximately 40 participants from 10 countries. Additionally, the NA has provided training on monitoring and impact design.

#### Policy pointer

- The NAs should continue their impact strategy and related activities in the Netherlands, strengthening the impact of Erasmus+ at project and programme level. They should additionally promote the impact strategy (and related activities) to other NAs since it supports quality of applications as well as impact of Erasmus+ support.

**Conclusion 6: The quality of applications across sectors tends to be lower in the initial years of programming. This is attributed to the introduction of new elements into the programme and delays in the publication of Calls and formats. However, improvements were observed as the programme progressed, owing to increased familiarity with the requirements. Projects that received advice and guidance from NA advisors generally achieved better scores in the assessment. It takes time for new innovative actions, such as Small-Scale Partnerships and KA1 mobility for adult learners, to be fully embraced by the sectors, necessitating specific guidance from the NA in the early years.**

Lower numbers of quality applications in the first years of the previous programme were reported across all sectors (source: Yearly Reports). According to interviewed programme stakeholders, this is mostly the result of changes made compared to the predecessor programmes, such as the transition from the LLL programme (2007-2013) to Erasmus+ for E&T, and from the Youth in Action programme to Erasmus+. These changes included asking applicants to describe their project plan

in terms of intellectual outputs instead of work packages, which applicants had to get accustomed to. Quality was also hampered by the late announcement of the programme (giving less room for guidance by the NAs) and the late publication of application forms, as well as the specification of the Calls of the programme. Beneficiaries interviewed indicated that this made internal preparation and coordination with foreign partners more difficult, especially with holidays before the deadline of a Call.

Specifically for Youth, the changes to the Erasmus+ programme partly coincided with a transformation of the Dutch Youth sector, decentralizing youth work from national to local government. Youth- and welfare organisations were very much focussed on this transition (both in time and money), leaving less room for their youth workers to get involved with Erasmus+.

Similar experiences occurred at the start of the current programme (with changes from the use of intellectual outputs into work packages; working with lump sums; and introducing new type of actions like Small-Scale Partnerships and KA1 mobility for learners in SE and AE). These changes to the programme seem to affect the number and quality of applications at the start of the programme, according to the Yearly Reports and programme stakeholders interviewed (see Annex J). Significantly less applications were received for the newly introduced Small-Scale Partnerships for VET. Some representatives of the VET sector interviewed say that there is less interest in 'Small-Scale Partnerships' within VET compared to the larger Cooperation partnerships. This can be explained by the fact that there is a desire to develop concrete outputs with Erasmus+, such as innovative teaching programmes. They were also informed by the NA that more experienced applicants are not eligible for Small-Scale Partnerships. There is ambiguity about the latter, as the EC and NA do not communicate clear criteria on who is or is not eligible for Small-Scale Partnerships. For example, it is unclear how to assess the eligibility of departments within a VET school when some departments do not have specific experience with Erasmus+, while others within the same school do.

Additionally, for the new programme period, the NA E&T face challenges committing available KA1 budgets for adult learners that were not eligible for programme funding in the previous programme (2014-2020). Until recently, there has been limited demand for this action, which needs further attention by the NA. Project beneficiaries and non-participants interviewed indicate that potential applicants could be better guided on these aspects. Examples could be providing a simple road map for newcomers to the action (including an overview of practical steps to be taken for organising mobility for adult learners) and illustrating good practice examples of organisations that successfully managed to implement such a project. Such commitment challenges were not identified for the newly introduced KA1 mobility for school pupils in SE, unlike in the AE sector. However, applications are still lower for primary education and lower secondary education.

Programme stakeholders indicate that the quality of applications generally improved during the programme period, as applicants gained more experience with the programme and application procedure. Additionally, stakeholders attribute the quality increase to extra support from NAs, who provided information and advisory services to applicants (e.g. presentations, workshops, one-to-one advice, writing sessions, online learning courses, impact tools, and more). Projects that received advice and guidance from NA advisors scored better in assessments (this is true for all education sectors, as well as the Youth sector). Applicants also appreciated the support provided. In the case of Erasmus+ Youth, this often led to applicants for KA2 being directed to KA1 if it better suited their project ideas. However, the NA also notes that many newcomers in the Youth sector do not take advantage of the opportunity to receive feedback from the NA.

Although the quality of applications improved over the years, it remains low for KA2 projects in the Youth sector (source: Yearly Reports; Annex E). The success rate of KA2 projects in the Youth sector has not exceeded 28% in any year (both in the previous and current programme). The main reason is that many applications do not fit the objectives of Erasmus+ Youth and are, for example, more related to formal education rather than youth work. Additionally, the NA Youth encounters a low level of relevance of applications, as many projects do not have a clear link to youth work.

Furthermore, the project designs are of lower quality, with no consistent or obvious connection between activities and results.

#### Policy pointers

- The EC should assure continuity between programmes as much as possible, so beneficiaries do not need to adopt their policies and practices to new (administrative) requirements and actions ('evolution instead of revolution').
- The EC should assure that the announcement of changes to the programme and the publication of application forms and guidance documents are on time, so beneficiaries have sufficient time to familiarise themselves with the Call. NAs could provide clear guidance on how new Calls differ from previous Calls and put these changes in written documentation (short fiche or guidance note).
- Provide more guidance while introducing new actions to the programme like KA1 mobility for adult learners and Small-Scale Partnerships (e.g. road maps and sharing good practice examples).
- The NA Youth should increase efforts to boost quality of proposals for KA2 project in the Youth sector and better inform organisations in case their proposal is more suitable to other parts of Erasmus+.

**Conclusion 7: Erasmus+ has successfully engaged a wide range of beneficiaries across all sectors, but there is still room for improvement. Numerous obstacles remain for participation, especially for newcomers. While the Inclusion and Diversity Strategy represents a significant step forward, it is too early to evaluate its effects. The administrative requirements associated with top-ups are considered complex, yet the instrument is valued, demonstrating potential for mainstreaming across other sectors.**

Erasmus+ managed to reach a wide range of beneficiaries across all sectors in both the previous and current programme periods. Beneficiaries of the programme are often repeat users in all sectors (ResearchNed, 2018; Sardes, 2018; Ockham IPS, 2022; Ockham IPS, 2023; Nuffic, 2020; Dialogic, 2024; and a survey among HE project coordinators). Once organisations have experienced the benefits of the programme, data suggest that they are highly likely to participate again. Despite these repeated users, the programme managed to achieve its target for newcomer organisations participating in all sectors (see Annex E). Nevertheless, there are still challenges in reaching all types of organisations in each sector. The NA E&T reports challenges attracting applications from certain regions (like remote regions, including the Dutch Caribbean, for SE) and certain types of beneficiary organisations (like VET innovation centres for VET and municipalities, specific VET colleges, and libraries for AE). Existing barriers to participation in the programme across sectors include unfamiliarity with the programme, doubts about its added value, lack of experience, lack of time and capacity (including management support), the administrative burden, the large responsibility of being a project coordinator, and unfamiliarity with trustworthy foreign partners. Some indicated that the rejection of their application halted the momentum of support for Erasmus+ participation within their own organisation and among partners (see Annex J for an overview of obstacles identified in interviews with non-participants). The challenge for the Youth sector is to reach organisations involved in professional youth work, youth workers, and participants from less advantaged groups.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> The surveys of RAY give the opportunity to know more about the characteristics of participants of ERASMUS+ Youth. It concerns women more often than men. On balance, the participants of the 2015-2020 programme consider themselves to have a more favourable position than their peers in their own country (see Annex H). There are some comments to be made about this. Participants from the Netherlands (at least in 2015/2016) were less likely to consist of higher educated people compared to other countries (38% versus 60%) (Genkova et al, 2019). For participants in projects funded by the Dutch NA in 2014/15, this is again high (60% total; for youth exchanges it is lower, 40%) (Boomkens et al, 2017). A quarter consider themselves members of a minority and about a fifth do not speak Dutch at

Respondents who are familiar with the programme and work in professional youth work certainly see the added value of Erasmus+ but mention several bottlenecks that prevent them from participating. The administrative requirements clearly emerge as a bottleneck. Some project beneficiaries interviewed also pointed out that the recent increase of the minimum threshold for the award criteria for KA2 applications (from 60 to 70 points) could have a negative impact on newcomers to the programme, who are less experienced with Erasmus+ applications and tend to score lower in the assessment. Another limitation is that there is no compensation for the time spent on the application, which creates a challenge. In line with this, it is also mentioned that municipalities are reluctant to fund the time spent on this. Respondents also see risks in international projects, especially when one is "in the lead." Reliable partners are then essential. Another bottleneck mentioned is that if young people's own ideas are an important element, this does not fit well with fixed submission deadlines and long procedures. The momentum then quickly passes.

The main obstacles for participation experienced by individual participants from all sectors in the Netherlands include disability, health problems and economic barriers (Boomkens et al., 2017, ResearchNed, 2019; Nuffic, 2022b). The recent RAY-surveys (2021-2023) indicate that economic barriers are the most important barrier in the Youth sector (see Annex I). Interviews with NA staff and beneficiaries also indicate that the overall participation of fewer opportunity participants is likely to be higher than currently reported. This issue arises because staff at VET, HE, and Youth organisations experience difficulties labelling individuals as they are unsure of the criteria and burden of proof for additional resources for participants with fewer opportunities or specific disadvantaged groups. Students are unlikely to indicate that they fall into the category of 'participants with fewer opportunities' in their applications. This underreporting is caused by the negative associations with the label, a fear of stigmatisation, or a personal belief that they do not have fewer opportunities compared to other vulnerable groups.

Since 2021, both the NAs outlined an Inclusion & Diversity Strategy (NA E&T refers to an inclusion strategy) with the aim of supporting institutions to include more participants from underrepresented or fewer opportunity target groups in international exchanges. The strategy also aims to supporting these institutions in the design and implementation of international cooperation projects and professionalisation of staff. Several activities have been carried out by the NA E&T to better reach underrepresented groups, such as appointing an inclusion coordinator, establishing sectoral sounding boards on inclusion with representatives of the field, training of NA staff, participating in TCA on inclusion, campaigning in the Caribbean region, promoting good practices, piloting the inclusion scan in HE, appointing inclusion ambassadors, and monitoring the top up for HE. Within the NA Youth and NA E&T, Inclusion and Diversity was already a priority during the former programme. Since the former programme period, the NA has had an Inclusion Officer who promotes the participation of inclusion groups in the programme. The NA has also implemented a supportive approach to assist organisations working with inclusion target groups and has participated in a long-term TCA European Partnership on Inclusion. In this context, the efforts of NJI together with the trade union organisation BV-Jong to increase awareness are also relevant to mention, next to information meetings about the programme in several places in the country, the importance of storytelling and involving others in passing on information.

Since it takes time for these actions to be implemented and have an impact in the field, a final assessment of their effectiveness cannot yet be made. Nevertheless, the programme seems to be achieving its targets for participants with fewer opportunities taking part in activities under Key Action 1, as well as increasing the number of newcomer organisations (for KA1 and KA2 combined)

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home. The analyses of more recent RAY surveys of the current program show that the share of higher educated participants has further increased (see Annex I). For all types of participants distinguished in the RAY surveys, the share of higher educated is at least two-thirds.

(see Annex E). The NAs indicate that dedicated support is effective, such as increasing the number of applications from the Caribbean and participation from underrepresented regions for E&T.

Sector organisations and beneficiary organisations in all E&T sectors appreciate the extra attention for inclusion as well as the top-ups for mobility in HE and VET (EQF 1 and 2). However, HE institutions are at the beginning stages of implementing the inclusion top-up. Limiting factors for adequately deploying the inclusion top-up include: budget insecurity (since the budget is fixed in advance, it limits active promotion of the top-up because it reduces the overall number of mobilities when many students make use of it), problems with inadequate procedures and the provision of support services, unfamiliarity with the rules (i.e., who is eligible for the top-up and how do they prove their eligibility), lack of communication to students about the possibility, unfamiliarity with the top-up, and privacy issues (students may not want to report personal circumstances or characteristics) (Nuffic, 2022c). Beneficiaries' express satisfaction with recent changes in regulating the administrative proof of top-ups (allowing self-declaration as proof). Additionally, VET institutions interviewed would like to receive the top-up for EQF 3 and 4 students to afford additional teachers as supervisors. At the same time, beneficiary organisations argue that the top-up of 250 Euros does not solve the problem for all participants with fewer opportunities, as issues related to (mental) health and physical ability also contribute to insecurities about applying. Additional support measures, alongside increased financial support, are needed to ensure vulnerable groups can also undertake a mobility experience. This includes outreach and coaching/mentoring support, for which there are currently insufficient funds.

NA Youth has commissioned specific research to support the national Inclusion and Diversity Strategy Erasmus+ Youth 2021-2027. This research shows that the NA offers various options to increase the participation of vulnerable groups. A significant number of organisations make use of opportunities provided by the NA, such as preparatory visits, consultations, training, and seminars. Slightly less frequently mentioned are the use of extra mentor support, subsidies for additional group leaders, and the use of extraordinary costs. Almost a third of organisations do not use these options at all. Interviewed stakeholders from the Youth sector indicated that additional financial facilities for young people with special needs are less used due to the complex administrative requirements. One issue is that it is required to use budget for this in advance, and it is unknown exactly how anything will turn out. Additionally, when young people play an important role in the application, the complexity of this means that this forms an additional barrier for target groups that are less skilled in this.

#### Policy pointers

- The NAs should continue their active approach to assure strengthening the inclusiveness of Erasmus+ and the EC should explore mainstreaming the inclusion top-up to VET EQF 3 and 4, SE, AE and Youth sector.
- To better facilitate the inclusion of fewer opportunity participants, the specific financial facilities must be simplified and made more flexible. The financial room for coaching and mentoring must be broadened.
- Better use sector organisations, professional associations, and intermediary organisation and set up alliances to reach out non-users. Continue and intensify the use of role models/ambassadors to promote the added value and impact of Erasmus.

**Conclusion 8: A significant and increasing portion of the committed budget is allocated to the four horizontal priorities of the programme and related programme targets are (over) achieved. Clear benchmarks and targets are currently lacking for all horizontal priorities and Key Actions (KAs) to effectively monitor progress. While beneficiaries generally appreciate and support the horizontal priorities, they also caution against prioritising them at the expense of programmes central objectives. They express concerns about the growing administrative burden associated with accommodating an increasing number of priorities. Beneficiaries suggest that the**

**programme and NAs could provide clearer expectations regarding how the horizontal priorities should be addressed in projects.**

A significant share of the committed budget for all sectors (E&T and Youth) addresses each of the four horizontal priorities of the programme (source Yearly Reports). Data was only reported by the NAs for 2021 and 2022 and these figures show that the bulk of the E&T and youth projects in 2022 address the priority of digital transformation (including 66% of allocated budgets), followed by inclusion and diversity (43%), participation in democratic life (41%) and environment and climate change (35%). Comparing these figures with the situation in 2021, we see an increasing focus. The share of the total grant related to digital transformation has significantly increased by 37 percentage points. Similarly, the share allocated to participation in democratic life has risen by 25 percentage points, followed by increases for environment and inclusion and diversity, both up by 19 percentage points.

The increased attention to digital transformation, inclusion and diversity, reflects the national priorities of the programme for education and training, as defined by the NA in consultation with the sectors and approved by the NAU for education and training. Overall, the increased attention of projects addressing one or more of these horizontal priorities is an indication that the extra investments of the NAs is paying off (such as by NA E&T appointing specific coordinators of horizontal priorities and establishing working groups, sounding boards, and dedicated communication actions and the development of tools (like the inclusion scan)). Within NA Youth, several advisors also fulfil the task of coordinating a priority as part of their function; they write a multi-year plan for their priority and involve other advisors in this.

The targets set for the share of KA2 projects that are addressing climate objectives are also overachieved by all education sectors (see Annex E). Especially SE and VET show high overachievement with nearly half of projects addressing climate objectives (respectively 50 and 44 percent, compared to the target of 10%). This target for Erasmus+ Youth is not achieved (2% of the targeted 6%), because priority was primarily given to ensuring that enough qualitative projects had applied to spend the budget. The achievement of the share of participants with fewer opportunities that are taking part in activities under Key Action 1 shows a more mixed picture across sectors (see Annex E). While the targets are generally achieved in 2021 for all education sectors, the year 2022 reports lower target achievements for all sectors, except for AE. The targets for Youth are achieved in both years, with the remark that the target is higher for Youth compared to the education sector. The target is 47% for 2022, while this was 40% in 2021 (compared to 5% for SE; 25% for VET; 10% for HE and 25% for AE in 2022). The RAY-surveys confirm effects in the fields of engagement in society (participation) and support of diversity, sensitiveness towards environmental issues, and digitalisation (source Annex I). Effects in these fields are somewhat lower compared to effects on personal competences, although still confirmed by roughly one third to two thirds of participants. The effects are lowest for the field of digitization<sup>7</sup>.

Currently, a clear benchmark and targets are missing for all horizontal priorities and KAs. This creates problems in assessing whether horizontal objectives are achieved, except for the programme indicators related to the share of participants with fewer opportunities taking part in activities under KA1 and the percentage of projects addressing climate objectives under KA2. Moreover, a clear framework is lacking for beneficiaries on how to translate these horizontal priorities into practical actions. Some of the beneficiaries that were interviewed, and especially a number of newcomers to the programme indicate experiencing challenges with how to address these horizontal priorities in their project design. NAs could also use such framework to better monitor how these horizontal

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<sup>7</sup> the effects in the RAY surveys are largely based on retrospective perceptions, which entails limitations in the effect measurement. Ideally, there should be a baseline measurement before and a repeated measurement after the project. However, this is not realistic given the target groups and beneficiary types as this requires even more administrative burden. Perhaps experiments can be conducted within the RAY network, using such an approach.

priorities are addressed in supported projects, as well to guide experts in their assessment of project applications,

Programme stakeholders (sector organisations and beneficiary organisations) that were interviewed generally appreciate and embrace the horizontal priorities, but at the same time warn that this should not be at the expense of the central objectives (strengthening the quality of education, youth work, and encouraging active citizenship) and come with an extra administrative burden. Others argue that an increasing number of priorities are linked to the programme, also having repercussion on the practicability of implementing the programme and projects. This makes the programme increasingly complex for applicants and causes more challenges for the NAs in promoting and monitoring these priorities.

Specifically for the Youth sector, new, smaller organisations report more problems incorporating the horizontal priorities according to interviewed programme stakeholders, particularly for first-time applicants. For these smaller organisations, it is sometimes harder to incorporate the horizontal priorities into the projects, especially when these priorities are not amongst the core expertise of the organisation. This is also the case in the AE sector.

Several beneficiary organisations that were interviewed indicate that the programme and NAs could be clearer about their expectations on how the horizontal priorities should be addressed in projects, and that it could provide a clear framework and intervention logic on how projects could contribute these objectives. At the same time, the NAUs and NAs appreciate the freedom and autonomy to shape horizontal priorities considering the national context.

#### Policy pointers

- Clear and realistic frameworks are needed at national level to guide beneficiaries in translating horizontal priorities into concrete actions. This will help monitoring how these horizontal priorities are addressed, but also enhance the visibility and foster positive attitudes towards Erasmus+ and the strategic goals.
- Define programme indicators for all horizontal priorities and KAs (currently there are no dedicated indicators for the priorities digital transformation and participation in democratic life).

**Conclusion 9: Examples of synergies between actions have been identified and new actions are welcomed. There is greater potential for creating synergies between decentralised and centralised actions, beginning with the sharing of information between EACEA and the NAs and NAUs regarding Dutch partners participating in centralised actions or acting as partners in decentralised actions managed by an NA in another country.**

Sectoral impact studies show that a fair share of beneficiary organisations participate in KA1 as well as KA2 actions. Nevertheless, most beneficiary organisations still do not participate in both, showing potential to strengthen the spill-over effects between various actions, as concluded in the study for the AE sector (Ockham IPS, 2022; Dialogic, 2024; Ockham IPS, 2023) and the survey amongst HE beneficiaries organised in the context of this evaluation.

Interviewees point to many examples in all sectors where organisations started with a KA1 application and later decided to apply for an KA1 Erasmus+ accreditation, as well as starting a KA2 project. Beneficiaries of Erasmus+ Youth also stress that experience in KA1 helps developing KA2 projects. The advantage of this is that methods developed in KA1 can also be used in KA2. For example, the knowledge of youth exchanges is used for a KA2 project in which young people also come together. Much knowledge has already been gained about how to deal with cultural differences of youth. There are also many examples where KA2 projects lead to successful KA3 projects, as well KA2 projects leading to successful applications for Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) in the field of VET. Recent research (Dialogic & Ockham IPS, 2024) on the VET sector shows



that more than half (63%) of VET-colleges that participate in a CoVE indicated that participation in another action of Erasmus+ led to participation in a CoVE.

Interviewed stakeholders appreciate new type of actions, like Small-Scale Partnerships, that make it easier for newcomers and smaller organisations to experience Erasmus+, with a lower administrative burden. However, potential new applicants are not always aware of these new types of actions. Beneficiaries are also satisfied with the shorter KA1 mobility for staff and learners, better facilitating their need and mobility obstacles for staff and learners.

There is more potential for creating synergy between decentralised and centralised actions. The NAs point out that stronger connections can be made promoting the interlinkage of actions and therefore exchange of information is needed between centralised and decentralised actions. Currently, EACEA does not provide information to the NAs nor NAUs on Dutch partners that are participating in centralised actions, as well as Dutch partners participating as partner in decentralised action in a project managed by another NA.

#### Policy pointers

- The NAs could strengthen the synergies between actions through clear communication on best practices as for how actions (KA1, KA2 and KA3) can strengthen each other. Beneficiary organisations can be encouraged to consider synergies with other KA by adding a section in the final report on follow-up activities.
- The EC should increase information exchange between EACEA and NAs and NAUs about centralised and decentralised actions, for example by providing an overview of Dutch partners participating in KA2 and KA3 managed by EACEA.

## 2.2 Efficiency

**Conclusion 10: Beneficiaries indicate that the benefits of Erasmus+ support outweigh the administrative costs, although not all staff costs are covered by the budget. Costs weigh relatively heavier in the SE, AE, and Youth sectors compared to other sectors. The lack of funding for hosting organisations limits the ability to find good partners for KA1 mobility, and the distance calculator is unfavourable for participants from remote areas.**

Most E&T beneficiaries indicate that the benefits of participating in Erasmus+ clearly outweigh the (administrative) costs made. They conclude that Erasmus+ is worth the investment. Most beneficiaries also indicate that they are prepared to apply for future application rounds, pointing on a general positive experience with Erasmus+ and positive cost-benefit ratio (Ockham IPS, 2022, 2023; Dialogic, 2024 and survey amongst HE beneficiaries organised in the context of this evaluation).

Most beneficiaries indicate that applying for and implementing Erasmus+ projects take a lot of time, especially for KA2. Nevertheless, they consider it more than worth it, given the enrichment of their regular curriculum, the learning benefits, and the personal development of both learners and staff, as well as the broader image of their organisation. Interviewed beneficiaries are more critical on the cost-benefit ratio if results are not taken up by their organisation. Beneficiaries also mention that the return for their partners is disappointing if the difference with organisations abroad is too big, and therefore little can be gained in terms of learning outcome (Ockham IPS, 2022, 2023; Dialogic, 2024 and survey amongst HE beneficiaries organised in the context of this evaluation).

In the SE, AE and Youth sectors, (administrative) costs weigh relatively more heavily than in other sectors, as applicants are often smaller and less professional organisations, according to beneficiaries interviewed. Notably, the administrative burden does not deter applicants from future applications.

Interviews with beneficiary organisations in E&T and Youth indicate that staff costs are often insufficient to compensate the real costs for the investments made, especially for KA1. In

acknowledging that grant rates have not always kept up with inflation, this might call for another scenario. There is furthermore no room for reimbursement of coordination hours by a paid employee for KA1 to manage the administration. There is some room for this in KA2 projects, but this is also experienced as very limited. Interviews show that the limited finance for coordination is even more a problem for small organisations, not having dedicated staff or a department for internationalisation.

Beneficiary organisations interviewed also indicate that the lack of funding for hosting organisations limits finding good partners for KA1 mobility, especially for those that do not have an established cooperation partnership with other organisations. Those that have it, do not experience the same problem since sending and hosting organisations see a clear return of investment by exchanging students and staff back and forth.

Beneficiaries interviewed also indicate that the distance calculator is unfavourable for participants from remote areas such as the Dutch Caribbean in their reimbursement of travel costs.

#### Policy pointer

- The EC could increase the budget for KA1 mobility, realising the compensation for increasing staff costs to facilitate mobility, as well provide funding for hosting organisations to assure quality provision of mobility and support newcomers to the programme that do not have good cooperation partners yet.

**Conclusion 11: The commitment of the Erasmus+ budget for decentralised actions is generally satisfactory across most sectors and actions in both the previous and current programme, with a slight decrease due to Covid-19. Generally, the demand for KA1 mobility exceeds the available budget, particularly at the beginning of the programme cycle when the budget is lower, followed by a steep increase, reflecting the overall Multiannual Financial Framework of the European Union.**

#### Erasmus+ programme 2014-2020

Yearly Reports of the NAs show consistent positive commitment figures for HE and VET for KA1 in the previous programme period (see Annex E). For both sectors the number of applications was fairly stable over the years, including the majority of publicly funded HE and VET institutions in the Netherlands, and requested budget exceeds the allocated budget by far. The overdemand also exists for KA1 projects in the Youth sector, specifically for the Mobility of Youth Workers (MYW). SE and AE report a more fluctuating picture in their commitments for KA1, with some years failing to commit all allocated budget.

The Yearly Reports also show that in most sectors and years, all allocated budget for KA2 was committed and in most cases the requested budget exceeds the programme budget available (e.g. for HE in 2015 the demand for funding was six times higher than budget available; see also Annex E). Sectors generally report a drop in the number of KA2 applications over the programme period, such as for HE, where the number of applications steadily decreased between 2014 and 2019 (from 49 to 26), before it increased again in 2020 (32) and 2021 (38). The Yearly Reports and Interviews with the NA and sector organisations point out that this drop is partly explained by the lower success rates due to the higher number of applicants, having an impact on the willingness of organisations to engage in the programme in the future, after an unsuccessful application. Despite the drop in applications for HE, the quality of the remaining applications was considered high according to the Yearly Reports, resulting in a full spending of the budget each year. As for VET, the number of applications also dropped severely after 2015 from 44, to 19 in 2017, and remained steadily at around 30 applicants thereafter until Covid-19 arose in 2020. In these years, the number of suitable applications was too low to allocate the full budget and the remaining budget was divided over KA1 and KA2 in other educational sectors for 2016 and 2017. In 2018, 2019, and 2020,

the budget was fully spent and proved insufficient to fully fund all suitable applications. For SE, the number of applications also dropped significantly from 135 in 2014, to 52 in 2017, but continued to grow again after 2018 (explained by the increased success rates due to decreasing number of applications and growing budget). For AE, the number of applicants varied heavily, but the budget was fully spent each year, as most years more projects applied than could be funded from the available budget. Furthermore, for Youth, according to the Yearly Reports, the commitment level is generally lower for KA2 projects in more recent years, and in most years spare budget was allocated towards KA1 projects.

### **Erasmus+ programme 2021-2027**

According to the Yearly Reports, the budget commitment levels of selected projects are lower for the first years of the current 2021-2027 programme (see also Annex E). Due to Covid-19, the NAs received fewer applications across all fields and the 2021 budget commitment levels per field are therefore lower than in the years before. For 2021, the average budget commitment level was 73% for all fields and KAs amalgamated (84% for KA1; 52% for KA2; 33% for SE, 82% for VET, 84% for HE, and 79% for AE), whereas this increased to 89% for 2022 (96% for KA1 and 93% for KA2), coming back to the pre-Covid level, where the budget commitment level was around 95%. For Youth, we also generally see an increase in commitment rates from 2021 to 2022. For 2021, the average budget commitment was 98% for KA1 and 65% for KA2, whereas these increased in 2022 to 106% for KA1 (which includes the new KA155 budget line which committed 26%) and 86% for KA2. Covid-19 coincided with increasing Erasmus+ budget for all sectors, putting extra pressure on the absorption capacity of the programme. The budget for HE, VET and Youth has doubled over the years (respectively 21 million Euro for HE, 12,3 million Euro for VET and 5,4 million Euro (incl. EVS) for Youth in 2014, increasing to 42,7 million for HE, 22 million for VET and 10,3 million Euro for Youth in 2023). The budget for SE and AE has risen significantly (from 5.2 and 1.5 million Euros respectively in 2014, to 18.2 and 10.3 million Euros in 2023). Nevertheless, both NAs still managed to achieve a relatively high commitment figure, despite the challenges faced due to Covid-19.

Beneficiaries in 2021 generally had conservative expectations regarding the numbers of mobilities that can be realized due to Covid-19 (source Yearly Reports; Annex E). The numbers were also affected by beneficiaries that had left-over funds from previous Calls that needed to be used. They were facilitated by the EC, who offered the option of an extra year of extension of projects to exhaust the remaining budget. In 2022, the number of requested mobilities increased significantly and equalized the numbers before Covid-19.

For the Netherlands, very limited (anecdotal) data is available on how Erasmus+ was used to provide a reaction to the consequences of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and no reference was made to these actions in the annual report of 2022. The NA advised applicants to address the integration of refugees from Ukraine in their application for Erasmus+ Call 2023, and communicated about the opportunity to amend the Grant agreement for KA1 projects to support people from Ukraine, or in case of force majeure due to war in Ukraine. They also communicated about the possibility to invite experts for educational organisations in refugee-affected regions and the possibility to organise inbound mobility of Ukrainian students and staff under KA131 HE and KA121 VET (international window), as well as proving access to the new Erasmus+ Online Language Support platform (OLS) to staff and students from Ukraine. The results of these efforts are not reported yet. Nevertheless, different examples are provided how Erasmus+ was used such as Erasmus+ collaboration between a HE institute in the Netherlands and a university in Ukraine, that provided essential support to Ukrainian students and staff with 43 grants awarded, offering assistance, and by extending Erasmus+ periods. One stakeholder for SE referred to different initiatives for Ukrainian refugees as the inflow allows some schools to integrate students within their regular programme or organise separate classes.

Stakeholders interviewed (NA, sector organisations and beneficiary organisations, especially in the field of VET and HE; see also Annex J), plea for more Erasmus+ funding for KA1, but not at the expense

of the KA2 budget, since, generally, demand for mobility funding exceeds budget available. This is especially true for those organisations where internationalisation is increasingly embedded in the curriculum. The urge for increasing the number of students that experience a period abroad (OCW, 2018; Nuffic, 2020) and the need to adequately address inclusion and sustainability topics, also requires increasing funds.

Programme stakeholders (sector organisations and NAs) also plea for a more gradual transition in annual budgets between programme periods, avoiding budget drops in the first programme years, representing the overall Multiannual Financial Framework of the European Union, with a slow start in the first few years and a steep increase in the last years of the seven-year period. Although the increasing budget for the 2021–2027 programme has initially made it possible to sustain Erasmus+ mobilities and projects at the level of the previous programme, sector organisations interviewed indicate that a stable volume of funding should be better safeguarded for future programme periods, since this better meets the direct demand for mobility. This is particularly the case when international mobility is strongly embedded within the organisation (such as in HE and VET where mobility is often mainstreamed in their education programmes). Consequently, the demand for funding does not fluctuate over time and consistently exceeds the available budget for these sectors. In other cases, where new types of mobility actions are introduced, such as the KA1 mobility for adult learners in the current programme, it takes time before newcomers and beneficiary organisations have adopted this action in their institutions, resulting in lower absorption capacity and commitments in the early years. Interviewees point to unfamiliarity with the action and that it takes time to embed mobility in their adult learning provision and identify groups of adult learners that are willing to participate and overcoming mobility obstacles. They indicate also that they face challenges identifying hosting/ receiving organisations and lack resources to incentivise them. Additionally, the recently introduced Small-Scale Partnerships serve as example, showing lower commitment levels in the early years for VET.

#### Policy pointers

- The EC should consider increasing the budget for KA1 mobility, given the aim to increase integration of mobility experience into students/learners' regular educational paths, and to assure the programme is inclusive for all as the demand for funding in most sectors and actions, is much higher than the allocated budget available.
- The EC should assure a stable volume of budget for mobility actions from the beginning of a programme period, especially for established actions that have been running for a longer time. New actions can follow a more gradual increase of budget, allowing time for beneficiaries to get familiar with the new action.

**Conclusion 12: NA E&T frequently utilised the option to reallocate budgets between KAs and sectoral fields, but would like to see even greater flexibility, as this is still somewhat restricted within certain boundaries by the EC. The provision of a separate budget for Erasmus+ Youth is appreciated by the sector, as it ensures dedicated funding for the sector.**

According to the Yearly Reports, both NAs frequently made use of the possibility to shift budgets between KAs and sectoral fields (NA Youth only shifted budget between actions). No challenges were reported by the NAs shifting these budgets, though NA E&T would like to see more flexibility regarding budget transfers between actions from different parts of the programme, since this is still restricted within certain boundaries by the EC. This would make the programme more responsive to developments that could not be foreseen at the time of the adoption of the Erasmus+ Regulation. Erasmus+ Youth has a separate budget. As a result, no shifts can take place with the other (education and training) sectors. This is welcomed by interviewed stakeholders as it safeguards dedicated budget for the Youth sector in the previous and current programme (see Annex J).

**Conclusion 13: In all sectors, budget realization figures for KA1 and KA2 in the previous programme were significantly negatively affected by Covid-19, as were the number of participants. However, figures indicate a positive recovery in the aftermath of Covid-19 for all sectors, with increasing participant numbers and positive target achievements. The NA E&T played an important role in achieving a high realisation rate by introducing a more intensive monitoring scheme.**

While the average budget realisation level for projects that were selected in Call 2017 for all education fields was 95.4%, and 90.3% for those selected in Call 2018, the figures dropped for the projects selected in the Call 2019 (54% for E&T and 75% for Youth). This was highly affected by Covid-19, causing cancelled courses or activities and a lack of participants (see Annex E; based on Yearly Reports). This drop is also reflected in the number of participants in a KA1 mobility project for learners in VET, HE and Youth, that show a drop in 2020 and 2021, after years of growing figures. In 2020, participation targets were not completely met due to the Covid-19 travel restrictions (99% of the targeted 15,000 for HE; 46% of the targeted 7,000 in the VET sector, while in the Youth sector the targets were achieved in every year (e.g. 106% in 2020)). In 2021, an achievement rate of 56% was reported in the Yearly Report for HE, which was at 22% for SE and 69% for VET. The AE and Youth sectors scored higher with an achievement rate of respectively 84% and 82%. Looking at the numbers for 2022, we see a positive recovery in the aftermath of Covid-19 for all sectors, with increasing numbers of participants and positive target achievements. The numbers are back to pre-Covid levels since there are no travel bans, and even more organised events and mobilities catching up activities that were not carried out because of Covid-19. Especially the achievement value for HE is high for 2022, partly due to the extension of Call 2020 and the number of blended intensive programmes (BIPs), which cannot be requested separately at the application stage.

The explanation for lower budget realisation for KA2 is the extension of the projects, resulting in many Final Reports not being included in the figures. Furthermore, many activities were changed into virtual ones, resulting in lower budget uptake (source Yearly Reports).

The NA E&T played an important role in achieving high realisation rates. This is illustrated by the more intensive monitoring scheme introduced by NA E&T for KA1 HE that resulted in a considerable increase in budget realisation from 74% in Call 2016 to 87.56% in Call 2017. The intensive monitoring was put on hold due to the Covid-19 pandemic, but the NAs have continued this practice since. The NA Youth would like to monitor more intensively, but this is limited because organisations in the Youth sector (e.g. on average less experienced, less professionalised, regular changes within staff/leaders leading to a loss of experience) already require a lot of guidance from the NA both at application and implementation stage.

**Conclusion 14: Cooperation between programme stakeholders is efficient, but there is scope for strengthening the dialogue between policymakers, education sectors and beneficiaries, especially in the sector where internationalisation is not high on the agenda. This helps assuring that policy informs programme implementation, and, vice versa, that programme outputs inform policy making.**

The NAUs and NAs appreciate their increasing involvement over the years in soliciting ideas for programme design and implementation, but the NAs still express the need for more active involvement in the strategic decisions made by the programme committee, as well as a formally embedded feedback process for future iterations.

It was indicated by NAUs and NAs interviewed that cooperation between the NAUs and NAs is considered efficient and satisfactory for E&T and Youth, with regular formal meetings and informal follow-up in between. There is an open dialogue about issues concerning the programme and the shaping and implementation of national priorities. They also work together well towards the EC and other EU Member States. They discuss how the Erasmus+ programme works in practice, what the Netherlands' commitment is in Brussels, how to send an unambiguous message and how to answer

the EC's questions, how agreements are made, and how information is shared. This is done in consultation with the Permanent Representation in Brussels. There is clear coordination in a triangle (the Permanent Representation, the NAUs, and the NAs). All stakeholders seem to be satisfied with the cooperation.

Besides the administrative consultations, separate consultations with the other directorates of the NAUs, the NAs, and the umbrella organisations also take place at important and regular intervals, with the aim to discuss national priorities and alignment between the programme and national policies and discuss trends in sectors. Nevertheless, internationalisation is not high on the agenda for all education sectors (and more limited for SE and AE, compared to VET and HE that embrace internationalisation in their sectoral policies), which is hampering the dialogue and policy alignment with the programme. Some umbrella organisations of education sectors interviewed express that they intend to play a more active role promoting the programme to their members or positioning themselves towards national priorities (and especially for SE and AE).

While there is generally appreciation among beneficiaries for the cooperation with the NAs, some E&T beneficiaries interviewed expressed that they do not believe their voices are sufficiently heard by the NA and the EC, particularly regarding their concerns about programme implementation, despite participating in advisory boards ('klankbordgroepen') per sector. Because the Youth sector is a less organised sector with many more informal organisations, just like the AE sector, it is more difficult to draw attention to the programme through other actors. Neither (professional nor voluntary) youth work nor organisations active in the field of youth participation are organised. Initiatives have been taken to jointly develop a youth strategy for the Netherlands, in which the NA is also involved. The NA Youth has regular contacts with important stakeholders in youth work and youth participation. For example, the NA Youth is part of the national working group on youth work in which major youth work related stakeholders, such as but not limited to NJi, VWS, BV Jong, Social Work Netherlands, Youth Spot, and other professional and voluntary youth work organisations are involved. In an interview, a suggestion is made to establish a kind of advisory committee of the NA to strengthen the link with the sector like the ones of NA E&T. This could also further improve transparency about choices that are made by the NA, for example what types of projects the NA mainly wants to focus on.

The NA Youth indicates that since the education and training sectors form the largest part of Erasmus+, the focus of the programme is often on education and training and guidelines from education sectors are regularly also used for the Youth sector. The NA Youth has the feeling that potential consequences of programme design are not always sufficiently considered for the Youth sector. In addition, according to the NA Youth, the focus within the programme committee is strongly on education and training. Youth stakeholders argue that it is important to give equal attention to all parts of the programme, including youth. E+ Youth is a tool to implement and support the European Youth Strategy and other youth (work) policies and strengthen competences through non-formal learning. Therefore, it is important that decisions regarding youth-related formats are made by representatives of youth ministries who have knowledge of both European and national youth (work) policy developments, as well as other trends and developments within the Youth (work) sector. The NAU VWS and NA Youth welcome the fact that Erasmus+ Youth has a dedicated budget, its own identity, and objectives, allowing the global framework for the multi-annual programme and budgets to be known.

In the previous programme, the management of the sectoral activities for VET and AE was implemented by CINOP, as a partner in the NA led by Nuffic. In the new programme, however, all education sectors fall under the responsibility of one NA (Nuffic). Although programme stakeholders indicate that the transition between organisations was achieved without any problems, some applicants interviewed in the field of VET and AE noted a difference in working culture between the organisations. Nuffic was described as more administrative and bureaucratic. Additionally, the

transition led to some turnover in staff, particularly in the NA VET team, resulting in a loss of institutional programme memory in this specific domain.

#### Policy pointers

- The NAU OCW could strengthen the dialogue between policy makers, NA E&T, and beneficiaries, assuring that policy informs programme implementation (such as by operationalising national priorities for each sector), and, vice versa, that programme outputs inform policy making (e.g. by thematically clustering project outcomes and facilitate further mainstreaming of results). Focal point could be SE and AE not having dedicated internationalisation policies and strategies.
- The NAs and the EC should rethink how the voice of beneficiaries can be better heard and reflect on programme changes and their impact on beneficiaries. For example, by empowering existing sectoral advisory boards ('klankbordgroepen') and establishing an advisory board for the Youth sector to create more transparency for the feedback loop for improving programme design and implementation.
- The EC should continue to involve NAUs and NAs in strategic decisions of the programme and formalise the process for feedback from NAs and NAUs to support more co-creation in strategic decisions of the programme.

**Conclusion 15: Beneficiaries generally express their satisfaction with the programme and NA support, with a few raising their concerns about the NA support, due to the recent high turnover of staff which affected the institutional memory of the programme. Beneficiaries indicate that clear information is lacking about changes in the KA1 Calls over the years and express the need for more clarity and uniformity about rules and reporting requirements and justifications of expenses from the start.**

Programme beneficiaries are generally satisfied with the programme, indicating their satisfaction with the alignment of the programme priorities and subsidised activities and their needs. They appreciate the wide variety of formats for mobilities (short- and long term, as well as individual and group mobility) that offer numerous opportunities to learn and develop. The partnerships – also with the recently introduced Small-Scale Partnerships - offer appropriate options for many institutions and organisations in different phases of professionalisation and integration of international activities.

Beneficiaries interviewed, including newcomers, are also generally satisfied with NAs support during the application process, with dedicated information and training sessions and personal constructive feedback on project ideas, as well as during the implementation of the project and support in finalising the project (final reporting and final declaration process) (see also Annex F with the results of the survey amongst HE project coordinators showing appreciation on the support during application, implementation, and finalisation of the project). Notably, a minority of experienced VET beneficiaries were more critical about the NA support in the new programme period, due to the recent high turnover of staff which affected the institutional memory of the programme. As a result, they experience challenges receiving different interpretations of staff on Calls and administrative requirements and the revocation of earlier agreements. This resulted in an increase in the administrative burden as additional evidence had to be collected to justify costs after the mobility already has taken place.

As the AE and the Youth sector comprise of many smaller and less formal organisations, the NA E&T and NA Youth provide more guidance for the application, administration and implementation of projects and dissemination of project results. Both newcomers and beneficiaries from AE and the Youth sector have expressed their appreciation with the additional support.

A general concern raised by interviewed beneficiaries is that clear information is lacking about changes in the KA1 Calls over the years. They recommend that the NAs should provide more detailed information in every Call about changes to the previous Call, the reasoning behind the

changes, as well as the impact it has on administration, reporting requirements and the justification of expenses. It should be noted, however, that NAs often cannot provide this information, because they themselves do not get this information (in a timely manner) from the EC. Beneficiaries interviewed also plea for more clarity and uniformity about rules and reporting requirements and justifications of expenses from the start. For example, some beneficiaries were surprised when participant reports suddenly had an increased role in the justification of expenses in the new programme period. Beneficiaries were unaware of this change at the start of the application process. Beneficiaries also indicated that they found it challenging to respond to individual participant reports without knowing the exact reasons why a participant provided a negative assessment of their mobility experience. They therefore believe that participant reports play too decisive a role in the assessment of the project. They suggest that allowing more room to provide context on the progression and achievements of projects in the final report would be helpful (see also Annex J).

#### Policy pointers

- The NAs should continue their efforts that support and safeguard the institutional memory of the programme and past agreements made with beneficiaries to mitigate the effects of high staff turnover. Proper knowledge management and EU standardised training of Erasmus+ officers is crucial avoiding different interpretations of the regulation, Programme Guide and Calls.
- The EC should provide timely detailed information to beneficiaries in every Call about changes to the previous Call, the reasoning behind, as well as the impact it has on administration, reporting requirements and justification of expenses.

**Conclusion 16: Beneficiaries express significant concerns regarding the EC's supporting IT tools and administrative processes, particularly at the onset of the programme. They criticize the redundant and overlapping questions in application forms and reports, advocating for the streamlining of these reporting formats to enhance accessibility. Rules and regulations are still considered complex by beneficiaries (contracts, learning agreements and supporting documents) especially for smaller projects and organisations as well as for individual participants.**

The implementation of the Erasmus+ programme is seriously hampered by malfunctioning IT infrastructure in the previous as well as in the current programme. Programme beneficiaries interviewed for all sectors report about the lack of accessibility of online platforms (Application Module, Mobility Tool+ (MT+) for 2014-2020, as well as the Beneficiary Module (BM) for 2021-2027) or about situations where uploaded information is lost (e.g. interim and final reports), leading beneficiaries to decide to keep a shadow administration, increasing their administrative workload. The transition to the new programme 2021-2027, with the introduction of new management support tools, was considered problematic by interviewees, especially in the beginning, when there were still many bugs in the system. This was also a problem at the start of the previous 2014-2020 programme. Later, improvements were made to the system, but according to interviewed beneficiaries this was too late as they believe support systems should be up and running from the start. This increased administrative burden for project coordinators and administrative staff impacting the credibility of the programme as basic reporting features were malfunctioning and legal deadlines for beneficiaries remained unchanged. In some cases, beneficiaries also indicated that this resulted in delays in payment when reports could not be uploaded, which is challenging for smaller organisations with less financial reserves, especially in the field of AE and Youth. The malfunctioning of IT tools also hampered the implementation of the European Student Card Initiative (ESCi) and the Erasmus Without Paper (EWP) project.

Beneficiaries are also critical of the overlapping questions in the application forms and reports, which are redundant, and plea for streamlining these reporting formats to make them more



accessible (particularly for KA2 that are perceived as more cumbersome). The 'continuous reporting' requests are also considered very cumbersome by some beneficiaries interviewed and take away valuable time from project implementation. According to the beneficiaries, the rules and regulations remain complex, and they consider contract and supporting documents unproportional, especially for smaller projects and smaller organisations participating in the programme. As a result, a large majority of beneficiaries experience a high administrative burden for running the administration. Specifically, project coordinators expressed a higher administrative burden for being accountable for their partners and towards the programme. Suggestions made by programme beneficiaries to make these forms more accessible by reducing overlap in questions, allow more differentiation in templates which makes applications and reporting easier for smaller projects, accepting digital signatures for participation, rethinking other ways to justify funding like sharing outputs or videos, but also putting impact more central in the final report form (see Annex J).

Especially the less experienced and smaller organisations experience cumbersome processes and documents, like difficulties to register their organisation in the online tool, difficulties to understand the complex grant agreements, as well as learning agreements for fewer opportunity participants. Beneficiaries also refer to challenges to collect physical signatures during large events, having many participants, for justifying the costs made. A Youth sector representative interviewed, noted that the evaluation methods were outdated, since this is still done with forms and standard questions, but that they can be much more tailored to young people and the channels they use (e.g. using social media and videos illustrating the impact). In the validation workshop, stakeholders in the field of Youth indicate that other media can also support the application process, such as through a digital coach, but also by offering more options to highlight a project plan through other media. Examples of other applications can also be helpful as inspiration. The possibility of providing more targeted support to new organisations that (want to) apply for the first time is also mentioned.

Beneficiaries in the Youth sector were moreover critical of the lack of digital interface where young people can easily access all necessary information, complete and submit forms, and receive support.

#### Policy pointers

- The EC should ensure that existing digital tools and systems used for the programme's management and implementation are user-friendly and work properly. IT tools should be tested on a sufficiently large scale by the EC before their further implementation.
- The EC should make application forms and reporting formats more compact (and reduce overlap in questions).
- The EC should make procedures and documents, as well as reporting obligations, proportional to the size of projects (more differentiation between type of actions) as well as type of beneficiaries. This seems especially helpful for smaller and less professionalised organisations, in the field of AE and Youth, including a lot of grassroots organisations.
- The EC should consider other ways to justify funding like sharing outputs or videos of events.
- The NAs should bring project coordinators into contact with each other and facilitate exchanges of experiences and support so that they can help each other to find solutions in the administrative processes (self-help groups).

**Conclusion 17: The simplification measures introduced for 2021-2027 are appreciated, but there remains uncertainty about the accountability and justification for expenses. New actions, such as the Small-Scale Partnerships and accreditation of providers for KA1 mobility, are appreciated for easing access to the programme. Nevertheless, the variety of sub-actions makes the programme relatively complex and difficult for target groups to understand, especially for newcomers and smaller organisations. Programme stakeholders and**

**beneficiaries highlight the importance of maintaining enough opportunities for non-accredited organisations in the programme.**

The Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme introduced a range of simplification measures, such as the use of including lump sums for KA2 projects and the introduction of Small-Scale Partnerships. These simplification measures have been welcomed by beneficiary organisations (see Annex J).

While lump sums are appreciated and considered the way forward, there remains uncertainty about accountability and justification for expenses. Interviews with beneficiaries indicate that NAs across countries have different interpretations on how to justify lump sums, as well related co-funding, leading to varying levels of information provided to beneficiaries. For instance, Dutch NAs advise project coordinators to keep time registration as a backup, while other NAs recommend against doing this. More clarity and guidance should be provided from the EC to assure NAs follow a common approach, and to reduce the uncertainty about the justification of the lump sums. Some respondents interviewed also experienced negative side effects of using lump sums, since it is less clear how to distribute the money amongst partners leading to discussions between partners about budget shares (since a clear overview of allocation of activities and workdays is missing in the application, as well as information on daily fees, as available in the previous programme). Moreover, some argue that partners are less inclined to use the budget for travel expenses, since they prefer to use the budget for compensating staff costs.

Generally, sector organisations and beneficiary organisations interviewed are satisfied with the introduction of Small-Scale Partnerships as new action, since this action provides easier access for newcomers to the programme, with a lower administrative burden (especially for SE and AE). Despite the general satisfaction with new actions, stakeholders also indicate that the variety of sub-actions makes the programme relatively complex and difficult for target groups to understand, especially for newcomers and smaller organisations. It also makes the programme's administration challenging with a variety of sub-actions, having different rules and reporting requirements.

Beneficiaries interviewed are also satisfied with the accreditation for KA1 for SE and AE, introduced for the current programme, as well existing accreditations and mobility charters for HE and VET from the previous programme onwards. Beneficiaries indicated that this reduces their workload, instead of sending yearly applications repeating organisational information that needs to be updated regularly. Having an accreditation also provides the flexibility to allocate budgets between staff and learners, without making an amendment to the contract. Beneficiaries also indicate that the accreditation has made them to reflect on their internationalisation strategy, while setting up an integrated, strategic plan to implement high quality mobility activities as part of a wider effort to develop their organisation. There are still voices saying that having an accreditation still coincides with a large administrative burden, especially to comply with upcoming new requirements for accreditation. In some sectors like SE, AE, and Youth, smaller organisations often do not have a dedicated internationalisation strategy. In these cases, applying for an Erasmus+ accreditation is too demanding, which highlights the importance of maintaining enough opportunities for non-accredited organisations in the programme. In the Youth sector, accreditation is rather limited and not strongly encouraged by the NA to guarantee quality of project implementation and leave sufficient room within the budget for new entrants.

**Policy pointers**

- The EC should ensure clarity across countries and NAs about what information is needed to justify the expenses made using lump sums.
- The EC should reserve sufficient budget and opportunities for non-accredited organisations for KA1 mobility, allowing organisation to apply that don't want to embed international mobility on an annual basis, as well as to leave sufficient room for newcomers.

**Conclusion 18: The programme indicators are accurate but predominantly output-oriented. They could be enhanced by incorporating impact indicators that reflect the Theory of Change (ToC) of the programme. There is room for improvement in utilising programme indicators for policy dialogue and learning purposes, rather than solely for accountability.**

Programme indicators, as included in the Erasmus+ Regulation, are generally seen as relevant by programme stakeholders interviewed and considered as an improvement compared to the previous programme (more limited number of indicators and simpler). The NAs collect information and report on these programme indicators in their Yearly Reports for the EC, as well as meetings between NAUs and NAs discussing quarterly reports, mostly for the purpose of accountability. No integral analyses are made on the performance on these programme indicators and developments over time, feeding dialogue and policy learning within the NAs. It is not always clear how target values for programme indicators are set, based on what baseline.

The current set of programme indicators are strongly output-oriented, and it is therefore very important to complement this by information on impact of participants and organisations. The programme indicators could be enriched by a set of qualitative indicators that properly map the intended impact of projects. Erasmus+ involves behavioural change or the development of soft competences and precisely measuring these kinds of phenomena requires good indicators. To identify long-term impact, it is necessary to be able to survey organisations and participants longer after the completion of a project about the changes they have experienced.

#### Policy pointers

- The NAs should improve the use of programme indicators in their reflections on the performance of decentralised action in the Netherlands, making an integral analysis feeding dialogue and policy learning within the NAs.
- In the new Erasmus+ programme, it would be beneficial to complete the output-oriented programme indicators with quantitative and qualitative impact indicators of Erasmus+ projects. More emphasis on different sets of qualitative indicators that properly map the intended impact of projects is an area where more effort is especially needed.
- To identify the long-term impact, it is necessary to survey organisations and participants sometime after the completion of a project about the changes they have experienced due to Erasmus+. To keep contact details up to date it is important to link up with or support the establishment of alumni networks of Erasmus+.

**Conclusion 19: IT support tools fall short as knowledge management tools for NAs for monitoring the performance of the programme, such as synthesizing participant reports, applications, and final reports. The lack of functioning IT tools also leads to extra work for the NA, as they must answer questions from beneficiaries and provide guidance on how to deal with malfunctioning tools.**

The slow advancement of IT tools intended to support the programme's implementation is falling short of all expectations, negatively affecting the programme's execution. It also hinders necessary data collection and monitoring at the NA level, ultimately posing a high reputational risk to the overall image of the programme. Over the years, the Yearly Reports have highlighted many challenges regarding the use of Mobility Tool+, including limitations on uploading information and making exports for monitoring purposes (such as synthesising participant reports, applications, and final reports). These issues hamper the programme's knowledge management function and prevent the NAs from undertaking analysis on programme performance due to the lack of reliable data. Non-functioning systems also cost the NAs much time to answer questions from beneficiaries, guide applicants with information sessions, and provide alternative reporting templates.

**Conclusion 20: Important steps have been taken to strengthen measures against fraud and misuse, such as setting maximum limits on the number of applications and considering the**

**years of existence. However, the NAs would like to have more flexibility in selecting projects for audits and further guidance by the EC on interpreting exclusion criteria related to 'EU values' and 'dubious actors', but also monitoring actions of invalid organisations in other applications in other countries. There are signs that the use of lump sums has a downside effect on identifying misuse of funding, particularly based on actual receipts.**

The EC's current exclusion criteria and the resources available to the NAs are already being improved. For example, the new rules in place in 2024 to use the maximum number of applications of 5 for KA1 and 10 for KA2 per organisation per Call is viewed positively by the NAs, but the NA Youth would like to see stricter requirements per Call for the future. The criterion stipulating that an organisation must have been in existence for two years before being eligible to apply for Erasmus+ accreditation also contributes to reducing the risk of fraud and misuse, according to programme stakeholders interviewed.

The EC's current measures against fraud and improper abuse are risk-based rather than random (as in the past). The biggest projects are currently chosen based on the size of the budget. The NA E&T indicates that a different approach makes more sense, based on other criteria such as the type of applicant. This is because the largest projects are carried out by larger educational institutions, such as universities that also carry out internal quality requirements and monitoring. Additionally, these organisations are often already accredited at national level and in Erasmus+. In contrast, the NA E&T indicates that the financial or operational check is too complex and not always adequate to filter out dubious organisations during the application process. The NA Youth also emphasizes the value of own degrees of freedom in selecting projects for audits, such as using previous experiences, less common administrative constructions, and signals from participants.

The NA E&T also indicates that the exclusion criteria used by the EC are interpreted differently by NAs and EACEA, also due to unclear definitions and criteria of 'EU values' and 'dubious actors'. This results in inconsistent application assessments and actions, which makes the position as an awarding organisation vulnerable because decisions made by Dutch NAs may be different than the decisions of NAs in other programme countries and EACEA. NAs can mark an organisation as invalid in their system, but there is no possibility for NAs to monitor the actions of these organisations in their applications with other NAs or ongoing projects. Beneficiaries interviewed also report different interpretations of NA E&T and NA Youth for the necessity of providing a bank guarantee for smaller organisations, for participating in the programme.

Furthermore, it was indicated by the NAs that, despite the positive experience with using lump sums and unit costs to reduce, the administrative burden on beneficiaries, this approach also has a downside, as actual receipts served as one of the clearest signals that could indicate improper use or fraud.

#### **Policy pointers**

- The EC should provide NAs more freedom to select organisations for audits, not only based on size of the budget, but also based on type of organisation.
- The EC should provide clear definitions and operationalisation for the exclusion criteria for dubious actors, to avoid different interpretations across programme countries.

**Conclusion 21: Programme stakeholders emphasize the clear advantages of having separate NAs for Education and Training (E&T) and Youth, as they possess specific sectoral expertise and are closely connected to their respective sectors. However, increasing tasks and roles of the NAs are not reflected yet in their management fee.**

Over the years, both NAs experienced an increase in their tasks, roles, and expectations, resulting in changes in the implementation costs for the programme. For example, they need to distribute a higher programme budget, have an increased workload on monitoring & compliance, include more activities related to the horizontal priorities and impact of the programme, and have an

increasing focus on knowledge management. Although the management fees (combined contribution of the EC and NAU) have increased over the years, it is not considered sufficient by the NAs reflecting these increasing tasks and expectations of the NAs. Alongside increasing expectations, NAs experienced a very high workload due to the aftermath of Covid-19 and the non-functioning of IT tools. The types of organisations and target groups in the AE and Youth sector also require more intensive guidance from the NAs, especially for newcomers.

By working with two separate NAs, certain economies of scale and synergies between actions aimed at the same target groups are lost. However, interviews with NA Youth, representatives from the Youth sector, and project beneficiaries in the Youth field indicate clear advantages to having a dedicated NA. This NA is very familiar with youth work, acts as an expertise centre, and has a network within the sector. Applicants from the Youth sector can rely on the NA for guidance and express satisfaction with this arrangement. This approach also acknowledges the distinct character of the Youth sector, which might otherwise be overlooked.

#### Policy pointers

- The EC and NAUs should reconsider increasing the management fee for NAs, considering the increasing task, roles and expectations (distributing higher programme budget; increasing workload on monitoring & compliance; more activities related to the horizontal priorities and impact of the programme; increasing focus on knowledge management).

## 2.3 Relevance

**Conclusion 22: There is a strong alignment between Erasmus+ and national and sectoral priorities. The horizontal priorities are appreciated, but stakeholders indicate that these should not overshadow the main objectives of supporting quality education, youth work and youth participation.**

Stakeholders and beneficiaries interviewed indicate that the objectives of the Erasmus+ programme continue to be regarded as relevant to the Dutch context. The four horizontal priorities are perceived as well-chosen, as they are not only pivotal to the further development of Europe, but also connect well with topics that already are of high importance in education and training policies, curricula and programmes.

Sector organisations interviewed point on the importance of embedding European Education, Training and Youth policies and the horizontal priorities within the programme since these address important societal challenges. This makes the programme less dependent on shifting national priorities, proving a stable and sustainable agenda for the years to come.

The national priorities for education and training of the current Erasmus+ programme (inclusion and digitalisation) have a clear relevance towards the Dutch education policy priorities of equal opportunities<sup>8</sup>, improving the position of teachers<sup>9</sup>, and digitalisation.<sup>10</sup> This has remained the same compared to the previous programme period, during which the national priorities were inclusion and professionalisation. In general, the education and training objectives are more focused on employability, gaining knowledge and developing skills for the (future) labour market, while the Youth sector is more focussed towards inclusion, diversity, citizenship, and personal development through non-formal education activities (see also Ecorys, 2017). After the Covid-19 pandemic,

<sup>8</sup> For example, the Equal Opportunity Alliance since 2016 for all education sectors, see: <https://www.gelijke-kansen.nl/over-gelijke-kansen/beleid>

<sup>9</sup> For example, the 2022 work agenda addressing teacher shortage in SE. See: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/binaries/rijksoverheid/documenten/rapporten/2022/03/22/bijlage-3-investeren-in-leren/bijlage-3-investeren-in-leren.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> The AEF report of 2021 indicates that two documents, the Dutch digitalisation agenda and Strategic knowledge agenda 2019-2024 provide direction and that all education sectors apart from AE have a sector specific policy agenda.

national education policies<sup>11</sup> also focused more on overtaking incurred cognitive or socio-emotional deficits, reducing study delays, promoting student welfare and combating placement shortages. All of these are topics that fit Erasmus+ objectives and priorities.

Themes such as digitalisation, inclusion, and climate are also issues that concern young people, but there are some differences between groups. Especially young people with fewer opportunities can be more concerned on "surviving" and can therefore have less affinity with the climate theme. Other themes are also mentioned in the conversations, such as radicalisation and mental health, but these are also related to the programme and have a link with the horizontal themes. Since the new programme, Erasmus+ Youth has been linked to the EU Youth Strategy and is therefore more strongly positioned around the themes connect, engage and empower. Those involved in youth work also appreciate the programme because it focuses on the impact of the quality of youth work, meaningful youth participation, and it makes the importance and role of youth work more visible. As youth work in the Netherlands is not considered very extensive, certainly not compared to youth care, the programme increases visibility of youth work. Another effect of this is that it is experienced as recognition by participants and stakeholders.

Various umbrella organisations and stakeholders indicate that Erasmus+ objectives and horizontal priorities are sufficiently broadly defined, so they still support a bottom-up approach and accommodate changing needs of the different sectors. Despite the general appreciation of Erasmus+ objectives and horizontal priorities, some programme beneficiaries have indicated that the emphasis of the Erasmus+ programme on the four priorities overshadows the main objectives of supporting quality education and youth work/ participation.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, some stakeholders interviewed indicate that Erasmus+ and its objectives stimulated them to (re-)think their own objectives and policies, resulting in more strategic approaches towards the Erasmus+ objectives, including the four horizontal priorities, as well as internationalisation, or more innovative practices.

**Conclusion 23: There is a high interest in digitalisation within KA2 projects, with great potential for virtual and blended learning to strengthen the inclusiveness of the programme. However, the costs associated with organising digital programmes and virtual mobility are not adequately covered by the programme. Furthermore, the potential of eTwinning has not yet been fully exploited, and challenges have been identified regarding the user-friendliness of the tool.**

A recent review by the NA E&T revealed that digitalisation played a role for around 40 KA2 applications between 2020-2022 (Nuffic, 2022a), showing a high interest in using Erasmus+ for strengthening digitalisation.<sup>13</sup> The majority of the projects are focused on the professional skills of teachers, followed by the development of digital tools. Improving the digital infrastructure and improving the digital skills of students and learners is not mentioned often and this could be an indication that more stakeholders should be involved with the digitalisation of didactics and supporting technologies. Notably, the VET sector was the most involved in digitalisation projects and synergies between the different sectors were not common except for service organisations active in multiple education sectors. The point about the increasing importance of digitalisation for staff certainly also applies to youth workers who deal with young people who increasingly move in a digital world. Moreover, a pilot in the field of e-learning is currently running for youth exchange activities.

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<sup>11</sup> Investments in all education sectors and youth have been bundled via the National Programme Education: support programme for recovery and perspective since 2021 see: <https://www.nponderwijs.nl/>

<sup>12</sup> Objectives: strengthening young people's competencies, improving the quality of youth work, encouraging active citizenship

<sup>13</sup> For now, the inventory has been delimited to the most recent years: 2020, 2021 and (until March) 2022 and within these to KA226, KA200, KA201, KA202, KA203, KA204 and finally K227. In these years, there may also have been an acceleration of developments due to the Covid-19 pandemic as an additional Call was opened in 2020.

Virtual and blended mobilities for HE and Internationalisation at Home (IaH) activities such as eTwinning for SE, VET and teachers are less popular compared to regular mobilities, yet they attract participants with fewer opportunities and provided an alternative to physical mobility during the Covid-19 pandemic. Preliminary results of virtual mobility and BIPs show that they improve the inclusion of the Erasmus+ programme as they provide opportunities for groups who cannot or are not ready to travel.<sup>14</sup> A minority of interviewed programme beneficiaries stated to use eTwinning, and while they rated the instrument positively, they did indicate to experience issues (especially at the beginning of the programme period) and low user-friendliness of the platform (see Annex J). In addition, they noted that organising digital programmes/mobility requires similar investments compared to physical activities and these costs are not covered by the programme.

#### Policy pointers

- The EC should continue the support for eTwinning by enhancing the user friendliness of the platform and consider providing funding for staff of organisations to set up and organise programmes. This is especially relevant for newcomers who lack a network of partners to facilitate matching and lessen the burden of organisational practicalities with other organisations.
- The EC should mainstream virtual mobility and BIPs as fully-fledged alternatives and provide organisational funding for organising virtual mobility, to facilitate opportunities for inclusion target groups in all sectors and position it as a stepping stone for longer physical mobilities.

**Conclusion 24: There is an increasing focus on projects related to the topics of 'environment and climate change.' However, green travel remains uncommon among participants in the programme and requires greater attention, including increased financial compensation and the establishment of green travel as the standard practice.**

A significant share of 35% of the committed budget for all sectors (education & training and Youth) in 2022 address environment and climate change and this share is increasing over the last years (increase of 19% since 2021 (see Annex E)). Yearly Reports also report a significant share of KA2 projects that are addressing climate objectives. Especially SE and VET show high overachievement with nearly half of projects addressing climate objectives (respectively 50 and 44 percent, compared to the target of 10%). This target for Erasmus+ Youth is not achieved (2% of the targeted 6%), because priority was primarily given to ensuring that enough qualitative projects were applied for to spend the budget.

Green travel is still not common practice for participants in the programme and needs greater attention. A recent study (Nuffic, 2022d) amongst students in HE confirms this and shows that students are divided on the importance of sustainable travel, with around 40% of students saying this is important, while the other group considers it as less important. On the one hand, stakeholders argue that it is very important to minimise the negative effects of traveling abroad, on the other hand participants choose most of the time travel options that are less green. Of the questioned students, almost three quarters (71%) of students travelled by plane to the country of destination and a minority (14%) chose to travel by train. For most flyers, speed of travel was the main reason for choosing the plane, followed by ease of arrangement, whereas for rail travellers sustainability and travel comfort were important considerations. Currently, the main obstacle is the insufficient height of the green top-up as programme beneficiaries note the significant monetary difference between international flight and train travel. Other factors that heavily influenced their travel decision were the shorter and more comfortable travel times and the poor connection of train operators in the EU. Beneficiaries stated that this instrument is currently insufficient to influence the

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<sup>14</sup> Notably interviewed programme beneficiaries indicate that this effect is similar to the intensive programmes of the lifelong learning programme from 2007-2013 which were not present in the previous programme period of 2014-2020.

travel choice of participants and is more seen as an appreciation and support for participants choosing sustainable travel.

#### Policy pointers

- The EC should facilitate green travel opportunities by mainstreaming green top-up in mobility funding (which is currently already implemented), as well as open it up for other sectors (besides HE) and invest in the prerequisites of international travel such as booking and train connections.

## 2.4 Internal and external coherence and complementarity

**Conclusion 25: The internal coherence of the objectives of Erasmus+ 2021-2027 remains high. The wide variety of mobility formats and actions is appreciated, and the newly introduced actions (Small-Scale Partnerships; KA1 mobility for adult learners) complement the existing offerings. There is still potential to enhance the spill-over effects between various actions. The cross-sectoral dimension of the project has been strengthened over the years, as has the connection with enterprises or other socio-economic players active in the world of work as participating organisations.**

Stakeholders and programme beneficiaries from all programme fields provide positive feedback on the internal coherence of the Erasmus+ objectives. Interviewed programme stakeholders (sector organisations and project beneficiaries) appreciate the wide variety of formats for mobility and partnerships, building further on successful formats of the previous programme, and adding new opportunities for exchanges and collaboration (see Annex J). KA1 and KA2 actions seem well-aligned according to interviewees. Especially the recently introduced action for KA2 Small-Scale Partnerships is appreciated by SE and AE as an entry point for newcomers to the programme to experience what it is to work in a partnership and share experiences across borders. Based on their experience, they could apply for a Strategic Cooperation Partnership at a later stage in the programme. There is also anecdotal evidence that beneficiaries start with KA1 mobility and later continue with an KA2 application, as well as continue Strategic Partnerships with an application for CoVE or European Universities Initiative (EUI), or a KA3 application (see Annex J). Nevertheless, most beneficiaries in all sectors are still only involved in either KA1 or a KA2 project (Ockham IPS, 2022; Dialogic, 2024; Ockham IPS, 2023; and survey amongst HE beneficiaries organised in the context of this evaluation), showing potential to strengthen the spill-over effects between various actions. Within larger organisations, Erasmus+ projects are often implemented by different accountholders working in different departments or faculties, hampering synergies between actions. This is mainly the case for HE and VET.

Inconsistencies have been addressed between KA1 and KA2 projects over the years and there is little evidence of duplication between KAs and in the programme documentation. Examples of inconsistencies remain from budget differences between different parts of a programme and is often not clear to organisations what these differences are based on. For example, the budget for traineeships abroad was lower than for studying abroad in the previous programme period, whereas it is currently reversed as students receive 150 euro more per month with their traineeships. Some beneficiaries interviewed therefore plea for a better alignment between different types of mobilities.

Erasmus+ Youth<sup>15</sup> focuses both on young people (participation, mobility) and professionalisation of those who work with young people (mobility) illustrating clear complementarity. Youth participation has been changed from KA3 to KA1 (KA154) in the new programme period, which broadened the scope of this grant and provided this objective with a bigger budget. Both the NA Youth and a

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<sup>15</sup> Since 2018, a separate action for (mobility of) volunteer work has been separated from the Erasmus+ Youth programme and placed in its own programme: European Solidarity Corps (ESC). The possible advantages and disadvantages of this will be reported separately in the parallel report about the ESC.



project leader interviewed with experience in the old and new programme indicated that this is a positive development as it provides more flexibility and embed similar activities within a broader project. With regards to the attention to professionalisation of the youth worker, it can be added that the 2014 - 2020 programme mainly focused on impacts on the individual youth worker (individual), but that the new programme also pays attention to the impact on quality of youth work (organisation level).

The two NAs utilise an integrated approach to present Erasmus+ as a single programme. Joint Management Team meetings and working groups on impact and communication are held. The cross-sectoral dimension of the programme is present in all information and support activities. For example, teaching colleges are encouraged to include schools in their projects, and business education institutions are strongly advised to include enterprises.

There is clear evidence that the programme is working cross-sectoral. The previous programme monitored the share of cross-sectoral projects awarded in each sector, showing that the relative share of cross-sectoral projects differ per year for all subsectors (fluctuating between 10-35% for SE; 10-80% for VET; 75-80% for HE; 27-78% for AE; and 67%-88% for Youth (see Annex E)). Although shares differ per year, generally, a significant share of the projects indicate that they are cross-sectoral, pointing to cooperation between different programme fields. In addition, large shares of Strategic Partnerships involved enterprises or other socio-economic players active in the world of work as participating organisations (see Annex E). While percentages differ per year (ranging between 15 to 50% per year for SE; 30-60% for VET; 50-75% for HE; 15-100% for AE; and 29%-60% for Youth) all sectors still overachieve their annual targets, pointing to well-established connections within projects with enterprises and other socio-economic players.

**Conclusion 26: There is evidence of high external coherence and complementarity between the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme and other national, regional, and sectoral programmes. However, not many synergies were identified between Erasmus+ and other national and EU-wide funding programmes, such as the ESF+ and Horizon Europe.**

No alternatives for Erasmus+ E&T are identified that offer similar possibilities at national, regional and sectoral level. The Erasmus+ programme is the largest and most well-known programme for international mobility according to interviewed stakeholders. Being able to go abroad and providing opportunities to set up strategic international collaborations and partnerships is what mainly distinguishes the Erasmus+ programme from other funding programmes. Most other funding programmes are more specific than Erasmus+ by restricting collaboration to a limited number of countries (e.g. INTERREG) or working on IaH, e.g. the Internationalisation Grant for SE<sup>16</sup> (IFO subsidy) that aims to sustainably integrate internationalisation into school policies. The IFO subsidy served in several cases as a stepping stone to an application for Erasmus+, showing clear synergies. Other funding opportunities provide the opportunity to strengthen the link between education and the labour market, like the Regional Investment Fund (RIF) subsidy for the VET sector but lack a clear international component. Other references were made to subsidy programmes that fund research (e.g. ZonMw<sup>17</sup> or the Horizon programme). The only change since the new programme period is the introduction of the 'Kingdom Exchange Grant'<sup>18</sup> (Koninkrijksbeurs) in 2024 which allows 120 students from the Dutch Kingdom to do a national mobility exchange. This subsidy can be seen as complementary, as the same kind of short student mobility is not possible within the Erasmus+

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<sup>16</sup> For more information see <https://www.dus-i.nl/subsidies/internationalisering-funderend-onderwijs>

<sup>17</sup> Partnership of Healthcare Research Netherlands (ZON) and board of medical sciences (NW) of the Netherlands Organisations for Scientific Research (NWO), see <https://www.zonmw.nl/en>

<sup>18</sup> The new Kingdom Exchange enables student mobility at VET and HE for students from Aruba, Curaçao, Netherlands, Sint Maarten and the islands Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba which are special municipalities within the Dutch Kingdom. the grant amount is comparable to the Erasmus+, also considering inclusion groups. See <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/actueel/nieuws/2023/01/17/landen-koninkrijk-zetten-stappen-voor-vergroten-studiesucces-caribische-studenten>

programme. Since these programmes address differing objectives, scopes, and target groups, there are still no inconsistencies or overlaps identified with Erasmus+ programme.

For the Youth sector, as far as actions focusing on mobility are concerned, it is indicated that Erasmus+ occupies a unique position in this regard. One alternative mentioned by a non-participant is the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) programme<sup>19</sup>. It is also mentioned that scouting and international sports tournaments are circuits in which mobility of young people also takes place, but that they have their own character. This is different with participation activities as (non-)participants much more often make a trade-off with other forms of financing. This includes municipalities, funds, but certainly also Civic Service (*Maatschappelijke Diensttijd*; MDT). The latter is a national programme with significant resources. Some indicate that this also means that MDT has more financial space (also for financing some coordination). It is recognized that the administrative burden is also high at MDT and the continuation of MDT also depends on political choices.

Beneficiaries interviewed did not mention many synergies between Erasmus+ and other national and EU-wide funding programmes (such as the ESF+ and Horizon Europe). For example: adding an international dimension to an existing educational or youth development project funded by another programme, or to mainstream results of outputs developed with the support of Erasmus+, or otherwise to further study the outputs in a local/regional context.

#### Policy pointers

- The NAs and beneficiaries should further explore synergies with other subsidy programmes adding an international dimension or contribute to mainstreaming outputs developed with the support of Erasmus+. This could be a part of the NAs' impact strategy and can also be embraced by beneficiaries.

## 2.5 European added value and sustainability

**Conclusion 27: Erasmus+ has a clear added value for beneficiary organisations. Stakeholders therefore believe it is important for Erasmus+ to continue as it provides them with sustainable opportunities for internationalisation and innovation.**

Beneficiaries indicate that there is no national or regional programme offering similar actions for mobility or cooperation in the Netherlands. Different surveys organised amongst beneficiary organisations in the last two years show that the bulk of beneficiary organisations clearly indicate that they would not have carried out the supported activities without Erasmus+. Otherwise, they would have implemented the project in a slimmed down version or at a later point in time (Ockham IPS, 2022; Dialogic, 2024; Ockham IPS, 2023; and survey amongst HE beneficiaries organised in the context of this evaluation). Almost none of the beneficiary organisations indicated that they would have implemented the activities like they have done with the support of Erasmus+, which indicates a clear added value of the programme. No similar survey data is available for SE and the Youth sector, but this added value is confirmed during the interviews and focus groups with beneficiaries (see Annex J).

Stakeholders therefore believe it is important for Erasmus+ to continue as it provides them with sustainable opportunities for internationalisation and innovation. The long-term existence of the Erasmus+ programme and associated network of beneficiaries, provides organisations and institutions easier access to international collaborations across Europe. In general, beneficiaries note that the international nature of the Erasmus+ programme makes international and cross-sectoral cooperation and cultural awareness easier to achieve compared to conducting projects within the borders of a country (Ecorys, 2017). The added value is not only collecting new innovative ideas

<sup>19</sup> The programme was launched in 2021 and will run for seven years until 2027. It was created along with the 2021-2027 Justice programme under the Justice, Rights and Values Fund, see regulation <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R0692>

from other countries, but also the ability to transfer good outputs to countries that are less advanced in this area. Beneficiaries interviewed, especially staff, indicate that the international orientation and reflection on methods and situations benefits innovation in their own practices which is not feasible within existing budget lines and Call upon the creativity of applicants, providing a stage for innovation in education sectors. Some say that Erasmus+ supports the R&D function of the organisation, being the catalysator for new programmes, methods and instruments.

**Conclusion 28: The Erasmus+ programme has a large impact on participants for themes related to general intercultural competencies, but less on European way of life.**

Beneficiaries point to a clear added value of adding a European dimension to their work, based on European policy priorities in the European Education Area, as well horizontal priorities. In general, research on impact for both staff and students show that the European common values and democratic citizenship are mentioned in relation to the intercultural competences and themes of global citizenship, open attitude, affinity with the visited country and broadening their horizons (ResearchNed, 2018; Nuffic, 2020, 2023; Oberon, 2020; Ockham IPS, 2023). In the RAY-surveys, participants in youth exchanges and participation projects clearly indicate their skills have improved in dealing with different cultural backgrounds (Annex I).

There is limited evidence to determine the extent of the contribution of the Erasmus+ programme to European integration matters, raising awareness about the common EU values and to foster a European sense of belonging in the Netherlands as most research does not or briefly touch upon these subjects. Only for staff in SE, a report shows that half of schools participating in Erasmus+ show considerable contributions in the development of teachers' international competences, attention to the European common values and democratic citizenship, and world citizenship in education (Ockham IPS, 2022). For the Youth sector, the RAY surveys illustrate that the perception of participants about the EU has improved for many of them.

The contribution towards knowledge development of certain themes depends on the type of activities organised for participants and the attitude of participants before their foreign experience. For example, internships and study exchanges of VET and HE explicitly contribute to foreign language skills, the general international orientation of career prospects of participants, as well as the personal development of the student (ResearchNed, 2019, 2021; Nuffic, 2023). In addition, research focused on HE students shows that students participating in Erasmus+ already differ in skills and attitudes compared to non-participants (ResearchNed, 2020). Prior to going abroad, they are already more open to travel, have higher perceived values for cultural orientation, international outlook, and European outlook than students who have not had a foreign experience.

**Policy pointers**

- If it is decided by Member States that the Erasmus+ programme should contribute more to the European way of life (including European integration matters, raising awareness about the EU common values and fostering a sense of belonging in the home country), it needs to be defined and integrated in a framework to steer these themes into the overarching concept of intercultural competencies and global citizenship.

**Conclusion 29: Erasmus+ contributes to the strengthening of educational cooperation between Member States and third countries.**

Stakeholders and researchers have noted that the Erasmus+ programme plays an increasingly important role in the strategic partnerships of the European Union as the programme enjoys a familiar and accessible image for international cooperation (Ferreira-Pereira & Mourato Pinto, 2021). In addition to this research, programme stakeholders interviewed note that when relations are frozen at the highest political level, cultural and educational exchanges via Erasmus+ and that contacts between Erasmus+ alumni ensure that partnerships are kept alive (see Annex J). Moreover, in a

rapidly changing multipolar order, the importance of education diplomacy is increasing as a way to gain influence. Educational cooperation is appropriate here because it is seen as a universal value.

**Conclusion 30: The discontinuation of the Erasmus+ programme will result in unequal access to mobility and cooperation abroad.**

Stakeholders and beneficiaries indicate that discontinuation of the Erasmus+ programme would put additional pressure on the increasing internationalisation ambitions of organisations of all programme fields (see Annex J). While national and regional educational policies exist which aim to create lifelong learning opportunities explicitly for fewer opportunity groups, they often lack the mobility, international exchange and a European dimension. It is likely that these factors would impact the accessibility of internationalisation activities, especially for disadvantaged groups, as they experience the most obstacles with foreign exchanges and travel in general. While the effects of discontinuation of the Erasmus+ programme would negatively affect all programme fields, research and NA staff indicate that these factors indicate a likely disproportionate effect on the SE, AE, youth sector as these sectors consist of smaller organisations having smaller budgets for internationalisation. Specifically for SE, the parental contribution, which was used to fund additional activities such as school trips and festivities abroad, has been abolished since 2021 (OCW, 2021)<sup>20</sup>. Organisations, staff and students of VET and HE will also face difficulties if they must rely on their own financial resources for internationalisation but might be able to rely more on the existing international public-private partnerships and research networks. However, it should be noted that less fortunate students and youth already indicated that the costs and additional funding of the Erasmus+ programme play a major role in their motivation to embark on a foreign exchange.

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<sup>20</sup> Note that the voluntary nature of the parental contribution for admission of a pupil to a school was already regulated by law (Article 41 Primary Education Act, Article 27.2 Secondary Education Act). The amendment deals with the costs of pupils' participation in activities organised outside the compulsory curriculum under the responsibility of the school.

## Annex A – Overview of the research methodology

The table below presents the overview of the research methodology of this study and specifies what kind of research activities have been executed, the number of interviews conducted and the number of participants in the focus groups and validation workshop that have been organised.

Table A.1 Overview of the research methodology

Type of research activity	Details of research activity	Total number of interviews
<b>Reviewing programme monitoring data</b>	All Yearly Reports and monitoring data are assessed	N/A
<b>Reviewing existing impact studies Youth</b>	Use results of RAY surveys (participants/project leaders in programme 2015-2020). Country-specific data for NL presented in several (data-)reports are presented in Annex G Earlier publication (Boomkens and others 2017) also made use of these data.	N/A
<b>Analyses of data RAY-surveys</b>	Analyses for respondents of NL in the current programme (2021-2023) presented in Annex H	N/A
<b>Reviewing existing impact studies education</b>	Impact studies of Erasmus+ in different sector have been analysed (see bibliography list in Annex C.	N/A
<b>Online survey KA2 beneficiaries HE</b>	Total response was 45	N/A
<b>Interviews with National Agencies (Nuffic, NJI)</b>	Nuffic, NJI	12
<b>Interviews with Ministries (OCW, VWS)</b>	OCW, VWS	6
<b>Sectoral organisations of institutes in education fields</b>	PO-Council, VO-Council, VET-Council, Universities of the Netherlands, Netherlands Council for Training and Education (NRTO), Netherlands House for Education and Research (NETH-ER), Foundation Learn for Life	7
<b>Representative organisations of teachers and students</b>	ESN Netherlands, Interurban Student Consultation (ISO), Youth Organisation for Vocational Education (JOB MBO), Living Languages (section English), The Dutch Association of Social Studies Teachers (NLVM), Netherlands Worldwide Students (NWS) and Dutch Association of Teachers of Mathematics	7
<b>Representative organisations for young people and youth workers</b>	Dutch National Youth Council (NJR) , Professional association for child and youth workers (BVJong), Youth Spot	3
<b>Focus group with project coordinators per sector</b>	5 focus groups conducted (SE with 6 participants, VET with 8 participants, HE with 9 participants, AE with 6 participants, Youth with 7 participants)	N/A
<b>Additional individual interviews with project</b>	2 project coordinators	2

<b>leaders' organisations</b>	<b>youth</b>		
<b>Interviews with individual participants (teacher/student/youth (worker))</b>		6 interviews conducted for SE, 6 conducted for VET, 6 conducted for HE, 4 conducted for AE and 5 conducted for Youth	27
<b>Interviews with non-participating education institutions</b>	<b>non-education</b>	9 interviews conducted for SE, 6 conducted for VET, 4 conducted for HE, 4 conducted for AE; however, some did have (pending) applications for projects or accreditation	23
<b>Interviews with non-participating organisations</b>	<b>non-youth</b>	4 interviews conducted	4
<b>Validation workshop with stakeholders and project coordinators</b>		A validation workshop conducted (Erasmus+ E&T with 11 participants, Erasmus Youth with 6 participants)	N/A

## Annex B – List of interviewees and participants of focus groups

The tables below present the type and number of sector organisations, beneficiary organisations, non-participating organisations, and individual participants that have been interviewed. Please note that the sector organisations shown in table B.1. and a select number of beneficiary organisations have also participated in the focus groups and validation workshops.

Table B.1 Overview of participating sector organisations and representative organisations

Organisations	
Dutch Association of Teachers of Mathematics	PO Council
ESN Netherlands	Professional association for child and youth workers (BVJong)
Interurban Student Consultation (ISO)	The Association of Universities of Applied Sciences (VH)
Foundation Learn for Life	The Dutch Association of Social Studies Teachers (NLVM)
Living Languages (section English)	The Dutch National Youth Council (NJR)
Ministry of Education, Culture and Science	Universities of the Netherlands
Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport	VET-Council
Netherlands House for Education and Research (NETH-ER)	VO-Council
Netherlands Council for Training and Education (NRTO)	Youth Organisation for Vocational Education (JOB MBO)
Netherlands Worldwide Students (NWS)	Youth Spot

Table B.2 Overview of beneficiary organisations of sectoral focus group

Sector	Number of organisations
SE	6
VET	8
HE	9
AE	6
Youth	7

Table B.3 Overview of interviewed non-participating organisations

Sector	Number of organisations
SE	9
VET	4
HE	4
AE	4
Youth	4

Table B.4 Overview of interviewed individual participants

Sector	Number of participants
SE	6
VET	6
HE	6
AE	4
Youth	5



## Annex C – Overview table of evaluation questions and answers in the report

The table below presents the overview of the evaluation questions, including where the answers to the questions can be found in the report. Not all questions have been answered completely in this report. In these cases, an explanation on why this has not been covered in the report is provided.

Table C.1 Overview of evaluation questions

Evaluation question	Location in the report	Reason for not answering
<b>Effectiveness</b>		
<b>1.To what extent have the various programme fields delivered the expected outputs, results and impacts? What negative and positive factors seem to be influencing outputs, results and impacts? Do you consider that certain actions are more effective than others? Are there differences across fields? What are the determining factors for making these actions of the programme more effective?</b>	Conclusion 2: Project objectives are generally achieved, and KA2 outputs are often integrated into regular policies and practices. This integration is driven by several factors, including the quality of the outputs, internal factors, time and capacity, external recognition, practical applicability, and support from the NA. However, additional resources are required by the programme to facilitate the mainstreaming of project results beyond the project's lifespan.	
<b>2.What are the results and long-term impact of Erasmus+ 2014-2020 in your country? We are interested in the impact of all actions/elements of Erasmus+ 2014-2020, and with special attention to those actions/elements that are continued in Erasmus+ 2021-2027. We are also interested in the impact of actions/elements that have been discontinued to the extent that it might help design the future programme. What is your assessment of the quality of applications received in your country, and what measures</b>	Conclusion 1: The organisational integration of internationalisation has improved with the support of Erasmus+, particularly influenced by Erasmus+ accreditation. However, smaller beneficiary organisations still face specific challenges, often relying too heavily on a few active individuals to sustain internationalisation within the organisation.  Conclusion 3: Erasmus+ strengthened the competences of staff, learners, and youth. The impact depends on factors such as the duration and purpose of the mobility, the quality of preparation and supervision for students, and the level of management support for staff. Additionally, the	

<p><b>could be taken to improve the quality of applications and awarded projects in your country taking?</b></p>	<p>recognition, reward, and quality of cooperation partners play significant roles.</p> <p>Conclusion 6: The quality of applications across sectors tends to be lower in the initial years of programming. This is attributed to the introduction of new elements into the programme and delays in the publication of Calls and formats. However, improvements were observed as the programme progressed, owing to increased familiarity with the requirements. Projects that received advice and guidance from NA advisors generally achieved better scores in the assessment. It takes time for new innovative actions, such as Small-Scale Partnerships and KA1 mobility for adult learners, to be fully embraced by the sectors, necessitating specific guidance from the NA in the early years.</p>	
<p><b>3. Please identify, describe and quantify (if possible) the spill-over effects between various actions (clusters of actions) of Erasmus+ 2021-2027 in your country, as described in the intervention logic.</b></p>	<p>Conclusion 9: Examples of synergies between actions have been identified and new actions are welcomed. There is greater potential for creating synergies between decentralised and centralised actions, beginning with the sharing of information between EACEA and the NAs and NAUs regarding Dutch partners participating in centralised actions or acting as partners in decentralised actions managed by an NA in another country.</p>	
<p><b>4.To what extent has Erasmus+ 2021-27 a transformative effect in your country on systems, values and norms, in particular with respect to the four horizontal priorities of the programme?</b></p>	<p>Conclusion 4: There is room for improvement in the impact of KA2 projects beyond beneficiary organisations, particularly within the Education and Training (E&amp;T) sectors. Beneficiaries often report a lack of resources to conduct extensive promotional and networking activities and express a desire to share more knowledge between projects. Experience from NA Youth suggests that the TCA budget has significant potential to address this need. Additionally, there is untapped potential in utilizing sector organisations, professional associations, and platforms to further disseminate developed outputs and promote the program within the sector.</p>	

<p><b>5. What are the differences in impact of Erasmus+ 2021-2027 actions in your country on hard-to-reach groups, people with fewer opportunities or specific disadvantaged groups of the population who traditionally do not engage in transnational or international activities as compared to other groups that benefit from the programme? We are interested in the evaluation of the first effects of the Framework of Inclusion Measures and of the Inclusion and Diversity Strategy on promoting accessibility to funding for a wider range of organisations, and to better reach out to more participants with fewer opportunities.</b></p>	<p>Conclusion 7: Erasmus+ has successfully engaged a wide range of beneficiaries across all sectors, but there is still room for improvement. Numerous obstacles remain for participation, especially for newcomers. While the Inclusion and Diversity Strategy represents a significant step forward, it is too early to evaluate its effects. The administrative requirements associated with top-ups are considered complex, yet the instrument is valued, demonstrating potential for mainstreaming across other sectors</p>	
<p><b>6. To what extent do the actions/activities/projects supported by Erasmus+ 2021-2027 contribute to mainstreaming climate and environment actions and to achieving the climate and environment objectives, including those intended to reduce the environmental impact of the programme, in your country?</b></p>	<p>Conclusion 8: A significant and increasing portion of the committed budget is allocated to the four horizontal priorities of the programme and related programme targets are (over) achieved. However, clear benchmarks and targets are currently lacking for all horizontal priorities and Key Actions (KAs) to effectively monitor progress. While beneficiaries generally appreciate and support the horizontal priorities, they also caution against prioritising them at the expense of programmes central objectives. Additionally, they express concerns about the growing administrative burden associated with accommodating an increasing number of priorities. Beneficiaries suggest that the programme and NAs could provide clearer expectations regarding how the horizontal priorities should be addressed in projects.</p> <p>Conclusion 24: There is an increasing focus on projects related to the topics of 'environment and climate change.' However, green travel remains uncommon among participants in the programme and requires</p>	

	<p>greater attention, including increased financial compensation and the establishment of green travel as the standard practice.</p>	
<p><b>7.To what extent have the forms of cooperation and the types of actions under Erasmus+ 2021-2027 and Erasmus+ 2014-2020 influenced policy developments in the fields of education and training, youth and sport in your country? Which actions of the programmes are the most effective considering the needs of your country? Are there marked differences between the different fields?</b></p>	<p>Conclusion 4: There is room for improvement in the impact of KA2 projects beyond beneficiary organisations, particularly within the Education and Training (E&amp;T) sectors. Beneficiaries often report a lack of resources to conduct extensive promotional and networking activities and express a desire to share more knowledge between projects. Experience from NA Youth suggests that the TCA budget has significant potential to address this need. Additionally, there is untapped potential in utilizing sector organisations, professional associations, and platforms to further disseminate developed outputs and promote the program within the sector.</p>	
<p><b>8.What specific approaches (such as co-financing, promotion or others) have you taken in order to try to enhance the effects of Erasmus+ 2021-2027 and Erasmus+ 2014-2020 in your country? To what extent have these approaches been effective? Can any points for improvement be identified?</b></p>	<p>Conclusion 5: Having a dedicated impact strategy by the NAs helps strengthen project designs. However, beneficiaries still encounter challenges in operationalising impact within their project applications and thus require ongoing support of the NA to enhance their impact.</p>	
<p><b>9. To what extent are the results of Erasmus+ 2021-2027 and Erasmus+ 2014-2020 adequately being disseminated and exploited in your country? Where can you see the possibilities for improvements?</b></p>	<p>Conclusion 4: There is room for improvement in the impact of KA2 projects beyond beneficiary organisations, particularly within the Education and Training (E&amp;T) sectors. Beneficiaries often report a lack of resources to conduct extensive promotional and networking activities and express a desire to share more knowledge between projects. Experience from NA Youth suggests that the TCA budget has significant potential to address this need. Additionally, there is untapped potential in utilizing sector organisations, professional associations, and platforms to further disseminate developed outputs and promote the program within the sector.</p>	

	<p>Conclusion 5: Having a dedicated impact strategy by the NAs helps strengthen project designs. However, beneficiaries still encounter challenges in operationalising impact within their project applications and thus require ongoing support of the NA to enhance their impact.</p>	
<p><b>10. To what extent are the effects likely to last in your country after the intervention ends, both cumulatively and the level of each implemented grant?</b></p>	<p>Conclusion 1: The organisational integration of internationalisation has improved with the support of Erasmus+, particularly influenced by Erasmus+ accreditation. However, smaller beneficiary organisations still face specific challenges, often relying too heavily on a few active individuals to sustain internationalisation within the organisation.</p> <p>Conclusion 2: Project objectives are generally achieved, and KA2 outputs are often integrated into regular policies and practices. This integration is driven by several factors, including the quality of the outputs, internal factors, time and capacity, external recognition, practical applicability, and support from the NA. However, additional resources are required by the programme to facilitate the mainstreaming of project results beyond the project's lifespan.</p>	
<p><b>11. What if the Erasmus+ programme had not existed? Would the relevant sectors (higher education, school education, adult education, vocational education and training, youth and sport) in your country be supported in the same way and to a comparable extent?</b></p>	<p>Conclusion 27: Erasmus+ has a clear added value for beneficiary organisations. Stakeholders therefore believe it is important for Erasmus+ to continue as it provides them with sustainable opportunities for internationalisation and innovation,</p>	
<p><b>12. How did the Covid-19 pandemic impact the implementation of the two generations of the programme in your country, and what was the effect of the measures taken to react to the consequences of the pandemic?</b></p>	<p>Conclusion 11: The commitment of the Erasmus+ budget for decentralised actions is generally satisfactory across most sectors and actions in both the previous and current programme, with a slight decrease due to Covid-19. Generally, the demand for KA1 mobility exceeds the available budget, particularly at the beginning of the</p>	

	<p>programme cycle when the budget is lower, followed by a steep increase, reflecting the overall Multiannual Financial Framework of the European Union.</p> <p>Conclusion 13: In all sectors, budget realization figures for KA1 and KA2 in the previous programme were significantly negatively affected by Covid-19, as were the number of participants. However, figures indicate a positive recovery in the aftermath of Covid-19 for all sectors, with increasing participant numbers and positive target achievements. The NA E&amp;T played an important role in achieving a high realisation rate by introducing a more intensive monitoring scheme.</p>	
<p><b>13.What was the effect in your country of the measures taken in the frame of the programme implementation to provide a reaction to the consequences of the Russian invasion of Ukraine?</b></p>	<p>Conclusion 11: The commitment of the Erasmus+ budget for decentralised actions is generally satisfactory across most sectors and actions in both the previous and current programme, with a slight decrease due to Covid-19. Generally, the demand for KA1 mobility exceeds the available budget, particularly at the beginning of the programme cycle when the budget is lower, followed by a steep increase, reflecting the overall Multiannual Financial Framework of the European Union.</p>	<p><b>Very limited (anecdotal) data available as stakeholders and programme beneficiaries rarely mentioned effects and measures.</b></p>
<p><b>Efficiency</b></p>		
<p><b>1.What is the cost-effectiveness of various actions (clusters of actions) of Erasmus+ 2021-2027 and Erasmus+ 2014-2020 in your country?</b></p>	<p>Conclusion 10: Beneficiaries indicate that the benefits of Erasmus+ support outweigh the administrative costs, although not all staff costs are covered by the budget. Costs weigh relatively heavier in the SE, AE, and Youth sectors compared to other sectors. The lack of funding for hosting organisations limits the ability to find good partners for KA1 mobility, and the distance calculator is unfavourable for participants from remote areas.</p>	<p><b>It was not feasible to implement a full cost-effectiveness analysis comparing effects with actual costs. Therefore, project beneficiaries were asked whether the benefits of Erasmus+ support outweigh the costs made.</b></p>

<p><b>2.To what extent, compared to the previous programme, is the size of budget appropriate and proportionate to what Erasmus+ 2021-2027 is set out to achieve? To what extent is the distribution of funds across the programme fields and key actions appropriate in relation to their level of effectiveness and utility?</b></p>	<p>Conclusion 11: The commitment of the Erasmus+ budget for decentralised actions is generally satisfactory across most sectors and actions in both the previous and current programme, with a slight decrease due to Covid-19. Generally, the demand for KA1 mobility exceeds the available budget, particularly at the beginning of the programme cycle when the budget is lower, followed by a steep increase, reflecting the overall Multiannual Financial Framework of the European Union.</p> <p>Conclusion 13: In all sectors, budget realization figures for KA1 and KA2 in the previous programme were significantly negatively affected by Covid-19, as were the number of participants. However, figures indicate a positive recovery in the aftermath of Covid-19 for all sectors, with increasing participant numbers and positive target achievements. The NA E&amp;T played an important role in achieving a high realisation rate by introducing a more intensive monitoring scheme.</p>	
<p><b>3.How efficient is the cooperation between the different actors involved in the implementation and supervision of the programme and to what extent does the EC fulfil its guiding role in the process? How has this changed between the two programming periods? What are the reasons for potential changes? What are the areas for possible improvement in the implementation of Erasmus 2021-2027 or a successor programme?</b></p>	<p>Conclusion 14: Cooperation between programme stakeholders is efficient, but there is scope for strengthening the dialogue between policymakers, education sectors and beneficiaries, especially in the sector where internationalisation is not high on the agenda. This helps assuring that policy informs programme implementation, and, vice versa, that programme outputs inform policy making.</p> <p>Conclusion 21: Programme stakeholders emphasize the clear advantages of having separate NAs for Education and Training (E&amp;T) and Youth, as they possess specific sectoral expertise and are closely connected to their respective sectors. However, increasing tasks and roles of the NAs are not reflected yet in their management fee.</p>	
<p><b>4.To what extent are the measures applied by the National Agencies for monitoring and supporting applicants, beneficiaries (including small and newcomer organisations) and participants</b></p>	<p>Conclusion 15: Beneficiaries generally express their satisfaction with the programme and NA support, with a few raising their concerns about the NA support, due to the recent high turnover of staff which affected the institutional memory of the programme. Beneficiaries indicate that clear</p>	

<p><b>effective and proportionate? What are the areas for improvement/simplification, considering the need for a smooth and effective implementation of the programme?</b></p>	<p>information is lacking about changes in the KA1 Calls over the years and express the need for more clarity and uniformity about rules and reporting requirements and justifications of expenses from the start.</p> <p>Conclusion 21: Programme stakeholders emphasize the clear advantages of having separate NAs for Education and Training (E&amp;T) and Youth, as they possess specific sectoral expertise and are closely connected to their respective sectors. However, increasing tasks and roles of the NAs are not reflected yet in their management fee.</p>	
<p><b>5.. To what extent have simplification measures put in place, such as the system of simplified grants and accreditation system, resulted in a reduction of the administrative burden for National Agencies, programme beneficiaries and participants? Are there differences across actions or fields? What elements of the programme could be changed to further reduce the administrative burden and simplify the programme's management and implementation?</b></p>	<p>Conclusion 16: Beneficiaries express significant concerns regarding the EC's supporting IT tools and administrative processes, particularly at the onset of the programme. They criticize the redundant and overlapping questions in application forms and reports, advocating for the streamlining of these reporting formats to enhance accessibility. Rules and regulations are still considered complex by beneficiaries (contracts, learning agreements and supporting documents) especially for smaller projects and organisations as well as for individual participants.</p> <p>Conclusion 17: The simplification measures introduced for 2021-2027 are appreciated, but there remains uncertainty about the accountability and justification for expenses. New actions, such as the Small-Scale Partnerships and accreditation of providers for KA1 mobility, are appreciated for easing access to the programme. Nevertheless, the variety of sub-actions makes the programme relatively complex and difficult for target groups to understand, especially for newcomers and smaller organisations. Programme stakeholders and beneficiaries highlight the importance of maintaining enough opportunities for non-accredited organisations in the programme.</p>	
<p><b>6. To what extent do the indicators identified for the programme in the Regulation correspond to the monitoring purposes at national level? How</b></p>	<p>Conclusion 18: The programme indicators are accurate but predominantly output-oriented. They could be enhanced by incorporating impact indicators that reflect the Theory of Change (ToC)</p>	



<p><b>could the overall management and monitoring system be improved?</b></p>	<p>of the programme. There is room for improvement in utilising programme indicators for policy dialogue and learning purposes, rather than solely for accountability.</p>	
<p><b>7. To what extent are the new management support tools consistent with the Erasmus+ programme needs and architecture? Which additional features would you recommend for future developments?</b></p>	<p>Conclusion 16: Beneficiaries express significant concerns regarding the EC's supporting IT tools and administrative processes, particularly at the onset of the programme. They criticize the redundant and overlapping questions in application forms and reports, advocating for the streamlining of these reporting formats to enhance accessibility. Rules and regulations are still considered complex by beneficiaries (contracts, learning agreements and supporting documents) especially for smaller projects and organisations as well as for individual participants.</p> <p>Conclusion 19: IT support tools fall short as knowledge management tools for NAs for monitoring the performance of the programme, such as synthesizing participant reports, applications, and final reports. The lack of functioning IT tools also leads to extra work for the NA, as they must answer questions from beneficiaries and provide guidance on how to deal with malfunctioning tools.</p>	
<p><b>8.. To what extent have the antifraud measures allowed for the prevention and timely detection of fraud in your country?</b></p>	<p>Conclusion 20: Important steps have been taken to strengthen measures against fraud and misuse, such as setting maximum limits on the number of applications and considering the years of existence. However, the NAs would like to have more flexibility in selecting projects for audits and further guidance by the EC on interpreting exclusion criteria related to 'EU values' and 'dubious actors', but also monitoring actions of invalid organisations in other applications in other countries. There are signs that the use of lump sums has a downside effect on identifying misuse of funding, particularly based on actual receipts.</p>	
<p><b>Relevance</b></p>		
<p><b>1.To what extent do the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 objectives as set up in Article 3.1 and 3.2 of the Erasmus+ regulation, in link with the EU policy</b></p>	<p>Conclusion 22: There is a strong alignment between Erasmus+ and national and sectoral priorities. The horizontal priorities are appreciated, but at the same indicate that these should overshadow the main</p>	

<p><b>agendas in the fields of education and training, youth and sport, continue to address the needs or challenges they are meant to help with? Are these needs or challenges (still) relevant in the context of your country? Have the needs or challenges evolved in such a way that the objectives of Erasmus+ 2021-2027 or its successor programme need to be adjusted?</b></p>	<p>objectives of supporting quality education, youth work and youth participation.</p>	
<p><b>2.To what extent are the needs of different stakeholders and sectors in your country addressed by the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 objectives? How successful is the programme in attracting and reaching target audiences and groups within different fields of the programme's scope? How well is the Erasmus+ programme known to the education and training, youth and sport communities in your country? In case some target groups are not sufficiently reached, what factors are limiting their access and what actions could be taken to remedy this? What are the reasons of limited participation of certain target groups? Are there target groups who chose not to participate or are there always external factors preventing them?</b></p>	<p>Conclusion 7: Erasmus+ has successfully engaged a wide range of beneficiaries across all sectors, but there is still room for improvement. Numerous obstacles remain for participation, especially for newcomers. While the Inclusion and Diversity Strategy represents a significant step forward, it is too early to evaluate its effects. The administrative requirements associated with top-ups are considered complex, yet the instrument is valued, demonstrating potential for mainstreaming across other sectors</p>	
<p><b>3.To what extent is the design of Erasmus+ 2021-2027 oriented and adapted towards the hard-to-reach groups, people with fewer opportunities or specific disadvantaged groups of the population who traditionally do not engage in transnational or international activities as compared to other groups that benefit from the programme? In case some target groups are not sufficiently reached in</b></p>	<p>Conclusion 7: Erasmus+ has successfully engaged a wide range of beneficiaries across all sectors, but there is still room for improvement. Numerous obstacles remain for participation, especially for newcomers. While the Inclusion and Diversity Strategy represents a significant step forward, it is too early to evaluate its effects. The administrative requirements associated with top-ups are considered complex, yet the instrument is valued, demonstrating potential for mainstreaming across other sectors</p>	

<p><b>your country, what factors are limiting their access and what actions could be taken to remedy this?</b></p>		
<p><b>4.To what extent are the needs and challenges linked to Europe's green and digital transitions reflected in the actions/activities of Erasmus+ 2021-2027?</b></p>	<p>Conclusion 23: There is a high interest in digitalisation within KA2 projects, with great potential for virtual and blended learning to strengthen the inclusiveness of the programme. However, the costs associated with organising digital programmes and virtual mobility are not adequately covered by the programme. Furthermore, the potential of eTwinning has not yet been fully exploited, and challenges have been identified regarding the user-friendliness of the tool.</p> <p>Conclusion 24: There is an increasing focus on projects related to the topics of 'environment and climate change.' However, green travel remains uncommon among participants in the programme and requires greater attention, including increased financial compensation and the establishment of green travel as the standard practice.</p>	
<p><b>5.What is the relevance of Erasmus+ 2021-2027 compared to the relevance of Erasmus+ 2014-2020 from the point of view of your country? Has it been improved in the new programme generation?</b></p>	<p>Conclusion 15: Beneficiaries generally express their satisfaction with the programme and NA support, with a few raising their concerns about the NA support, due to the recent high turnover of staff which affected the institutional memory of the programme. Beneficiaries indicate that clear information is lacking about changes in the KA1 Calls over the years and express the need for more clarity and uniformity about rules and reporting requirements and justifications of expenses from the start.</p> <p>Conclusion 22: There is a strong alignment between Erasmus+ and national and sectoral priorities. The horizontal priorities are appreciated, but at the same indicate that these should overshadow the main objectives of supporting quality education, youth work and youth participation.</p>	

<b>Coherence</b>		
<p><b>1.To what extent are the objectives of different programme fields within Erasmus+ 2021-2027 consistent and mutually supportive? What evidence exists of cooperation between the different programme fields, including those managed by different National Agencies, and actions? How well do different actions work together? To what extent there exist inconsistencies, overlaps, or other disadvantageous issues between the programme fields and how are they dealt with?</b></p>	<p>Conclusion 25: The internal coherence of the objectives of Erasmus+ 2021-2027 remains high. The wide variety of mobility formats and actions is appreciated, and the newly introduced actions (Small-Scale Partnerships; KA1 mobility for adult learners) complement the existing offerings. There is still potential to enhance the spill-over effects between various actions. The cross-sectoral dimension of the project has been strengthened over the years, as has the connection with enterprises or other socio-economic players active in the world of work as participating organisations.</p>	
<p><b>2.To what extent is Erasmus+ 2021-2027 coherent with other national or regional programmes, other forms of EU cooperation (bilateral programmes) as well as international programmes with similar objectives available in your country? Can you identify any inconsistencies, overlaps or other disadvantageous issues with other programmes?</b></p>	<p>Conclusion 26: There is evidence of high external coherence and complementarity between the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme and other national, regional, and sectoral programmes. However, not many synergies were identified between Erasmus+ and other national and EU-wide funding programmes, such as the ESF+ and Horizon Europe.</p>	
<p><b>3.To what extent has Erasmus+ 2021-2027 proved to be complementary to other national and international programmes available in your country in the fields of education and training, youth and sport? To what extent is Erasmus+ 2021-2027 building effective synergies or interactions with other programmes at national or regional level and other EU or international programmes with complementary objectives available in your country? What evidence exist of synergies and complementarities between Erasmus+ and other EU, national or regional programmes? Can you</b></p>	<p>Conclusion 26: There is evidence of high external coherence and complementarity between the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme and other national, regional, and sectoral programmes. However, not many synergies were identified between Erasmus+ and other national and EU-wide funding programmes, such as the ESF+ and Horizon Europe.</p>	

<p>identify any inconsistencies, overlaps or other disadvantageous issues with other programmes? Can you compare with the synergies and complementarities developed in the previous Erasmus+ programme 2014-2020?</p>		
<p><b>4.What is the coherence of Erasmus+ 2021-2027 compared to the coherence of Erasmus+ 2014-2020 from the point of view of your country? Has it been improved in the new programme generation?</b></p>	<p>Conclusion 25: The internal coherence of the objectives of Erasmus+ 2021-2027 remains high. The wide variety of mobility formats and actions is appreciated, and the newly introduced actions (Small-Scale Partnerships; KA1 mobility for adult learners) complement the existing offerings. There is still potential to enhance the spill-over effects between various actions. The cross-sectoral dimension of the project has been strengthened over the years, as has the connection with enterprises or other socio-economic players active in the world of work as participating organisations.</p>	
<p><b>EU Added value</b></p>		
<p><b>1.What is the additional value and benefit resulting from EU activities, compared to what could be achieved by similar actions initiated only at regional or national levels in your country? What does Erasmus+ 2021-2027 offer in addition to other education and training support schemes available at regional or national levels in your country? What possibilities do you see to adjust Erasmus+ or its successor programme in order to increase its European added value?</b></p>	<p>Conclusion 27: Erasmus+ has a clear added value for beneficiary organisations. Stakeholders therefore believe it is important for Erasmus+ to continue as it provides them with sustainable opportunities for internationalisation and innovation.</p>	
<p><b>2.To what extent does the Erasmus+ programme contribute to developing knowledge in European integration matters, to raising awareness about the EU common values and to fostering a European sense of belonging in your country?</b></p>	<p>Conclusion 28: The Erasmus+ programme has a large impact on participants for themes related to general intercultural competencies, but less on European way of life Conclusion 29: Erasmus+ contributes to the strengthening of educational cooperation between Member States and third countries.</p>	

<p><b>3.To what extent does Erasmus+ 2021-2027 promote cooperation between Member States and third countries associated to the programme? And between these countries and third countries not associated to the programme?</b></p>	<p>Conclusion 29: Erasmus+ contributes to the strengthening of educational cooperation between Member States and third countries.</p>	
<p><b>4.What is the benefit and added value of Erasmus+ 2021-2027 and Erasmus+ 2014-2020 for individuals or organisations participating to the programme compared to non-participants in your country?</b></p>	<p>Conclusion 27: Erasmus+ has a clear added value for beneficiary organisations. Stakeholders therefore believe it is important for Erasmus+ to continue as it provides them with sustainable opportunities for internationalisation and innovation.</p>	<p><b>Non-participants were only interviewed for exploring reasons for non-participation, but were not used as control group.</b></p>
<p><b>5.To what extent are the results of Erasmus+ 2021-2027 and Erasmus+ 2014-2020 sustainable beyond the projects duration in your country?</b></p>	<p>Conclusion 2: Project objectives are generally achieved, and KA2 outputs are often integrated into regular policies and practices. This integration is driven by several factors, including the quality of the outputs, internal factors, time and capacity, external recognition, practical applicability, and support from the NA. However, additional resources are required by the programme to facilitate the mainstreaming of project results beyond the project's lifespan.</p>	
<p><b>6.What would be the most likely consequences in your country if the Erasmus+ programme were possibly to be discontinued?</b></p>	<p>Conclusion 27: Erasmus+ has a clear added value for beneficiary organisations. Stakeholders therefore believe it is important for Erasmus+ to continue as it provides them with sustainable opportunities for internationalisation and innovation.</p> <p>Conclusion 30: The discontinuation of the Erasmus+ programme will result in unequal access to mobility and cooperation abroad</p>	

## Annex D – Bibliography

This annex presents all the impact studies and reports used in the desk research of this study.

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## Annex E – Overview programme indicators (target versus achievement)

The tables below present an overview of the programme indicators from the previous and current programme period of the Erasmus+ programme collected from the Yearly Reports provided by the NAUs.

Table E.1 Number of participants Key Action 1 targets and achieved (2017-2022)

<b>Foster participation in Key Action 1 mobility projects in order to improve the level of key competences and skills of participants</b>										
	Higher Education		School Education		Adult Education		VET		Youth	
<b>Indicator and year</b>	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved
<b>1.3.1.1./E01 Number of participants in awarded mobility projects for Key Action 1: I. Learners</b>										
<b>2022</b>	15000	17170	7800	9380	280	248	5500	5598	9800	10885
<b>2021</b>	15000	8382	6500	1423	100	84	7000	4815	7000	5763
<b>2020</b>	15000	14787	1500	2315	600	50	7500	3484	3000	3188
<b>2019</b>	14000	14325	1200	1783	100	132	6900	7704	2900	3225
<b>2018</b>	12500	13784	1100	1457	80	146	6300	7507	2000	3193
<b>2017</b>	12000	13082	1000	1047	75	95	5750	5575	3500	4196
<b>1.3.1.1. Number of participants in awarded mobility projects for Key Action 1: II. Staff/Youth workers</b>										
<b>2020</b>	1500	1729	1500	2315	600	50	150	605	1200	1179
<b>2019</b>	1300	1553	1200	1738	100	132	825	1859	1000	1169
<b>2018</b>	1300	1201	1100	1457	80	146	800	1373	900	1014
<b>2017</b>	1200	1262	1000	1047	75	95	800	1470	1000	870
<b>1.3.1.2. % of NA budget take-up (commitment rate) info for Key Action 1 mobility projects in:</b>										

<b>2022</b>	100	97.8	100	89.8	100	91.2	100	96.6	100	106
<b>2021</b>	100	83.92	100	33.29	100	79.34	100	82.04	100	98
<b>2020</b>	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	104
<b>2019</b>	100	101	100	99	100	102	100	100	100	94
<b>2018</b>	100	101	100	99	98	13	100	100	100	100
<b>2017</b>	100	100	100	100	98	33.48	100	92.67	100	104
<b>2020</b>	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	104
<b>E02 Number of participants in virtual learning activities under key action 1</b>										
<b>2022</b>	1680	0	780	1162	14	33	502	485	N/A	N/A
<b>E02/ E03 Number of organisations and institutions taking part in the Programme under Key Action 1</b>										
<b>2022</b>	53	55	240	185	15	14	59	56	870	786
<b>2021</b>	55	43	500	62	15	6	62	46	900	414

Source: Yearly Reports NA E&T 2017-2022

Table E.2 Participation in KA1 and KA2 (2021-2022)

	Higher Education		School Education		Adult Education		VET		Youth	
Indicator and year	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved
<b>E04/ E05 Number of organisations and institutions taking part in the Programme under Key Action 2 (both coordinators and partners)</b>										
<b>2022</b>	40	71	40	39	36	29	22	26	110	71
<b>2021</b>	40	45	25	50	35	50	30	37	40	47

<b>E06 Number of newcomer organisations and institutions taking part in the Programme under Key Actions 1 and 2</b>										
<b>2022</b>	4	9	55	118	11	26	12	15	N/A	N/A
<b>E07 Share (%) of projects addressing climate objectives under Key Action 2</b>										
<b>2022</b>	10	17	10	50	5	20	10	44	6	2

Source: Yearly Reports NA E&T 2021-2022

Table E.3 Recognition of learning outcomes (2014-2020)

<b>Raise the level of recognition of learning outcomes in mobility activities</b>		
<b>1.3.2.1. % share of HE students from Programme Countries who have received full recognition of their learning outcomes acquired through their participation in the programme, using ECTS for study periods</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Achieved</b>
<b>2020</b>	100	93
<b>2019</b>	99	92
<b>2018</b>	99	91
<b>2017</b>	99	90
<b>1.3.2.2. % share of HE students from Programme Countries who have received full recognition of their learning outcomes acquired through participation in the programme in a Partner Country, using ECTS for study periods</b>		
<b>2020</b>	100	100
<b>2019</b>	99	89
<b>2018</b>	75	78
<b>2017</b>	75	88

<b>1.3.2.3. % share of HE students from Partner Countries (out of the total number of students in your Programme Country) who have received full recognition of their learning outcomes acquired through their participation in the programme, after studying in your Programme Country for study periods</b>		
<b>2020</b>	95	80
<b>2019</b>	90	67
<b>2018</b>	75	59
<b>2017</b>	75	62
<b>1.3.2.4. % share of VET learners from Programme Countries who have received a certificate, diploma or other type of recognition/validation of their learning outcomes acquired through their participation in the programme, using tools such as Europass, ECVET, etc.</b>		
<b>2020</b>	99	91.4
<b>2019</b>	95	100
<b>2018</b>	95	95
<b>2017</b>	90	92
<b>1.3.2.5. % share of volunteers in the youth field from Programme Countries who have received a validation for the learning outcomes acquired through participating in the programme, using Youthpass</b>		
<b>2020</b>	-	Unknown percentage; 286 volunteers
<b>2019</b>	-	85
<b>2018</b>	80	90
<b>2017</b>	60	60

<b>I.3.2.6. % share of volunteers in projects involving Partner Countries in the field of youth who have received Youthpass validation of their learning outcomes</b>		
<b>2020</b>	-	7
<b>2019</b>	-	53
<b>2018</b>	45	50
<b>2017</b>	60	55

Source: Yearly Reports NA E&T 2017-2020

Table E.4 Cross-sectoral dimension in Strategic Partnerships (2017-2020)

<b>Foster the cross-sectoral dimension of Strategic partnerships</b>										
<b>Indicator and year</b>	Higher Education		School Education		Adult Education		VET		Youth	
	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved
<b>I.3.3.1. % share of cross-sectoral projects awarded through in the relevant sectors</b>										
<b>2020</b>	10	0	10	27	10	0	15	18	75	100
<b>2019</b>	10	0	10	0	10	10	15	13	50	67
<b>2018</b>	40	80	35	78	40	40	45	45	40	80
<b>2017</b>	30	75	30	35	30	80	30	92	10	88

Source: Yearly Reports NA E&T 2017-2020

Table E.5 Synergies and cooperation in Strategic Partnerships (2017-2020)

<b>Through Strategic Partnerships, foster synergies and cooperation between the fields of education, training and youth and the world of work</b>										
<b>Indicator and year</b>	Higher Education		School Education		Adult Education		VET		Youth	

	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved
<b>I.3.4.1. % share of awarded projects in Strategic Partnerships involving enterprises or other socio-economic players active in the world of work as participating organisations:</b>										
<b>2020</b>	40	60	20	50	20	65	50	46	40	60
<b>2019</b>	40	75	20	36	15	15	45	54	30	-
<b>2018</b>	35	50	15	15	15	15	40	80	20	60
<b>2017</b>	30	60	15	35	15	100	30	100	10	29

Source: Yearly Reports NA E&T 2017-2020

Table E.6 Number of participants with Partner Countries (2017-2020)

<b>Enhance the international dimension of education, training and youth activities and the role of youth workers and organisations as support structures for young people by encouraging mobility projects with Partner Countries</b>		
<b>Indicator and year</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Achieved</b>
<b>I.3.5.1. Number of participants in awarded mobility projects in Key Action 1: a. Higher education with Partner Countries</b>		
<b>2020</b>	1250	1855
<b>2019</b>	1000	1547
<b>2018</b>	850	866
<b>2017</b>	850	822
<b>I.3.5.1. Number of participants in awarded mobility projects in Key Action 1: b. Youth with Neighbouring Partner Countries</b>		
<b>2020</b>	1000	1046
<b>2019</b>	1200	998
<b>2018</b>	1200	828
<b>2017</b>	220	1101

Source: Yearly Reports NA E&T 2017-2020

Table E.7 Commitment rate for KA1 with partner Countries in HE (2017-2020)

<b>Enhance the international dimension of education, training and youth activities and the role of youth workers and organisations as support structures for young people by encouraging mobility projects with Partner Countries</b>										
<b>Indicator and year</b>	Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA2)		European Neighborhood Instrument (ENI)		Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI)		Partnership Instrument (PI)		European Development Fund (EDF)	
	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved
<b>I.3.5.2. % of NA budget take-up (commitment rate) info for Key Action 1 mobility projects with Partner Countries in I. Higher education</b>										
<b>2020</b>	90	100	95	100	95	100	100	100	100	100
<b>2019</b>	60	100	90	100	90	100	100	100	100	100
<b>2018</b>	60	40	70	100	85	94	100	100	100	100
<b>2017</b>	100	87	70	63	85	89	100	100	95	100

Source: Yearly Reports NA E&T 2017-2020

Table E.8 Share of participants with fewer opportunities in KA1 (2017-2022)

<b>Foster participation of people with special needs or fewer opportunities in the programme</b>										
<b>I.3.6.1. / E03/ E04 Share (%) of participants with fewer opportunities taking part in activities under Key Action 1</b>										
<b>Year</b>	Higher Education		School Education		Adult Education		VET		Youth	
	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved	Target	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved	Target

<b>2022</b>	10	6	5	4.35	25	28.23	25	15	47	57
<b>2021</b>	1.5	0	1	7	1	2	2	30	40	40
<b>2020</b>	1.5	0	2	0.14	5	2	1.5	0	2	0.14
<b>2019</b>	0.5	0.04	2	3.7	5	2.1	0.5	0.04	2	3.7
<b>2018</b>	0.5	0.05	1.5	1.5	5	3	0.5	0.05	1.5	1.5
<b>2017</b>	0.5	0.2	1	1	8	3	0.5	0.2	1	1

Source: Yearly Reports NA E&T 2017-2022

Table E.8. Inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities (2017-2020)

<b>Year</b>	<b>2017</b>		<b>2018</b>		<b>2019</b>		<b>2020</b>	
<b>Indicator</b>	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved	Target	Target	Achieved	Target
<b>1.3.6.2. % share of young people with fewer opportunities participating in KA1</b>	850	822	850	866	1000	1547	1250	1855
<b>1.3.6.2. % share of young people with fewer opportunities participating in KA3</b>	20	39	50	38	50	39	50	16
<b>1.3.6.3. % share of awarded projects with topics related to</b>	30	31	40	50	50	58	50	52



<b>inclusion of people with fewer opportunities</b>									
<b>1.3.6.3. % share of awarded projects with topics related to inclusion of people with fewer opportunities</b>	25	29	30	50	30	33	30	13	
<b>1.3.6.3. % share of awarded projects with topics related to inclusion of people with fewer opportunities</b>	30	33	30	50	40	67	40	20	

Source: Yearly Reports NA E&T 2017-2020

Table E.9 Foster democratic and civic participation in KA3 (2017-2020)

<b>Foster active participation of young people in democratic life of their communities, through participation in Key Action 3 meetings between young people and decision-makers</b>		
<b>Indicator and year</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Achieved</b>
<b>3.7.1. Number of young people directly participating in KA3</b>		
<b>2020</b>	1400	2325

<b>2019</b>	1250	228
<b>2018</b>	1200	817
<b>2017</b>	900	1201

Source: Yearly Reports NA E&T 2017-2020

Table E.10 Programme management (2017-2020)

<b>Efficient, effective and compliant programme management</b>								
<b>Year</b>	<b>2017</b>		<b>2018</b>		<b>2019</b>		<b>2020</b>	
<b>Indicator</b>	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved
<b>I.3.8.1. % share of applications reaching the minimum quality threshold for selection KA1 (Excluding HE)</b>	80	67	80	84	82	80	90	-
<b>I.3.8.2 % share of applications for KA2 reaching the minimum quality threshold for selection</b>	70	67	70	75	70	67	80	-
<b>I.3.8.3. % share of applications</b>	50	43	50	43	50	60	60	61

for KA3 reaching the minimum quality threshold for selection								
1.3.8.4. % share of applications acceptance without grant reduction based on quality grounds	75	89	75	100	80	100	100	-
1.3.8.5. % share of timely received final beneficiary reports	75	95	95	75	80	100	100	-
1.3.8.6. % share of final beneficiary reports with financial adjustments below 2%	85	89	85	96	95	96	80	-

Source: Yearly Reports NA E&T 2017-2020

Table E.11 Additional NA E&T objectives (2017-2020)

Additional NA operational objectives								
Year	2017		2018		2019		2020	
Indicator	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved
<b>I.3.9.a % of KA1 beneficiaries with a VET Mobility Charter</b>	60	61	N/A	N/A	75	71	74	74
<b>I.3.9.b % share of applications in KA1 School Education involving primary schools</b>	45	33/55 <sup>21</sup>	N/A	N/A	48	61	50	71
<b>I.3.9.b % share of applications in KA2 School Education involving primary schools</b>	10	10	N/A	N/A	11	SEP 13% and SP 0%	12	16

Source: Yearly Reports NA E&T 2017-2020

<sup>21</sup> Explanation Out of 92 applications, 38 (41%) were submitted by primary education. However, because of the numerous consortium applications the actual number of primary schools in applications (70 out of 126 = 55%) is higher than the actual number of secondary schools (56 out of 126 = 45%). (Source: Yearly Report 2017)

Table E.12 Budget Realisation (2014-2019)

Budget realisation	2014	2015	2016 <sup>22</sup>	2017 <sup>23</sup>	2018 <sup>24</sup>	2019 <sup>25</sup>
<b>School education</b>	43.14%	94.81%	92.43%	88.52%	87.70%	Unknown
<b>Vocational education</b>	97.53%	N/A	98.93%	97.68%	94.30%	Unknown
<b>Higher Education</b>	96.49%	N/A	98.93%	96.44%	88.90%	Unknown
<b>Adult Education</b>	73.08%	N/A	95.39%	85.50%	90.40%	Unknown
<b>Total KA1</b>	97.69%	>90% <sup>26</sup>	95.61%	96.78%	N/A	N/A
<b>Total KA2</b>	67.67%	N/A	91.76%	91.25%	N/A	N/A
<b>Total</b>	N/A	N/A	96.45%	95.42%	90.30%	54.30%

Source: Yearly Reports NA E&T 2017-2020

<sup>22</sup> Reasons for the low realisation rates are cancelled courses, lack of participants, and staff changes or participants' private circumstances. The NA is aware of these issues and informs potential applicants to plan and budget realistically. (Source: Yearly Report 2020)

<sup>23</sup> The intensive monitoring is currently on hold due to the Covid-19 pandemic, but the NA will continue along this line. (Source: Yearly Report 2021)

<sup>24</sup> Projects with staff and/or student/pupil/learner mobility were affected by the start of the Covid-19 pandemic at the end of their project period, cancelling their activities due to travel bans and lockdowns as of March 2020. (Source: Yearly Report 2022)

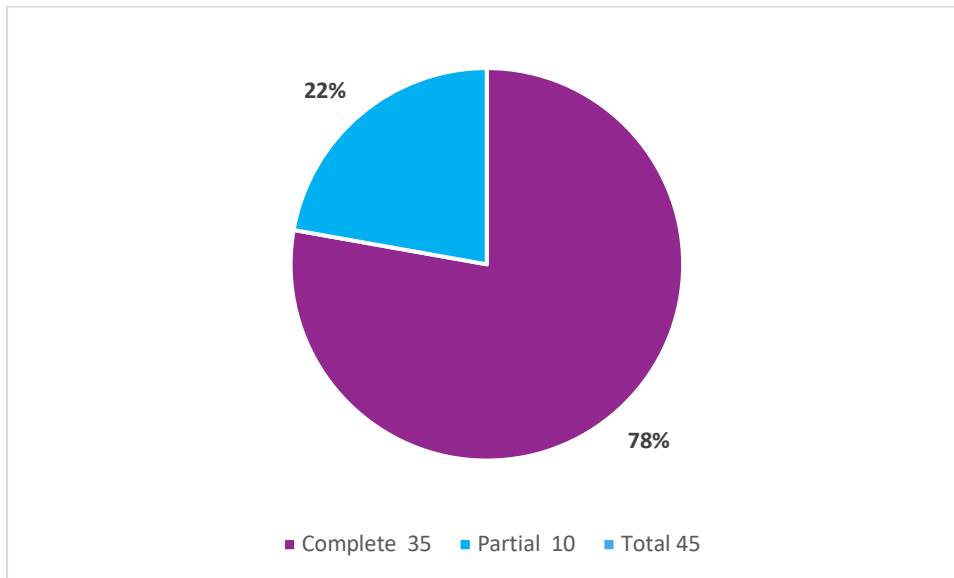
<sup>25</sup> Most applicants have extended their project duration due to Covid-19. Also, many activities were changed into virtual activities, resulting in a lower budget uptake. (Source: Yearly Report 2022)

<sup>26</sup> For KA1, all budget realisation levels are above 90%, except for KA101 (81.8%) and KA107 (70.2%). Source Yearly Report 2018.

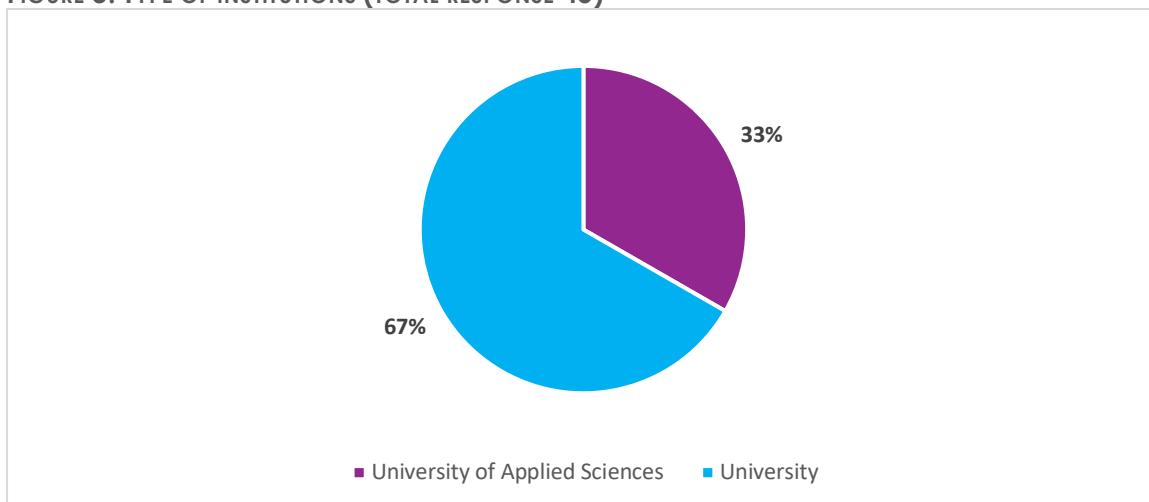
## Annex F – Online survey amongst project coordinators in the higher education sector

The following Annex presents the results of the online survey among higher education institutions carried out in the context of this evaluation. Please note that descriptive answers from respondents are not included.

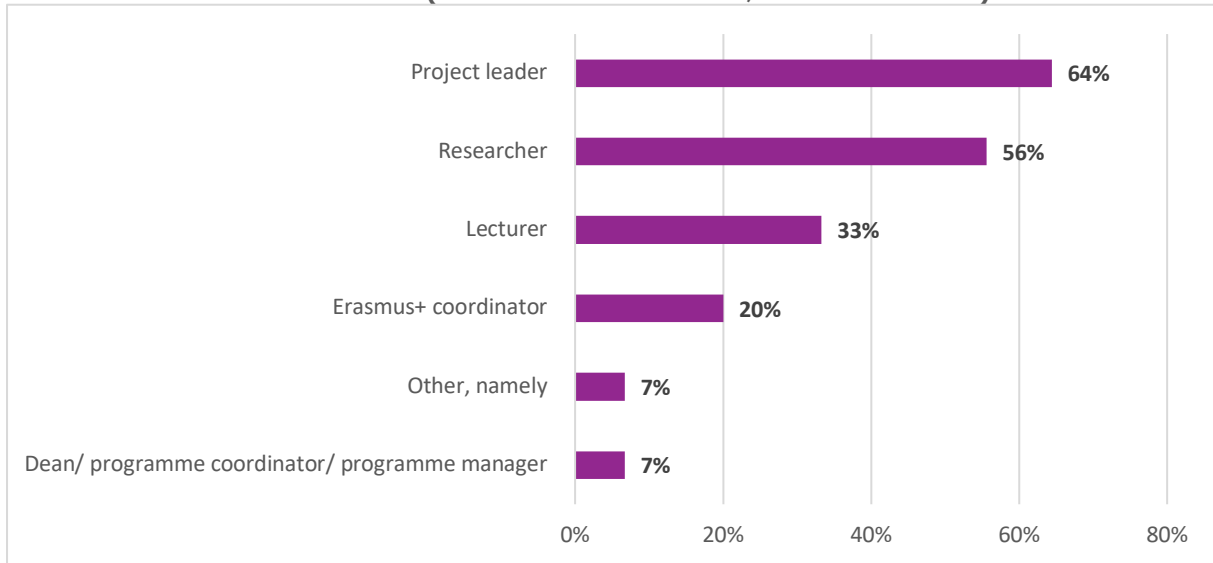
**FIGURE 2. RESPONSE STATISTICS (TOTAL RESPONSE 45)**



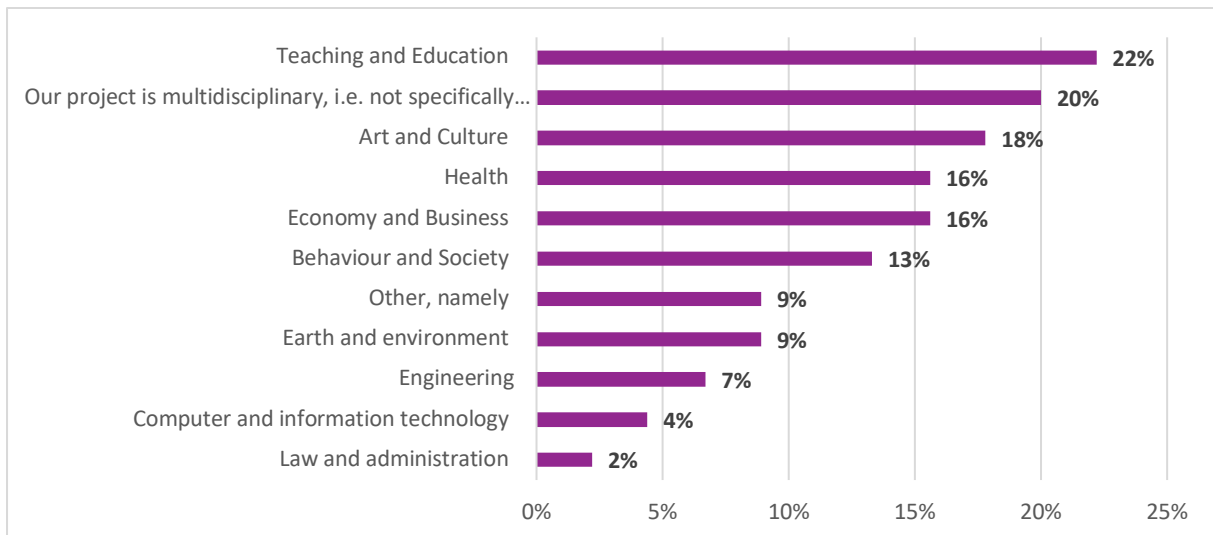
**FIGURE 3. TYPE OF INSTITUTIONS (TOTAL RESPONSE 45)**



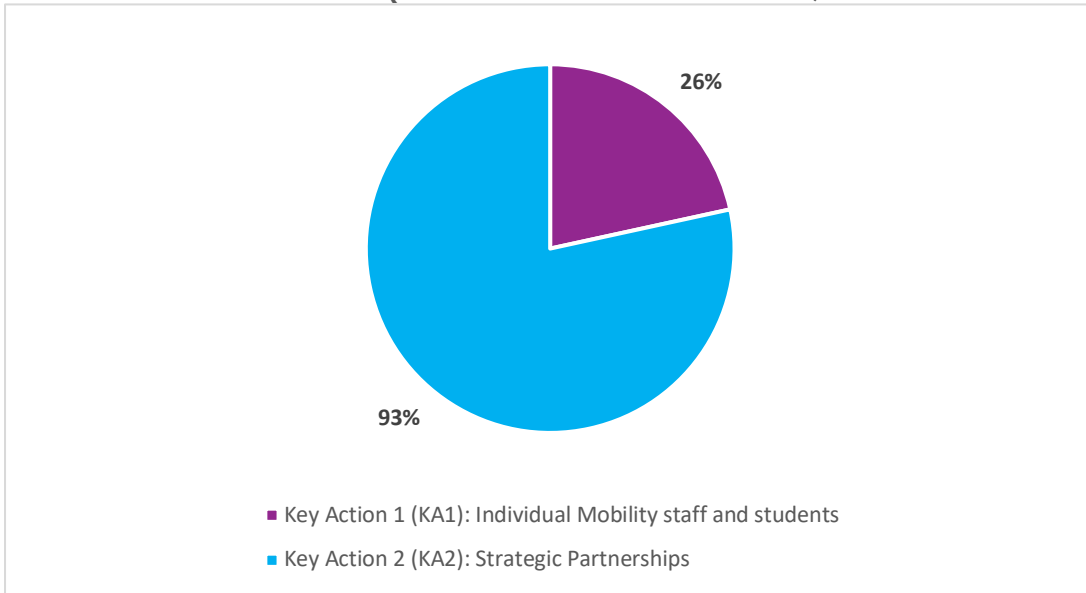
**FIGURE 4. FUNCTION OF RESPONDENT (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE, TOTAL RESPONSE 45)**



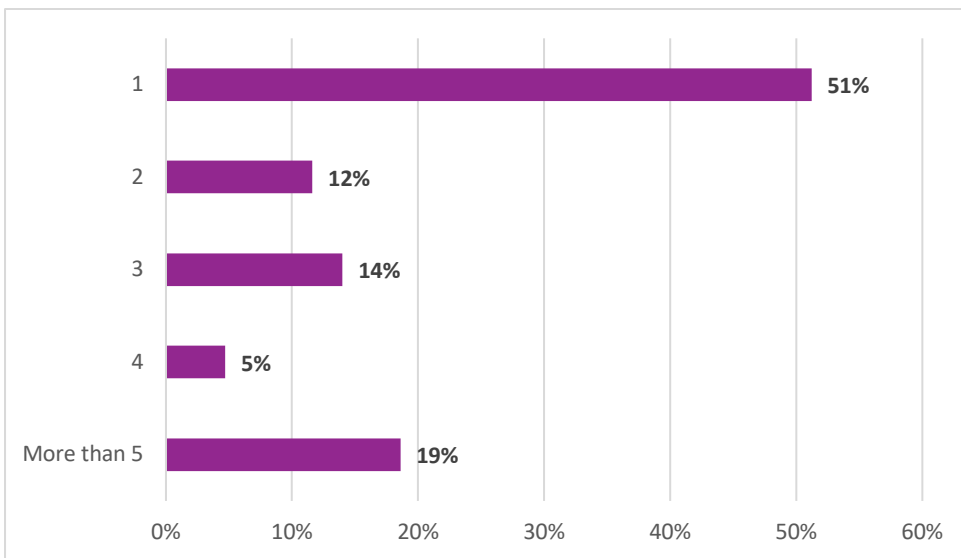
**FIGURE 5. THEME AND FOCUS OF THE (ALMOST) FINISHED ERASMUS+ PROJECT (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE, TOTAL RESPONSE 45)**



**FIGURE 6. PARTICIPATION IN KEY ACTION AS PARTNER OR COORDINATOR IN THE PREVIOUS OR CURRENT ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE, TOTAL RESPONSE 45)**

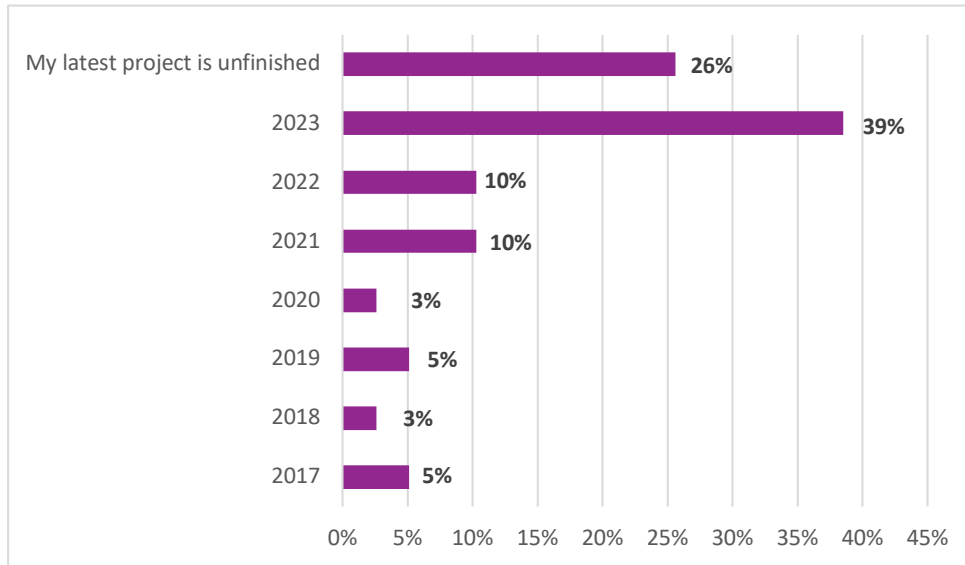


**FIGURE 7. EXPERIENCE WITH ONE OR MORE ERASMUS+ PROJECTS (KA1 AND KA2) (TOTAL RESPONSE 43)**

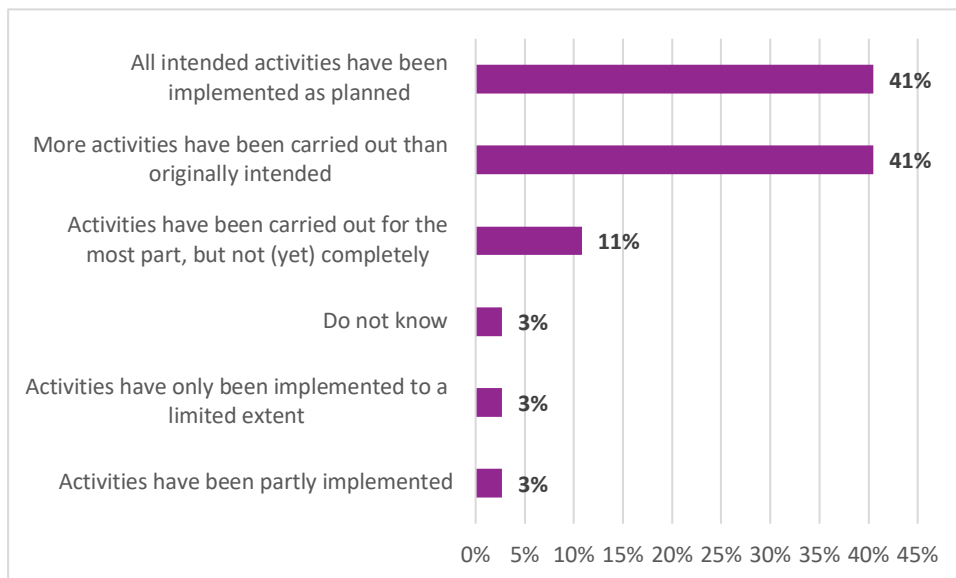




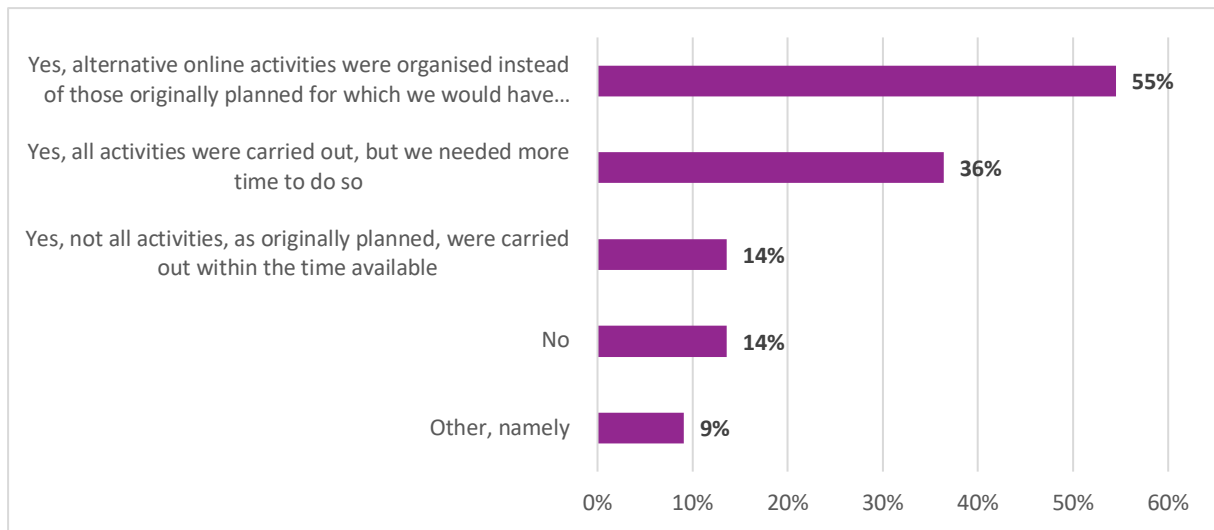
**FIGURE 8. YEAR OF (ALMOST) FINISHING ERASMUS+ KA2 PROJECT (TOTAL RESPONSE 39)**



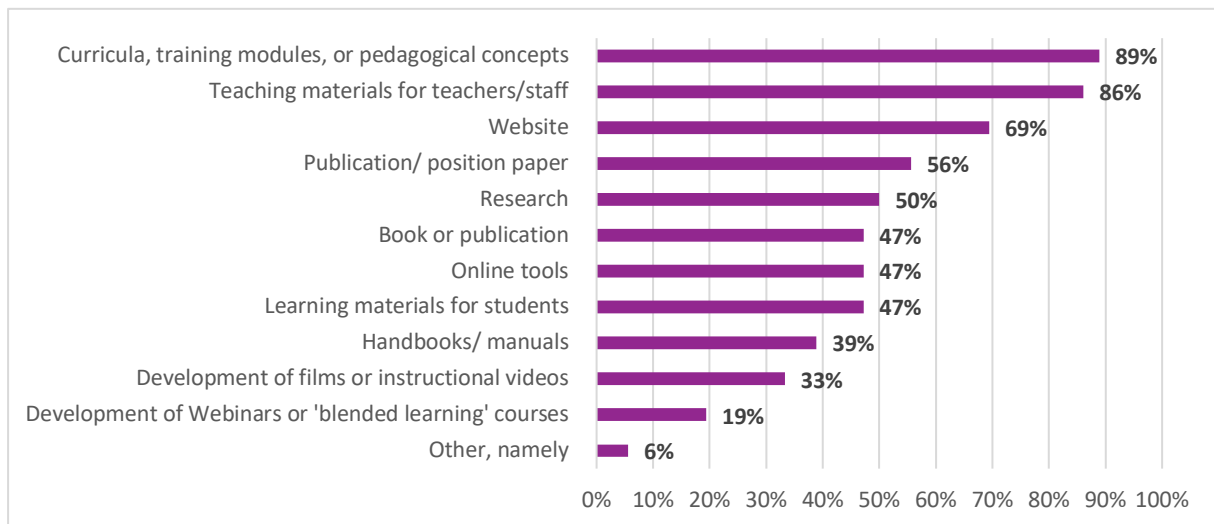
**FIGURE 9. RESULTS OF ACTIVITIES OF THE (ALMOST) FINISHED ERASMUS+ KA2 PROJECT (TOTAL RESPONSE 37)**



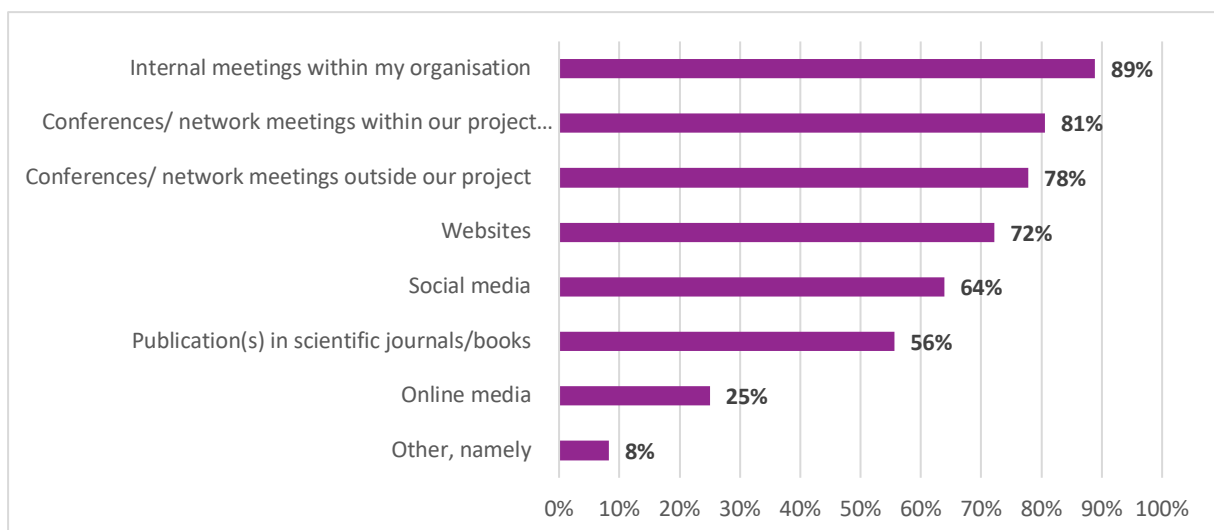
**FIGURE 10. EFFECT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON ACTIVITIES (TOTAL RESPONSE 28)**



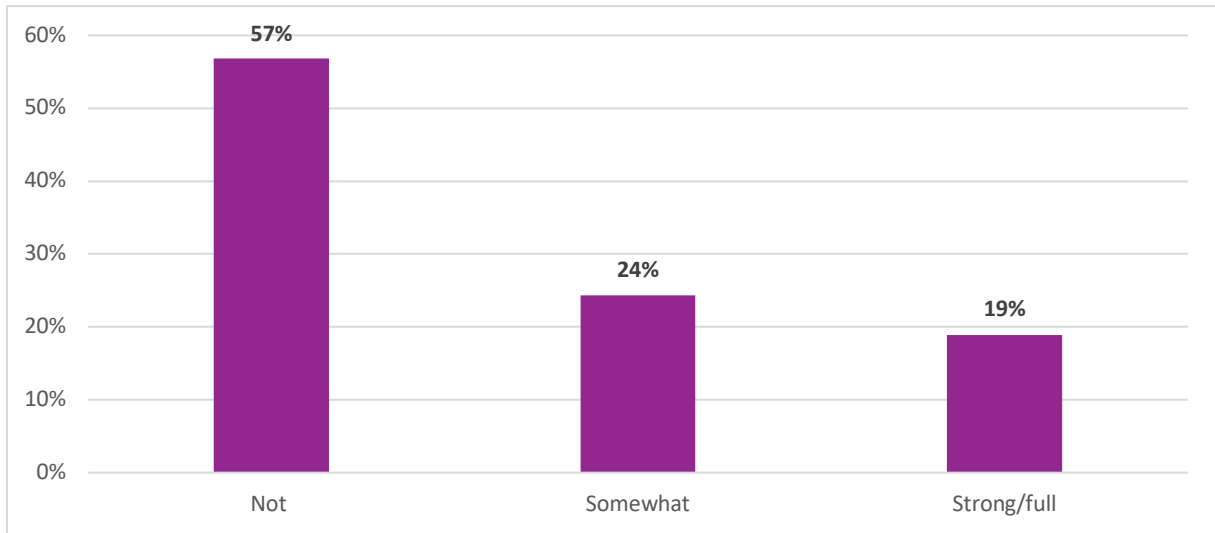
**FIGURE 11. TYPE(S) OF OUTPUT OF THE KA2 PROJECT (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE, TOTAL RESPONSE 36)**



**FIGURE 12. DISSEMINATION OF DEVELOPED OUTPUTS AFTER FINALISATION OF THE KA2 PROJECT (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE, TOTAL RESPONSE 36)**



**FIGURE 13. THE EXTENT OF WHICH VULNERABLE GROUPS WERE INCLUDED (STAFF AND STUDENTS) (TOTAL RESPONSE 37)**



**FIGURE 14. THE EXTENT OF THE ACHIEVED RESULTS WHICH WERE INTENDED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE PROJECT (TOTAL RESPONSE 36)**

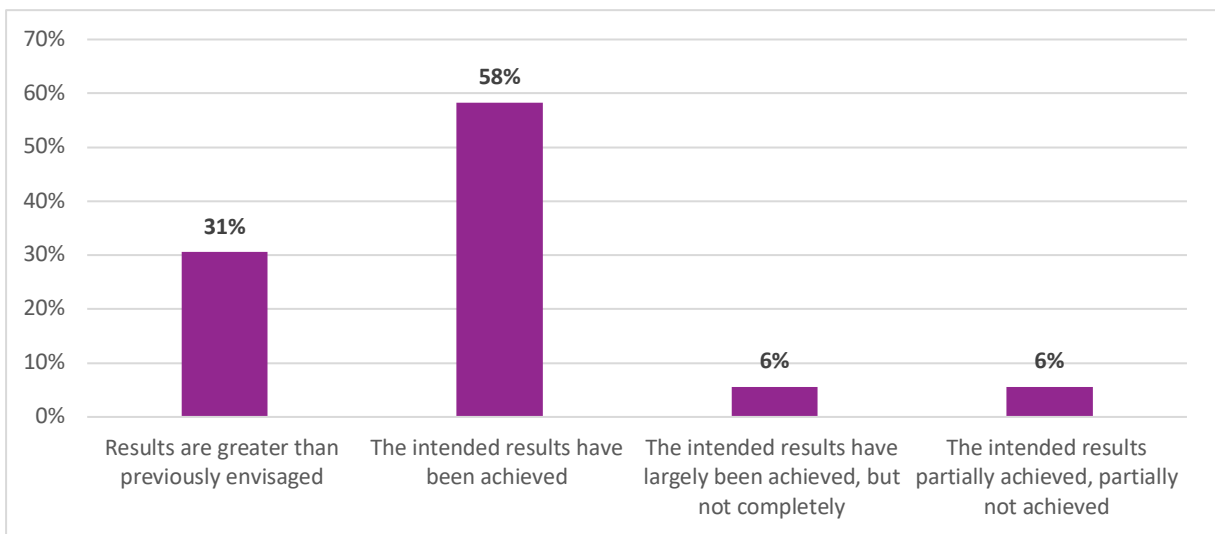


FIGURE 15. SATISFACTION WITH THE FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION OF ERASMUS+ TO IMPLEMENT THE PROJECT (TOTAL RESPONSE 36)

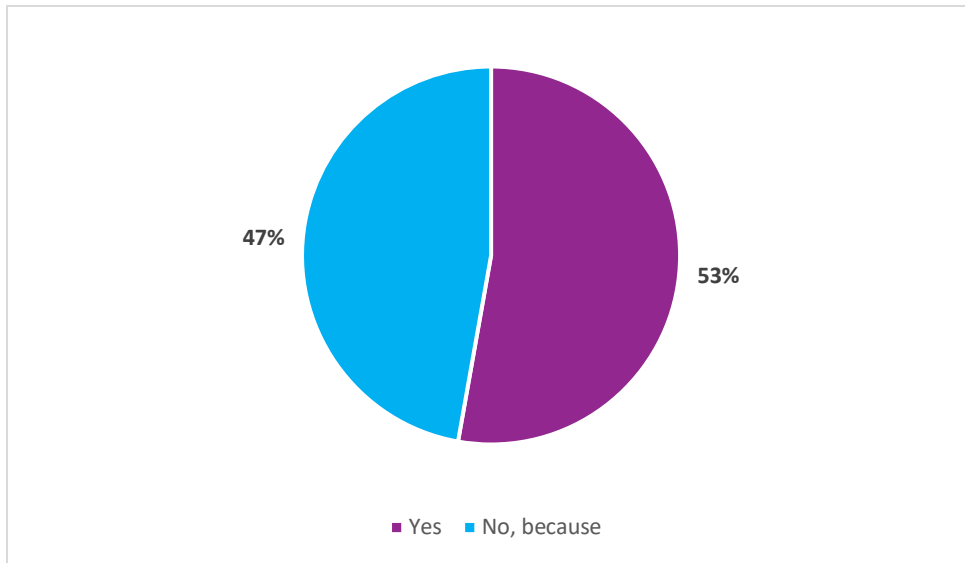
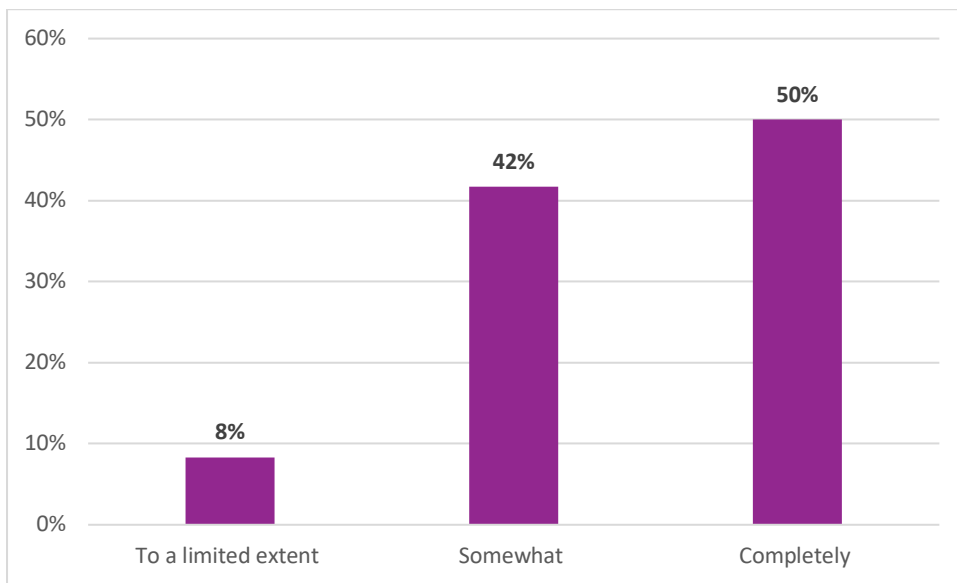
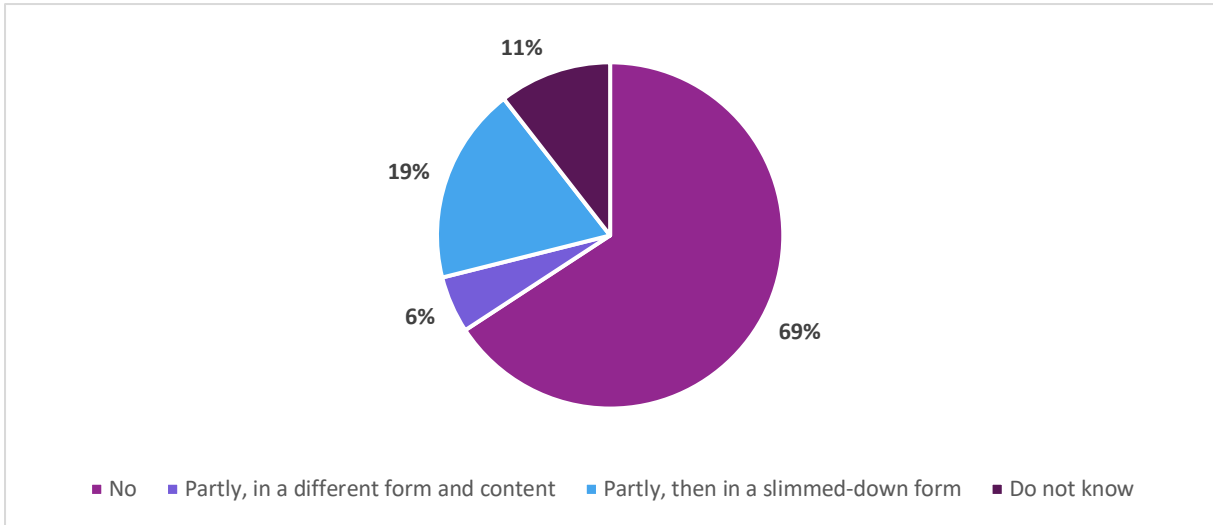


FIGURE 16. PROPORTIONALITY OF THE REQUIRED INVESTMENTS TO IMPLEMENT THE PROJECT (TOTAL RESPONSE 36)



**FIGURE 17. ADDED VALUE OF ERASMUS+ - WOULD THE PROJECT/ACTIVITIES BE IMPLEMENTED WITHOUT ERASMUS+ FUNDING (TOTAL RESPONSE 38)**



**FIGURE 18. SOURCES OF ALTERNATIVE FUNDING (TOTAL RESPONSE 10)**

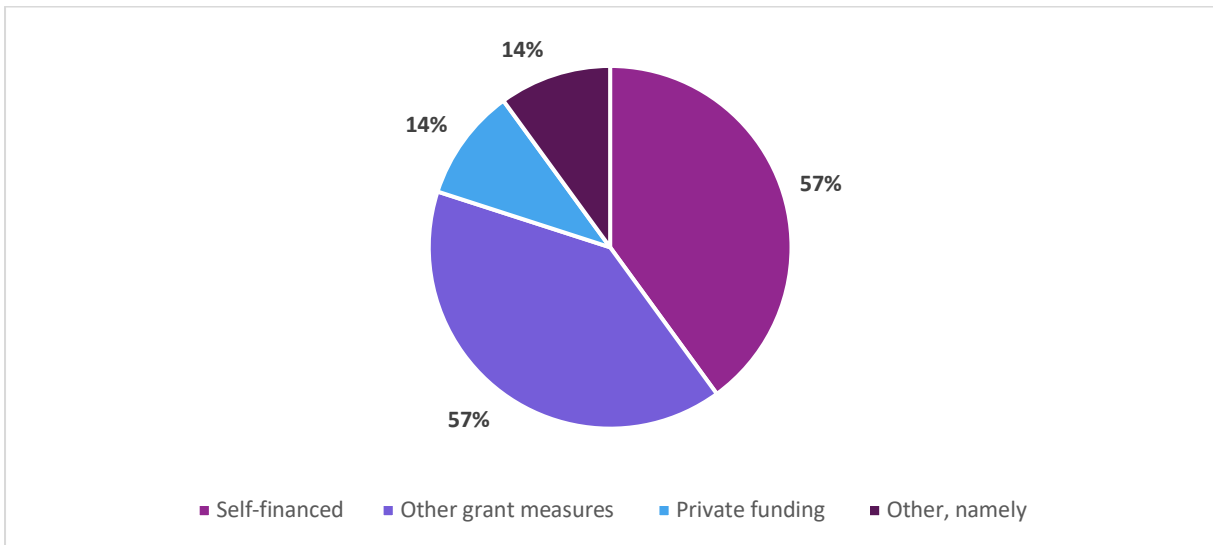


FIGURE 19. IMPACT OF ERASMUS+ PARTICIPATION ON THE ORGANISATION (TOTAL RESPONSE 35)

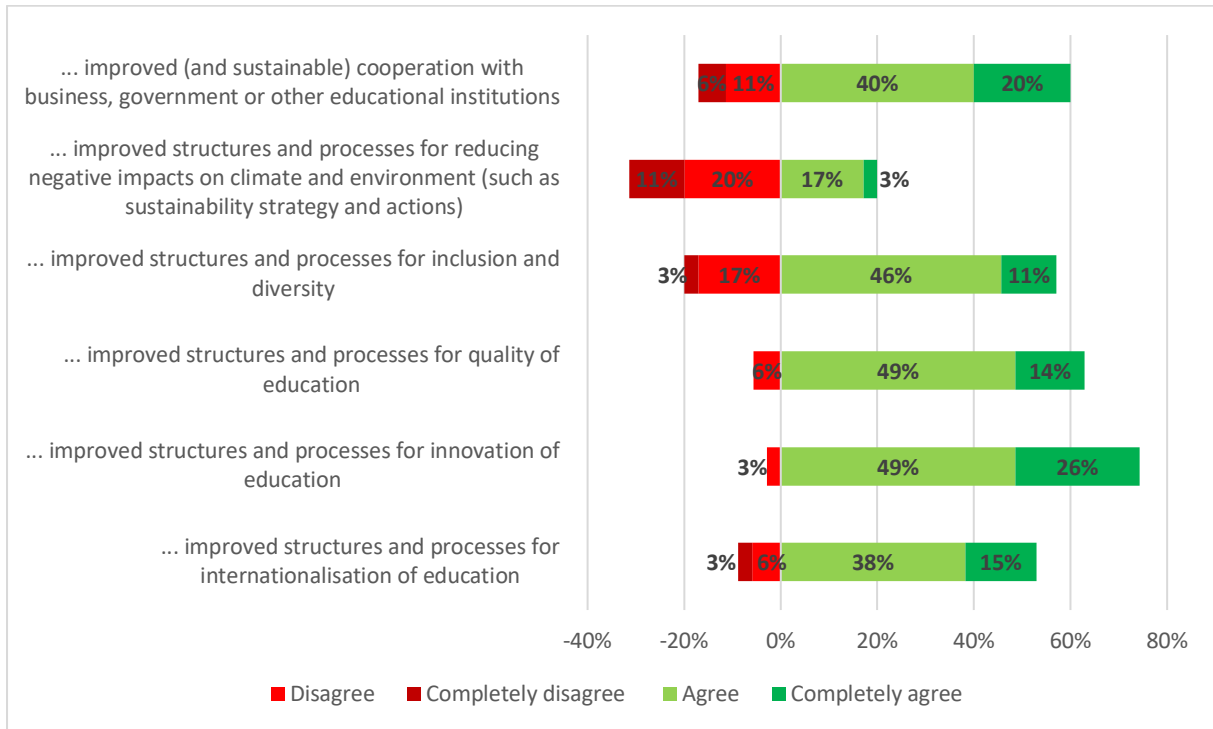


FIGURE 20. IMPACT OF ERASMUS+ ON THE EDUCATION OFFERS OF ORGANISATIONS (TOTAL RESPONSE 35)

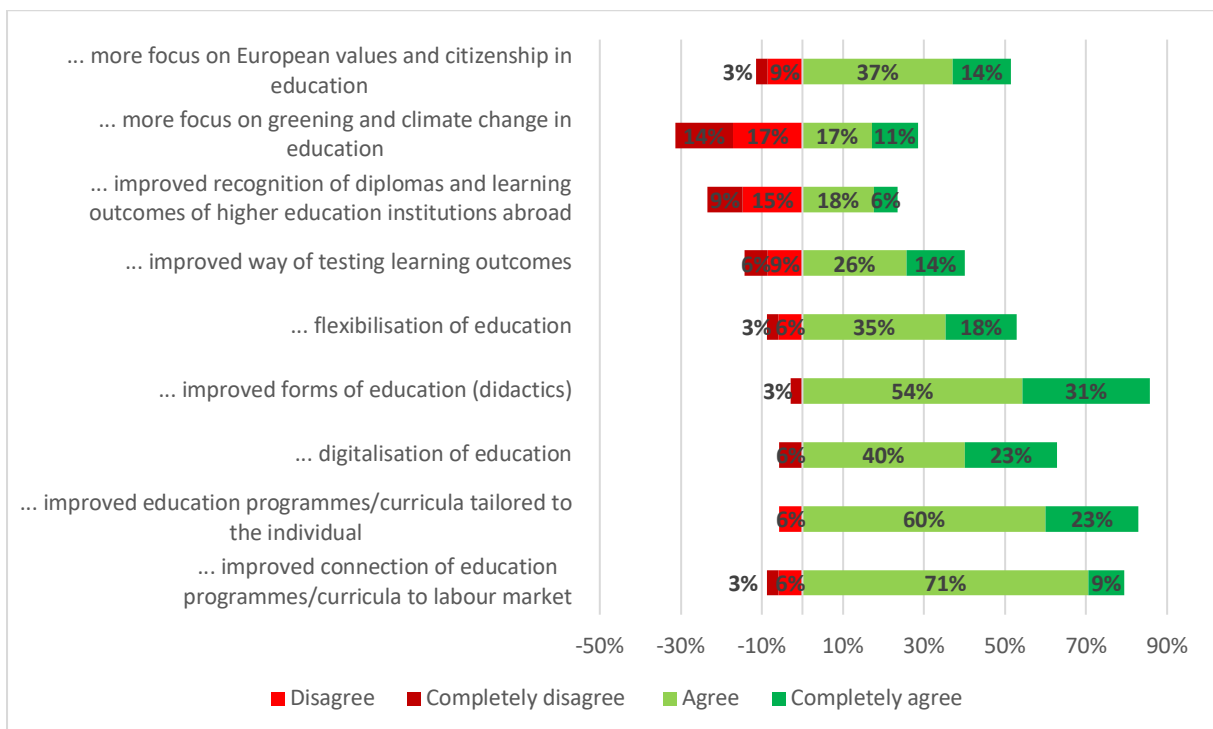
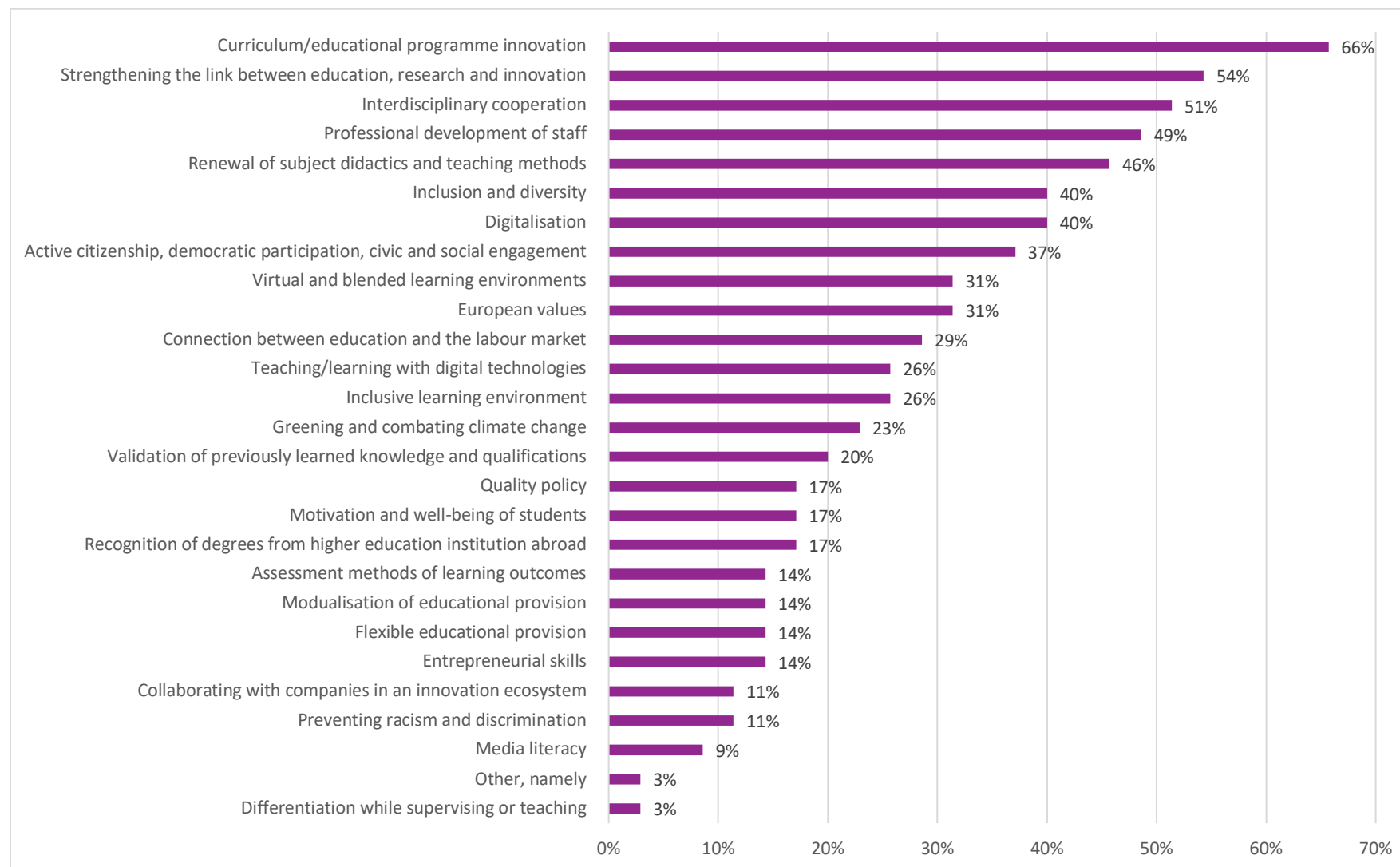
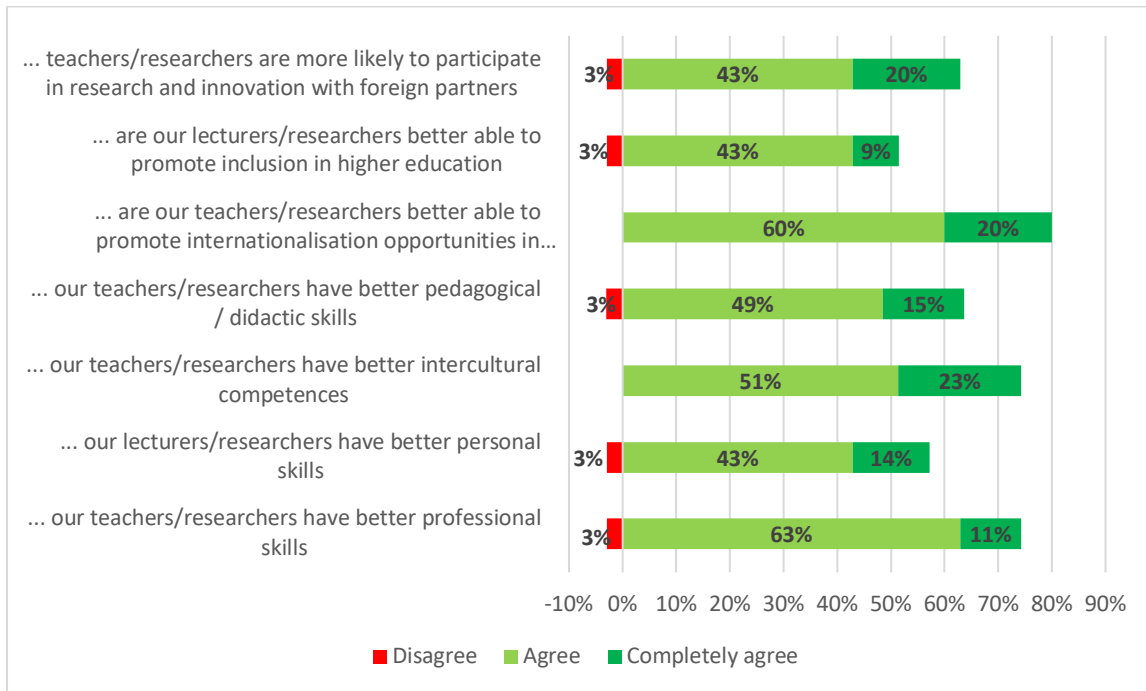


FIGURE 21. THEMES THAT RECEIVE MORE ATTENTION AFTER ERASMUS+ PARTICIPATION (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)



**FIGURE 22. IMPACT ON THE PROFESSIONALISATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF STAFF AFTER ERASMUS+ PARTICIPATION (TOTAL RESPONSE 35)**



**FIGURE 23. IMPACT AND DISSEMINATION OF ERASMUS+ PARTICIPATION (TOTAL RESPONSE 35)**

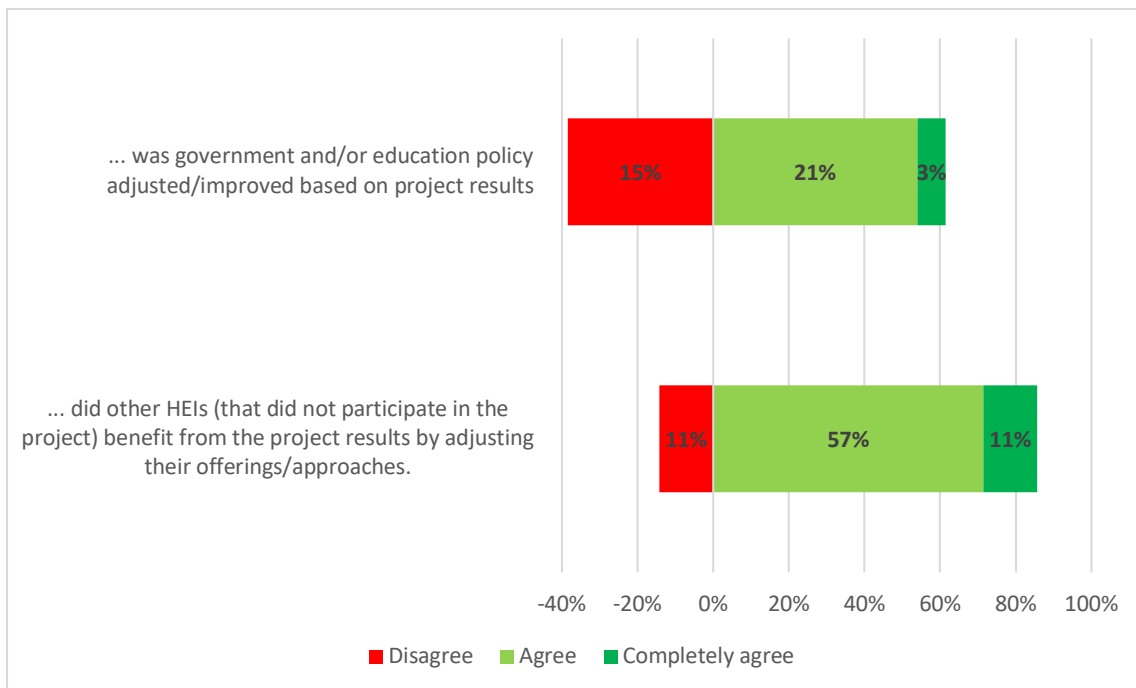




FIGURE 24. EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAMME DESIGN OF ERASMUS+ (TOTAL RESPONSE 35)

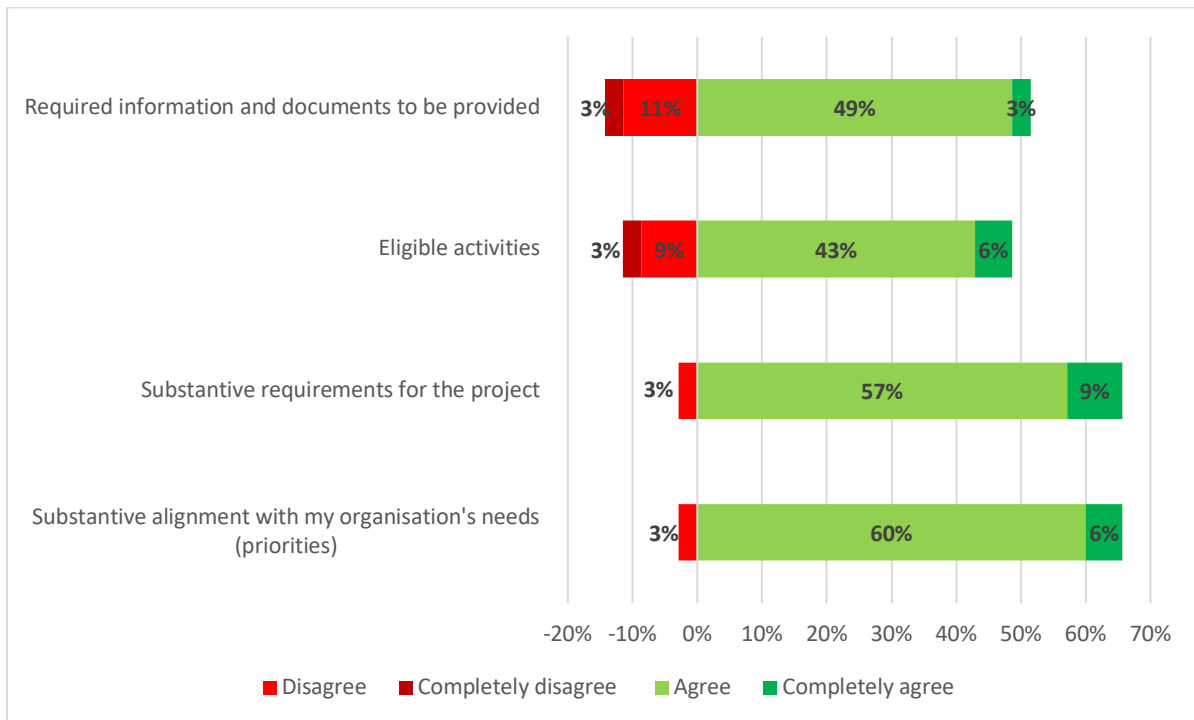
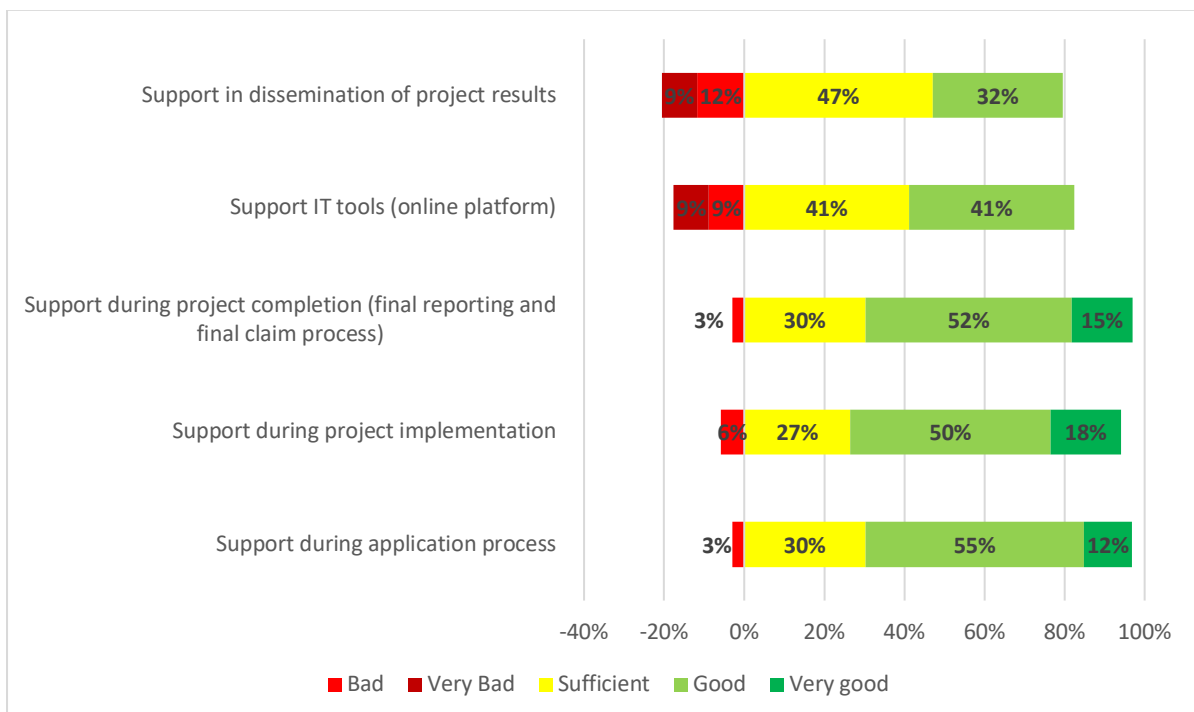
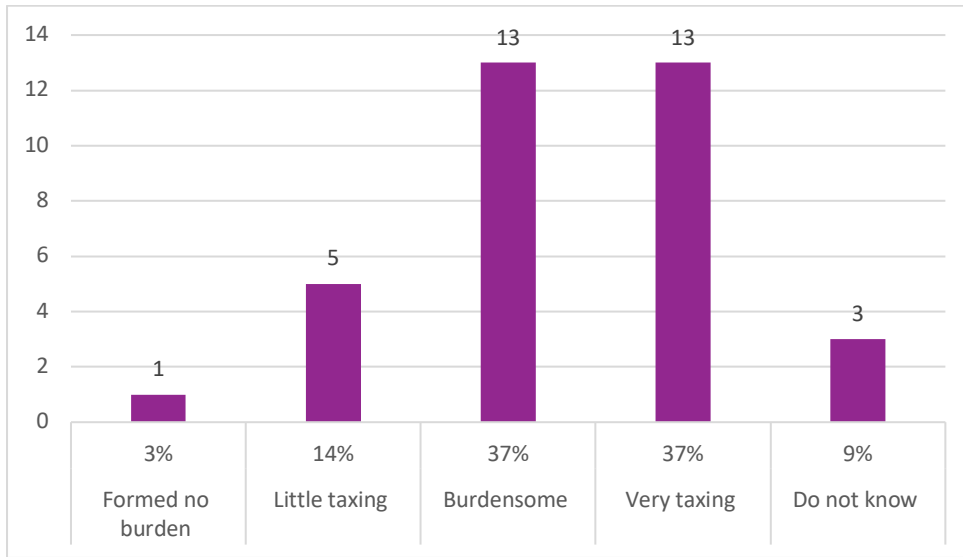


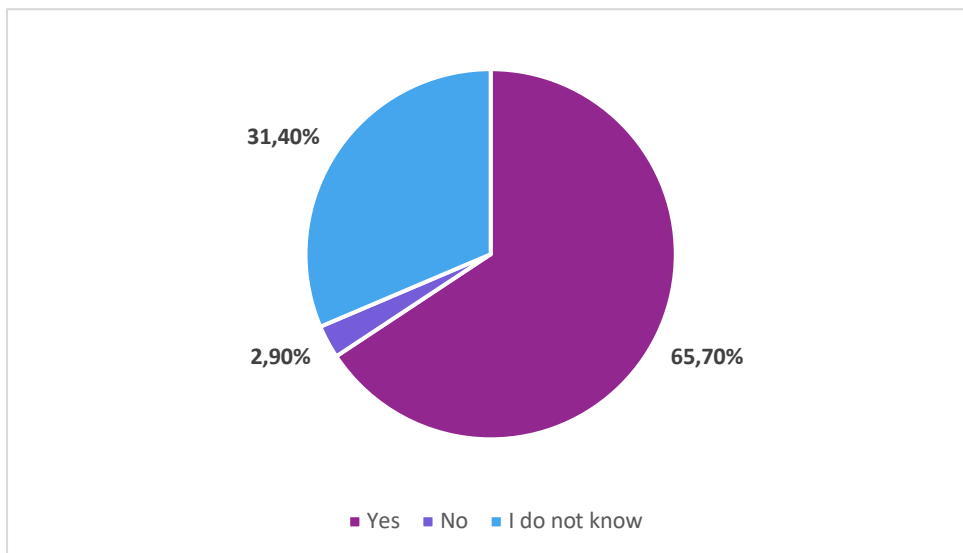
FIGURE 25. EVALUATION OF THE SUPPORT OF THE NA E&T (TOTAL RESPONSE 34)



**FIGURE 26. EVALUATION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE LOAD (TOTAL RESPONSE 35)**



**FIGURE 27. INTENTION OF FUTURE APPLICATION AFTER ERASMUS+ PARTICIPATION (TOTAL RESPONSE 35)**



## Annex G – Evidence on impact of Erasmus+ from existing studies

The table below presents the impact of the Erasmus+ programme in the Netherlands at various scales (individual, organisation and policy) and specified per sector.

Table G.1 Impact on Erasmus+ from desk research

Impact category	Evidence collected from existing impact studies
<b>Internationalisation</b>	<p><b>SE:</b> According to a recent study (Ockham IPS, 2022) beneficiaries generally attribute a major contribution of Erasmus+ to the current way internationalisation is organised in their school. On average, two-thirds of schools indicate that Erasmus+ and/or eTwinning has made a significant or decisive contribution. The contribution is particularly large in funding internationalisation at school (89%), for participation in partnerships and networks (76%), setting up a support infrastructure (73%), and developing a vision and strategy on internationalisation (70%). This is less true for HR policy, but still a third (33%) of schools indicate that Erasmus+ has made a significant or decisive contribution here. If we compare primary and secondary schools, we see that primary schools are more positive about the contribution of Erasmus+ on various aspects than secondary schools. (Ockham IPS, 2022).</p> <p><b>VET:</b> A study by Dialogic and Ockham IPS (2024) shows that the large majority (87%) of beneficiaries indicate the organisational embedding of internationalisation in their organisation has (greatly) improved over the period 2014-2022. Around 81% indicate that structure and processes for internationalisation have improved because of participation in Erasmus+.</p> <p><b>HE:</b> The survey amongst HE beneficiaries (see Annex F) shows that the majority of KA2 beneficiaries (52%) of the previous programme indicate that participating in Erasmus+ lead to improved structure and processes for internationalisation of their education offers, while one third is undecided. Around one-tenth indicate that this is not the case. Those that did not agree or are undecided indicate that internationalisation was already well embedded in their education offer.</p> <p><b>AE:</b> A study of Ockham IPS (2023) shows that a large majority of participating organisations indicate that the organisational embedding of internationalisation has improved, with some even seeing a strong improvement (27%). However, a part of respondents indicate that organisational embedding has remained the same (17%) or even decreased (1%). Beneficiaries clearly indicate that due participation in Erasmus+ there is more support for internationalisation for their staff (94%), but also that it helped improving the management (design, monitoring,</p>

	<p>evaluation and learning) of international projects (85%) and formulating a vision on internationalisation in the organisation (82%). Furthermore, a majority indicate that there are more financial options for internationalisation in the organisation (74%) and more support for internationalisation among organisations working with volunteers (68%). However, improvements in HR policies for internationalisation are perceived less (36%). This shows that the impact is mainly on internationalisation of professionals, management of international projects and the vision on internationalisation, and to a lesser extent on structural funding and HR policy for internationalisation.</p> <p><b>Youth:</b> A large majority of project leaders in the RAY surveys report positive effects on the organisation in terms of more networking at the European level. In one of the interviews, it was indicated that without Erasmus+ the organisation would probably only have had contacts with similar organisations in neighbouring countries. In another interview it was indicated that Erasmus+ has been the reason to establish more structural contacts with comparable organisations.</p>
<p><b>Quality of education and training offer</b></p>	<p><b>SE:</b> According to a recent study (Ockham IPS, 2022) beneficiaries generally attribute a major contribution to Erasmus+ to the internationalisation of education. About half (45%) of schools indicate that Erasmus+ has had a significant or defining contribution. The contribution is particularly large (significant and decisive) in the development of teachers' international competences (72%), followed by the focus on the European dimension (51%), change in pedagogy and didactics (47%) and world citizenship (42%) in education. Around a third of schools indicated that Erasmus+ has made a significant and decisive contribution to the use of digital resources and tools (37%) and a focus on inclusion and diversity (29%) and sustainability (34%) in lessons. Comparing primary and secondary education schools, we see that primary schools are generally more positive about the contribution of Erasmus+ than secondary schools. This concerns the contribution of Erasmus+ to pedagogy and didactics: 79% of primary schools indicate that Erasmus+ has made a significant and decisive contribution to changes in pedagogy and didactics compared to 51% of secondary schools.</p> <p><b>VET:</b> A study by Dialogic and Ockham IPS (2024) shows that half of the beneficiary organisations that participated in the previous programme indicated that the results are still frequently used after the completion of the last KA2 project. Almost 40% still indicate limited use of the outputs/products and just over 10% do not know. Interestingly, none of the respondents indicated that the developed outputs/products are no longer used. Beneficiary organisations are positive about the impact Erasmus+ has had on the aspects of their organisation and learning. A strikingly strong</p>

positive effect is seen in the professionalisation of staff after participation in Erasmus+ (90% (strongly) agree), followed by improved education programmes (86%), improved and sustainable cooperation with the private sector (72%), improved structures and processes for innovation (73%), improved structures and procedures for inclusion (69%), and improved structures and processes for quality (66%). With regard the structural embedding of supported innovation, beneficiary organisations the majority declare that this is the case for cooperation with other organisations (61%), cooperation internally with other disciplines (54%), followed by implementing new education concepts and working with innovative issues (both 45%).

**HE:** The survey amongst HE beneficiaries (see Annex F) shows that around two thirds (67%) of beneficiary organisations indicate that outputs developed in the previous programme period are often used within their organisation and around one fifth (20%) indicate that they use it more sporadic. Beneficiary organisations are positive about the impact Erasmus+ had on different aspects of their organisation and learning offer. Around three quarter (76%) indicate that participation in Erasmus+ had improved structures and processes for education innovation, while two third (67%) indicate that it improved the structures and processes for quality education, followed by improved structures and processes for inclusion and diversity (64%). A smaller share of beneficiary organisations, but still more than half, indicate that Erasmus+ led to improved (and sustainable) cooperation between businesses, the government, or other education institutions (58%), improved structures and processes for internationalisation of education (50%) and Erasmus+ contribution to improved structures and processes for reducing negative impacts on climate and environment (21%). The most often mentioned impact areas are improved forms of education didactics (mentioned by 81% of beneficiary organisation), improved education programmes/ curricula tailored to the needs of the student (81%), improved connection of education programmes/ curricula to the needs of the labour market (74%) and digitalisation of education (59%). Impact areas that are less mentioned are focus on European values and citizenship in education (53%), flexibilization of education (52%), improved ways of testing learning outcomes (44%), focus on greening and climate change in education (28%), and recognition of diplomas and learning outcomes of HEI in other countries (26%).

**AE:** As study of Ockham IPS (2023) shows that a large majority (87%) of beneficiary organisations indicated that the developed outputs have been incorporated into their regular offerings. Also, a vast majority (81%) sees a discernible change in their own learning provision by being better aligned with the needs of adult learners/participants. Organisations also see improvements in

digitalisation and digital competences (73%). The extent to which accessibility is improved and the learner's voice is included scores lower but is still seen by just over half of the institutions as an impact of participation in Erasmus+ (67% and 64% respectively).

**Youth:** An example from Erasmus+ Youth that regularly comes up is that lessons have been learned from contacts with other countries (particularly Finland and Estonia) how online youth work can be further developed. Furthermore, it is regularly stated that the Erasmus+ projects have given an impetus to the professionalization of the organisation. This concerns for example, management skills that are associated with coordinating cooperation with many parties and cultures but also professionalizing the administration. More continuity can also be given to activities. It is also mentioned that the design and requirements of Erasmus+ lead to better consideration of the connection between the activities and the needs of the target group. Country specific results in the RAY-survey also mention increased competences in organisations for the provision of non-format education.

### Impact on staff

**SE** - In almost six in ten schools (58%), the development of teachers' international competences concerns only the group directly involved in internationalisation activities, while in a third of schools (29%) it concerns a broader group of teachers. A very small group of 6% of schools indicate that international competences have been developed among almost all teachers (more than three quarters). Schools in secondary education are more likely to indicate that international competences have been developed among a broader group of teachers (32% versus 21% for primary education schools), while schools in secondary education are more likely to indicate that international competences have been developed among almost all teachers (21% versus 2% for secondary education schools).

**VET** - A study by Dialogic and Ockham IPS (2024) shows that more than 80% of respondents believe that Erasmus+ has contributed to improved awareness and skills of teachers to promote internationalisation in VET. While the results are positive, this is slightly less so in relation to inclusion than for the statements on internationalisation. About half of the respondents agree or fully agree that Erasmus+ has contributed to improved awareness and skills to promote inclusion in VET, while 27% indicate disagreement/disagreement, and 8% disagree with the statement. A significant percentage of respondents indicated that teachers are more likely to participate in research and innovation with partners as a result of participation in Erasmus+. This suggests that Erasmus+ not only enhances teachers' individual capacities, but also contributes to a culture of improvement and cooperation inside and outside the organisation (the ecosystem). It is striking that respondents seem to have little insight into the improvement of

teachers' didactic and pedagogical skills, as around 40% indicate neither agree nor disagree with the statement.

**HE** – The survey amongst HE beneficiaries (see Annex F) shows that around 80% of beneficiary organisations indicate that their lecturers/researchers better able to promote internationalisation opportunities in higher education, while 75% indicate that their lecturers/researchers have better professional skills, just like better intercultural competences. Around 63% indicate that their lecturers/researchers have better pedagogical / didactic skills, as well as participate more often in research and innovation with foreign partners. A smaller group, but still more than half of HE beneficiaries indicate that their staff have better personal skills (57%) and are better able to promote inclusion in higher education (57%).

**AE** - A recent study of Ockham IPS (2023) shows that many respondents see improvement on all impact dimensions surveyed after participating in Erasmus+. The most reported impact for professionals is experienced in improved guidance (86%), more attention to inclusion and diversity (85%) and developing learning pathways (81%). Furthermore, a large majority of participating organisations report that professionals pay more attention to global citizenship (79%). This is a dimension to which Erasmus+ projects can specifically contribute due to their international nature in terms of cooperation and target groups. Other impact on dimensions is mentioned less often, but still by the majority of participating organisations, such as an improvement in the pedagogical and didactic skills of professionals (70%), mapping of learning needs (69%), differentiation of learning pathways during counselling (67%) and attention to social-emotional development during counselling (66%). The study also shows that, as with professionals, the greatest impact for volunteers is experienced in the areas of attention to inclusion and diversity (60% of responding organisations), attention to world citizenship (47%) and guidance of adult learners (47%). To a lesser extent, respondents experience improvements in supervision of adult learners/participants (45%), the socio-emotional development of learners (36%) and the development of learning pathways for adult learners (33%). Respondents were least likely to report impact in mapping the outcomes of learning pathways (22%), differentiation during mentoring of learners (16%) and professionalisation through knowledge sharing/collaboration (5%).

**Youth** – see RAY data in Annex H and I.

**Impact on learners/ people on young people**

**SE** – a study of Ockham IPS (2022) shows that schools are very positive about the impact on students. Three quarters (75%) indicate that pupils develop international competences to a (very) great extent through participation; 14% indicate to a limited extent

and 3% that this is not the case. vo schools see slightly more impact on pupils than po schools (79% versus 62%). Few differences are seen between independent schools and schools that are part of an umbrella or foundation. Medium-sized schools (between 51 and 250 teachers) are more positive than small and large schools (around 82% versus 64%).

**VET** – A recent study of Dialogic and Ockham IOPS (not published yet) shows that project coordinators experience a high positive impact in terms of personal development (80% [totally] agree), with subsequent increased self-confidence (78% [totally] agree) and improved intercultural competences (80% [totally] agree). Improving professional skills also scores high on impact (78% [completely] agree). It seems that participation in Erasmus+ has a positive impact on practical skills and personal growth, leads to a positive self-image and increases intercultural understanding. A less pronounced positive outcome is seen when developing a better understanding of European values (66% [completely] agree). While this outcome is still quite good, it comes out significantly lower than the other categories. Here one would expect a higher outcome, as this is one of the core objectives of Erasmus+.

**HE** – Several studies have been done for HE students all indicating that the long-term impact of Erasmus+ is felt in the personal and professional life (Oberon, 2020; ResearchNed, 2018; 2024). Most students report positive effects on factors such as: personal development, self-knowledge, independence, flexibility, social and communication skills, personal relationships and an open and interested attitude (towards other cultures). The same applies to aspects from professional life: inter-cultural skills, acquiring language skills, shaping one's career international framework, acquiring language skills, shaping one's (international) career path. Notably, the groups of (former) students, one with experience abroad and one without, were significantly different from each other in the baseline measurement (ResearchNed, 2018; 2020). Former students who will go abroad already have a more positive self-image, greater independence, and are more open to travelling and other cultures. Additionally, this group already has higher perceived values for cultural orientation, international outlook, and European outlook than those who have not had a foreign experience.

**AE** - A recent study of Ockham IPOS (2023) shows that the most perceived impact that respondents see is that participation in Erasmus+ increases the learners' quality of life (81%), followed by more job opportunities (76%) and new contacts outside their learning pathways (74%). Respondents also perceive that learners have more opportunities on the labour market (70%) and that other learning pathways of their organisation have become more



accessible (67%). The least reported impact, but still by the majority of participating organisations, is that learners participate more in activities in their own environment (61%) and that they have become more assertive (51%). Nevertheless, more than half of respondents still report experiencing this.

**Youth** – see RAY data in Annex H and I.

**Other organisation and policies**

**SE** – A study of Ockham IPS (2020) shows that about a third (36%) of schools see that experiences in improving quality are adopted by other schools. However, a third (39%) also do not see this. A quarter (25%) sees no takeover of experiences by other schools. Primary schools are slightly less negative compared to secondary schools (17% versus 28% disagree with the statement). Slightly less than half (41%) of the schools see that the experiences in improving quality provide input for policy development. However, a third (39%) also do not see this. Here, too, secondary schools are more negative than primary schools (29% disagree versus 12% disagree). Schools in umbrella organisations or foundations are more often aware of this than independent schools (37% versus 48% indicate “don't know”). They are also more positive about impact on policy development (38% versus 26%). Large schools (more than 250 teachers) are much more positive than smaller schools (73% versus about 40%).

**VET** – no data, not included in a study

**HE** - The survey amongst HE beneficiaries (see Annex F) shows that around two thirds (69%) of beneficiary organisations indicate that other HEIs (that did not participate in the project) benefited from the project results by adjusting their offerings/approaches. Only 24% indicate that government and/or education policy were adjusted/improved based on project results.

**AE** - The impact of developed outputs on other organisations and policies is mentioned to a lesser extent as an outcome but is still mentioned as an impact by half of the respondents (63% and 45% respectively) (Ockham IPS, 2023).

**Youth** – see RAY data in Annex H and I.

## Annex H – Results RAY-surveys for the Netherlands in reports of Ray-network (E+ Youth Programme, 2015- 2020)

The following Annex presents a selection of country specific results of a number of data reports/data annexes of surveys carried out in the framework of the RAY network among participants and project leaders of the Erasmus+ Youth programme in the period 2015-2020. Results are presented for participants with country of origin (residence) the Netherlands. These results are for a specific year compared to the results for residents of all countries involved. The number of survey participants for the NL differ per period (project participants: '15/'16: 169; '17/'18: 232; '19/'20: 147; project leaders: '15/'16: 51; '17/'18: 91; '19/'20: 30).

The RAY Network<sup>27</sup> – Research-based Analysis and Monitoring of European Youth Programmes – is an open and self-governed European research network. Currently, 35 National Agencies of the Erasmus+ Youth in Action & European Solidarity Corps programmes and their research partners are involved.

The reports which have been used are the following:

- Böhler, J, Fennes, H, Karsten, A, & Mayer, M. (2021-I), Effects and outcomes of the Erasmus+ Youth in Action Programme, Transnational Analysis, Comparative Data Report, 2014-2020, RAY.
- Böhler, J., Fennes, H., Karsten, A. & Mayerl, M. (2021-II). Effects and outcomes of the Erasmus+ Youth in action programme. The perspectives of project participants and project leaders. Transnational analysis 2019/2020. Data Report, RAY.
- Böhler, J., Fennes, H., Karsten, A, Mayerl, M., Pitschmann, A. & Lee Roth, C. (2019). Exploring Erasmus+ Youth in Action Effects and outcomes of the ERASMUS+ Youth in Action Programme from the perspective of project participants and project leaders Transnational Analysis 2017/2018 Data Report, RAY.
- Genkova, V., Taseva, I., & Fennes, H. (2019) Thematic pre-study on country-specific characteristics related to youth and youth work. Working Document. RAY.

### Characteristics of participants and inclusiveness

TABLE D.1 GENDER OF PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

	NL '15/'16	NL '17/'18	NL '19/'20	Total '19/'20
Gender participants				
Women	61%	62%	65%	66%
Men	38%	37%	33%	33%
Other	1%	1%	2%	1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Böhler et al. (2021-I)

TABLE D.2 (OTHER) CHARACTERISTICS OF PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

	NL '15/'16	Total '15/'16
Highest educational attainment		

<sup>27</sup> See also: <https://www.researchyouth.net/network/>

primary school	1%	2%
lower secondary school	21%	10%
technical school	4%	3%
upper secondary school	11%	21%
upper vocational school	24%	4%
university, polytechnic, post-secondary/tertiary level college	38%	60%
total	100%	100%
Highest educational attainment of father/male legal guardian		
Primary school	7%	5%
Lower secondary school	7%	7%
Technical school	14%	16%
Upper secondary school	10%	14%
Upper vocational school	20%	11%
University, polytechnic, post-secondary/tertiary level college	34%	41%
Do not know	8%	5%
Total	100%	100%
Highest educational attainment of mother/female legal guardian		
Primary school	7%	6%
Lower secondary school	13%	8%
Technical school	4%	11%
Upper secondary school	17%	18%
Upper vocational school	27%	11%
University, polytechnic, post-secondary/tertiary level college	24%	44%
Don not know	8%	3%
Total	100%	100%
Do you belong to a cultural, ethnic, religious, or linguistic minority in your country?		
Yes	25%	13%
No	75%	87%
Total	100%	100%
If minority, what type of minority affiliation		
I belong to a minority that has always lived in this country	10%	30%
I belong to an ethnic or cultural minority	36%	37%
I belong to a religious minority	29%	28%
I belong to a linguistic minority	17%	27%
I am an immigrant (first generation)	29%	17%
I have an immigrant background (second or third generation)	57%	16%
Other minority	5%	7%
Is the language mainly spoken in your family an official language of the country or region you live in?		
Yes	79%	91%
No	21%	9%

Total	100%	100%
At home, does your family (including grandparents) also speak languages other than an official language of the country/region you live in?		
Yes	37%	36%
No	63%	64%
Total	100%	100%

Source: Genkova et al. (2019)

TABLE D.3 RELATIVE POSITION OF PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

	NL '15/'16	NL '17/'18	NL '19/'20	Total '19/'20
Compared to the way other people of your age/peers live in your country, do you think ...				
That you are getting your fair share of opportunities	51%	55%	50%	55%
That you are getting more than your fair share of opportunities	14%	28%	40%	21%
That you are getting somewhat less than you fair share of opportunities	8%	14%	8%	18%
That you are getting much less than your fair share of opportunities	2%	2%	3%	6%
I do not know/do not understand the question	24%			
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Böhler et al. (2021-I)

TABLE D.4 COST OBSTACLES FOR PARTICIPANTS

	NL '15/'16	Total '15/'16
Covering the costs for participation in the project (e.g. travel, lodging, food, participation fee, other expenses) was .....		
... easy for me	38%	38%
... difficult for me	8%	9%
... not necessary – all costs were covered by the project	54%	53%
total	100%	100%

Source: Genkova et al. (2019)

TABLE D.5 PREVIOUS MOBILITY EXPERIENCE OF PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

	NL '15/'16	NL '17/'18	NL '19/'20	Total '19/'20
Previous mobility experiences project participants				

I went abroad for holidays	87%	85%	90%	75%
I went abroad with my class at school	62%	56%	68%	40%
I Participated in a youth exchange	34%	50%	37%	47%
I went to school abroad for one semester or longer in the framework of a programme	11%	17%	17%	11%
I lived in another country with my parents	10%	21%	22%	6%
I studied at a university in another country	16%	18%	23%	14%
I did a language course abroad	11%	12%	8%	11%
I did a work placement or an internship abroad	15%	24%	17%	12%
I did a vocational training course abroad	1%	3%	3%	6%
I worked as an au-pair	1%	4%	1%	2%
I had a job abroad	12%	16%	14%	13%
I went to another country to live with my partner	2%	6%	5%	5%
I live near an international border and can easily cross it	13%	21%	21%	10%
I was born in another country	8%	11%	9%	5%
I lived in another country for another reason	20%	20%	19%	8%
I have never been abroad before this project	1%	1%	0%	7%
Specific previous project experiences by country of residence (project participants)				
In a project supported within Erasmus+: Youth in Action or an earlier EU youth programme (e.g. Youth in Action 2007-2013)		44%	41%	49%
In a similar project which was supported by another programme of the European Union		22%	15%	22%
In another similar project.		23%	22%	24%
None of the above		38%	41%	33%

Sources: Böhler et al. (2021-II); Böhler et al. (2019); Genkova et al. (2019).

TABLE D.6 GENDER OF PROJECT LEADERS

	NL '15/'16	NL '17/'18	NL '19/'20	Total '19/'20
Gender project leaders				
Women	69%	52%	67%	58%
Men	31%	47%	30%	42%
Other	0%	1%	3%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Böhler et al. (2021-I)

TABLE D.6 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF PROJECT LEADERS

	NL '15/'16	Total '15/'16
Highest educational attainment (project leaders)		
primary school	0%	0%
lower secondary school	0%	1%
technical school	0%	2%
upper secondary school	17%	11%

upper vocational school	26%	4%
university, polytechnic, post-secondary/tertiary level college	57%	81%
total	100%	100%

Source: Genkova et al. (2019)

TABLE D.7 PREVIOUS PROJECT EXPERIENCE OF PROJECT LEADERS

	NL '17/'18	NL '19/'20	Total '19/'20
Previous project experience of project leader			
Yes, as project leader/member of the project team	45%	63%	52%
Yes, as participant (including in projects/training for youth workers/leaders)	34%	40%	45%
No	35%	27%	23%
No answer	4%	0%	2%
If previous experience: number of previous EU-youth projects as a project leader or member of the project team			
1	5%	0%	5%
2	7%	16%	11%
3 tot 5	42%	5%	27%
6 tot 10	10%	16%	25%
11 tot 20	20%	26%	20%
20+	15%	37%	13%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Sources: Böhler et al. (2021-II); Böhler et al (2019).

TABLE D.8 PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE WITH FEWER OPPORTUNITIES (ACCORDING TO PROJECT LEADERS)

	NL '15/'16	NL '17/'18	NL '19/'20	Total '19/'20
Did young people with fewer opportunities or with special needs participate in this project (according to project Leaders)				
Yes	64%	77%	81%	69%
No	25%	11%	14%	17%
Do not know/remember	11%	12%	5%	14%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Böhler et al. (2021-I)

Impact

TABLE D.9 EFFECTS ON INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPANTS

	NL '15/'16	Total '15/'16
Did participating in the project have any further impact on you? (project participants)		
I have a clearer idea about my further educational pathway (% agree)	56%	69%

I have a clearer idea about my professional career, aspirations and goals (% agree)	75%	73%
what effect did your involvement in the project have on you? (values = more than before the project)		
I keep myself informed on current European affairs	57%	54%
I engage in civil society	50%	47%
I actively support the inclusion of people with fewer opportunities	63%	56%
I participate in democratic/political life	28%	30%
I appreciate cultural diversity	70%	77%
I am interested in contributing to youth policy development	67%	63%
I feel European	50%	52%
I am committed to work against discrimination etc.	59%	60%

Source: Genkova et al. (2019)

TABLE D.10 EFFECTS ON PERCEPTION OF EU OF INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPANTS

	NL '15/'16	Total '15/'16	NL '19/'20	Total '19/'20
Change in perception of the EU (project participants)				
Has become worse	1%	4%	3%	4%
Has not changed	60%	48%	42%	40%
Has become better	39%	48%	55%	56%

Sources: Genkova et al. (2019); Böhler et al. (2021-II).

TABLE D.11 EFFECTS ON PROJECT LEADERS

	NL '15/'16	Total '15/'16
what effect did your involvement in the project have on you? (values = more than before the project)		
I keep myself informed on current European affairs	57%	54%
I engage in civil society	50%	47%
I actively support the inclusion of people with fewer opportunities	63%	56%
I participate in democratic/political life	28%	30%
I appreciate cultural diversity	70%	77%
I am interested in contributing to youth policy development	67%	63%
I feel European	50%	52%
I am committed to work against discrimination etc.	59%	60%
To what extend do you agree or disagree with the following statements as a result of the project (values = sum of "strongly agree" and "agree")		
I am now better able to move around on my own in other countries	77%	80%
I intend to go abroad to study, work do a work placement	62%	70%
I have a clearer idea about my further educational pathway	62%	73%

I have a clearer idea about my professional career aspirations and goals	90%	81%
I have a better understanding of my career options	83%	77%
I have become aware which of my competences i want to develop further	96%	91%
I know my strengths and weaknesses better	94%	92%
I plan to develop my foreign language skills	81%	92%
I believe that my chances of getting a job have increased	77%	77%

Source: Genkova et al. (2019)

TABLE D.12 EFFECTS ON ORGANISATIONS ACCORDING TO PROJECT LEADERS

	NL '15/'16	Total '15/'16
What effect did the project have on your organisation/group/body? (values = sum of "strongly agree" and "agree")		
More contacts/partnerships with other countries	90%	93%
More international projects	90%	81%
More networking at the European level	94%	86%
Increased participation of young people in the organisation/ group	83%	85%
Increased appreciation of cultural diversity	88%	92%
Increased commitment to include YPFO	77%	83%
More intensive involvement in European issues	71%	76%
Increased competences for the provision of non-format education	85%	89%
Increased application of open educational resources	42%	40%
Increased project management competences	44%	37%
Increased knowledge transfer and implementation of good practices within the organisation	54%	39%
The network/links with local structures were strengthened	46%	36%

Source: Genkova et al. (2019)

TABLE D.13 EFFECTS ON COMMUNITY ACCORDING TO PROJECT LEADERS

	NL '15/'16	Total '15/'16
Which effects did the project have on the community, in which it was carries out? (values = sum of "strongly agree" and "agree")		
The local community was actively involved in the project	77%	84%
The project was positively perceived by the local community	95%	91%
The local community has become more aware of the concerns and interests of young people	73%	74%
The intercultural dimension was appreciated by the local community	93%	89%
The local community has become more committed to the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities	64%	62%
The European dimension was received with interest by the local community	86%	83%
The local community has shown interest in similar projects in the future	82%	82%
The local community has expressed readiness to support similar activities in the future	68%	77%



The project has created synergies between different stakeholders in the local community	70%	73%
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Source: Genkova et al. (2019)

## Annex I – Results RAY-surveys for the Netherlands (E+ Youth Programme, 2021 - 2023)

The following Annex presents data of surveys that were held amongst respondents who participated in the Erasmus+ Youth Programme in the period 2021-2023. In total 920 respondents filled out the survey. In the tables enclosed a selection of results is presented. A distinction is made between the different categories corresponding to different roles of participants and parts of the programme: *PP*, *PT*, *YWM* and *TCA*. In the table below these categories are explained.

Category	Description	Number of respondents
PP	Project participants in youth exchanges and participation projects	378
PT	Project teams including youth workers, youth leaders, trainers and other actors responsible for preparing and implementing YiA projects	242
YWM	Participants attending youth worker mobility projects	273
TCA	Representatives of youth and educational organisations participating in Training and Cooperation Activities	27

Some questions have only been answered by a (random) part of the respondents so as not to make the list of questions too long.

Table E.1 personal background

	Percentage/ Mean scores			
	PP	PT	YWM	TCA
Have you participated in similar European activities?				
Yes	57%	83%	81%	62%
No	43%	17%	19%	38%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
Do you identify as ...?				
Female	56%	48%	57%	67%
Male	38%	48%	38%	21%
Transgender	0%	0%	0.5%	0%
Non-binary	2%	0.5%	1%	8%
Genderfluid	1%	0.5%	1%	0%

Not sure (yet)	2%	0%	0.5%	0%
Prefer not to say	1%	3%	2%	4%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
Which of these is your currently completed level of education?				
Left school before finishing primary school	0%	0.5%	0%	0%
Left school after the end of primary school but before reaching the end of junior cycle	1%	0.5%	1%	0%
Completed Junior Cycle with Junior Certificate Examination	6%	2%	1%	0%
Completed Senior Cycle with Leaving Certificate Examination	13%	3%	4%	0%
Further Education leading to Post Leaving Certificate	7%	7%	6%	0%
Higher Education leading to a bachelor's degree	42%	33%	42%	25%
Higher Education leading to a master's degree	23%	41%	34%	50%
Higher Education leading to a doctoral degree	2%	9%	9%	13%
Other degree, namely	6%	4%	3%	12%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
What is the highest level of education your mother/female or legal guardian has completed?				
Left school before finishing primary school	1%	11%	1%	8%
Left school after the end of primary school but before reaching the end of junior cycle	5%	3%	6%	0%

Completed Junior Cycle with Junior Certificate Examination	4%	11%	7%	8%
Completed Senior Cycle with Leaving Certificate Examination	10%	18%	11%	17%
Further Education leading to Post Leaving Certificate	11%	16%	11%	8%
Higher Education leading to a bachelor's degree	33%	19%	28%	17%
Higher Education leading to a master's degree	24%	16%	24%	21%
Higher Education leading to a doctoral degree	5%	3%	7%	8%
I do not know	7%	3%	5%	13%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
What is the highest level of education your father/male or other legal guardian has completed?				
Left school before finishing primary school	2%	3.5%	2%	4%
Left school after the end of primary school but before reaching the end of junior cycle	4%	10%	5%	4%
Completed Junior Cycle with Junior Certificate Examination	7%	10%	7%	4%
Completed Senior Cycle with Leaving Certificate Examination	13%	18%	14%	13%
Further Education leading to Post Leaving Certificate	15%	13%	14%	4%
Higher Education leading to a bachelor's degree	25%	21%	27%	18%
Higher Education leading to a master's degree	20%	16%	17%	22%
Higher Education leading to a doctoral degree	5%	5%	6%	18%
I do not know	9%	3.5%	8%	13%

Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
Which of the following descriptions apply to what you have been doing around the time of the project? The percentages add up to more than 100% because respondents could enter multiple answers				
In paid work	23%	46%	40%	48%
In education	47%	21%	33%	19%
Unemployed and actively looking for a job	8%	5%	7%	0%
Unemployed, wanting a job, but not actively looking for a job	7%	4%	4%	0%
Volunteering	22%	31%	28%	22%
Doing care work	3%	4%	5%	11%
Would you say that you are faced with barriers to achieve your full potential?				
Yes	45%	41%	51%	46%
No	55%	59%	49%	54%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
Are these barriers related to ...?				
Health problems	5%	5%	6%	19%
Low educational attainment	1%	2%	3%	7%
Living in a remote area	6%	7%	6%	7%
Not having enough money	22%	23%	25%	19%
Your social background	9%	7%	12%	11%
Your gender	7%	5%	6%	4%
Family responsibilities and/or ties	7%	10%	10%	15%

A history of unemployment in your family	2%	2%	2%	0%
Living in a deprived area	6%	7%	7%	4%
Would you describe yourself as being a member of a group that is discriminated against?				
Yes	29%	30%	33%	21%
No	71%	70%	67%	79%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
On what grounds is your group discriminated against?				
Colour or race	4%	7%	4%	0%
Nationality	4%	9%	10%	4%
Religion	3%	4%	3%	4%
Language	2%	3%	4%	0%
Ethnic group	4%	7%	6%	0%
Age	2%	0%	4%	4%
Gender	9%	7%	10%	11%
Sexuality	10%	3%	8%	11%
Disability	1%	3%	3%	0%
Compared to the way other people of your age live in your country, do you think ...				
That you are getting your fair share of opportunities?	46%	48%	42%	52%
That you are getting more than your fair share of opportunities?	27%	25%	23%	26%
That you are getting somewhat less than your fair share of opportunities?	21%	25%	26%	13%
That you are getting much less than your fair share of opportunities?	6%	2%	9%	9%

Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
And finally, all things considered, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days?  scale 0 – 10 (0 completely dissatisfied, 10 completely satisfied)	6.0	7.9	6.0	6.0

Table E.2 Awareness and reason for participation

	Percentage/ Mean scores			
	PP	PT	YWM	TCA
Reasons for participating in the project				
To get to know other cultures	78%	x	60%	52%
To have new experiences	84%	x	70%	78%
To get engaged in tackling social political challenges	34%	x	42%	33%
To develop my language skills	49%	x	38%	41%
To develop professionally	x	x	68%	81%
To challenge myself	61%	x	55%	56%
To have fun	65%	x	38%	41%
To explore the activity topic	58%	x	69%	63%
To improve something in my network/ organisation	30%	x	60%	56%
I got to know about the activity...				
Through friends	36%	x	27%	11%
Through colleagues	10%	x	17%	37%
Through mentors	12%	x	7%	4%
Through social media	38%	x	29%	30%
Through an organisation	41%	x	52%	22%
Through a national agency	3%	x	6%	26%
Through a SALTO centre	2%	x	6%	15%

Through Eurodesk	1%	x	1%	0%
The activity, overall, was scale 0 – 10 (0 not at all, 10 very much)				
Digital	5.5	6.2	5.8	5.1
Inclusive	8.3	8.5	8.7	7.9
Participatory	8.4	8.7	8.7	8.7
Sustainable	7.5	7.9	8.0	7.3
Overall, my experience has been scale 1 – 5 (1 not great at all, 5 very great)				
	4.5	4.6	4.6	4.5

Table E.3 participation

	Percentage /Mean scores			
	PP	PT	YWM	TCA
I was able to contribute my views and ideas to the activity. scale 1-5 (1 disagree strongly, 5 agree strongly)	4.5	x	4.5	x
I was satisfied with how my contributions were integrated into the activity. scale 1-5 (1 disagree strongly, 5 agree strongly)	4.2	x	4.4	x
After the activity, I engage in civil society ...				
Less than before the activity	4%	x	3%	x
To the same extent	54%	x	44%	x
More than before the activity	42%	x	53%	x
Total	100%	x	100%	x
After the activity, I am interested in participating in elections ...				
Less than before the activity	2%	x	3%	x



To the same extent	32%	x	66%	x
More than before the activity	66%	x	31%	x
Total	100%	x	100%	x
After the activity, I am interested in participating in democratic processes ...				
Less than before the activity	2%	x	1%	x
To the same extent	36%	x	54%	x
More than before the activity	62%	x	45%	x
Total	100%	x	100%	x
Mean scores scale 1-5 (1 disagree strongly, 5 agree strongly)				
		PT		
After the activity, participants are better able to actively engage in civil society	4.4			
After the activity, participants are more interested in participating in elections	3.6			
After the activity, participants are more interested in participating in democratic processes	3.9			

Table E.4 Diversity and inclusion

	Percentage / Mean scores			
	PP	PT	YWM	TCA
I felt well integrated into the activity. scale 1-5 (1 disagree strongly, 5 agree strongly)	4.2	x	4.8	3.9
In the activity, I observed or experienced barriers to inclusion. scale 0 – 10 (0 not at all, 10 very much)	3.4	3.7	2.7	3.3
In the activity, we managed to overcome these barriers. scale 1-5 (1 disagree strongly, 5 agree strongly)	3.7	4.1	4.3	3.4
After the activity, I actively support diversity ...				
Less than before the activity	6%	x	3%	0%

To the same extent	49%	x	33%	42%
More than before the activity	45%	x	64%	58%
Total	100%	x	100%	100%
After the activity, I actively stand up against discrimination and intolerance ...				
Less than before the activity	2%	x	2%	0%
To the same extent	49%	x	52%	42%
More than before the activity	49%	x	46%	58%
Total	100%	x	100%	100%
After the activity, I actively stand up for my own rights ...				
Less than before the activity	3%	x	0%	0%
To the same extent	56%	x	49%	67%
More than before the activity	41%	x	51%	33%
Total	100%	x	100%	100%
Mean scores scale 1-5 (1 disagree strongly, 5 agree strongly)				
		PT		
I felt that participants were well integrated into the project		4.5		
After the activity, participants are better able to actively support diversity		4.3		
After the activity, participants are able to stand up against discrimination and intolerance		4.3		
After the activity, participants are better able to stand up for their own rights		4.2		

Table E.5 Digitising

	Percentage/ Mean scores			
	PP	PT	YWM	TCA
I was satisfied with how the activity used digital spaces. scale 1-5 (1 disagree strongly, 5 agree strongly)	3.7	4.0	3.9	3.8

After the activity, I am competent in using digital technologies ...				
Less than before the activity	5%	x	4%	0%
To the same extent	72%	x	64%	38%
More than before the activity	23%	x	32%	62%
Total	100%	x	100%	100%
Mean scores				
		PT		
After the activity, participants are more competent in using digital technologies scale 1-5 (1 disagree strongly, 5 agree strongly)		3.8		

Table E.6 Sustainability

Mean scores				
	PP	PT	YWM	TCA
The activity has made me more sensitive towards environmental issues. scale 1-5 (1 disagree strongly, 5 agree strongly)	3.6	x	3.6	x

Table E.7 the outcomes and impact of the activity (PP)

Percentages	
In the project, I learned something about ...	
using different languages for communication	52%
applying logical thinking	42%
using digital technologies	22%
dealing with complexity	39%
cooperating with others	70%
developing arguments	43%
acting upon opportunities	40%
expressing myself with empathy	46%
expressing ideas creatively	62%
none of the above	4%
After the project, I appreciate cultural diversity	

Less than before the project	2%
To the same extent	25%
More than before the project	73%
Total	100%
Mean scores scale 1-5 (1 disagree strongly, 5 agree strongly)	
Through the project, I improved my ability to discuss political topics seriously	3.8
Through the project, I improved my ability to get along with people who have a different cultural background	4.5
Through the project, I improved my ability to reflect and think critically	4.0
Through the project, I improved my ability to engage in tackling sociopolitical challenges	3.9
After the project, I feel that I am more self-confident	4.1
After the project, I feel that I am more autonomous	3.9
After the project, I feel that I am better at empathising with others	4.1
Through the project, I improved my ability to communicate with people who speak another language	4.3
Through the project, I improved my ability to negotiate joint solutions when there are different viewpoints	4.1
Through the project, I improved my ability to interact with policy- and decision-making	3.9
Through the project, I improved my ability to engage in tackling sociopolitical challenges	3.7

Table E.8 the outcomes and impact of the activity (PT, YWM, TCA)

	Percentages		
	PT	YWM	TCA
In the activity, I learned something about ...			
young people's realities	x	54%	44%
youth policy	x	39%	33%
youth work	x	66%	59%
non-formal learning	x	71%	82%

professional development	x	49%	59%
project management	x	51%	51%
organisational learning and development	x	52%	48%
none of the above	x	3%	0%
In the activity, I also learned something about ...			
youth empowerment	x	67%	63%
needs-orientation	x	47%	48%
learner-centredness	x	36%	26%
power and power relations	x	41%	41%
peer learning	x	55%	52%
none of the above	x	4%	0%
Mean scores			
scale 1-5 (1 disagree strongly, 5 agree strongly)			
	PT	YWM	TCA
My networks have extended meaningfully	4.3	4.3	4.1
I have become aware which of my competences I want to develop further	4.1	4.2	4.0
I have learned more about fostering non-formal learning in youth work	4.3	4.3	4.2
I have learned more about strengthening youth-led youth work	4.2	4.2	3.9
I am better able to strengthen international dimensions in my youth work	4.2	4.2	3.9
I am better able to strengthen diversity in my youth work	4.3	4.2	3.9
I am better able to deal with ambiguity and tensions in my youth work	4.2	4.1	3.8
My participation in the activity already had an impact on my youth work	4.2	4.2	4.0
My participation in the activity already had an impact on my network/organisation	4.2	4.0	3.7

Table E.9 personal experience

	Mean scores			
	scale 0 – 10 (0 not at all easy, 10 very easy)			
	PP	PT	YWM	TCA
How easy was it for you to afford participating in the activity?	7.6	x	7.8	7.7
How easy was it for you to fully express yourself in the activity?	7.9	x	8.2	7.6
How easy was it for you to transfer your learning to your network/organisation?	x	x	7.7	7.0
How much did you enjoy participating in the activity?	8.8	x	8.9	8.4
How much have the recent multiple crises influenced your experience?	5.1	x	5.7	5.8
How much have the recent multiple crises influenced the project?	4.8	6.1	5.5	5.0
How meaningful was the activity for you?	8.5	x	8.6	8.6
Thinking back, how close did you feel to Europe before the activity?	6.6	x	7.1	6.4
And how close do you feel to Europe now?	7.8	x	8.2	7.3

## Annex J – Main outcomes of the stakeholder interviews and focus groups

The tables below present the main findings of the interviews and focus groups with project beneficiaries, interviews with individual participants and non-participating organisations.

Table J.1 Analysis of interviews and focus groups on the strengths of Erasmus+ in the Netherlands

What is going well?	Sector-specifics
<p><b>Policy priorities</b></p> <p><b>Many stakeholders and beneficiaries state that the familiarity of the programme contributes to successful participation and international cooperation. However, they also indicate that many educational professionals are unfamiliar with the programme as its more known for the student mobility.</b></p> <p><b>Note: Several beneficiaries reported that the number of student mobilities were back to pre-Covid years except for exchanges with the UK after Brexit.</b></p>	<p>VET: Stakeholders and beneficiaries noted that internationalisation is included in the sectoral agenda and student participation with targets are defined. In addition, the regional focus remains most common in the sector but that interest in international cooperation via the CoVe's has grown.</p> <p>HE: Stakeholders and beneficiaries note internationalisation is included in the sectoral agenda and beneficiaries indicate a high number of student participation. However, the political climate for internationalisation has shifted towards limiting incoming degree student mobility.</p> <p>Youth: Stakeholders and beneficiaries state that the programme has an agenda setting function, making the role of youth work more visible. In addition, the Erasmus Youth programme tends to focus more on long-term issues and youth development rather than just current problems (policy makers tend to focus on current issues like criminalization and nuisance).</p> <p>Discontinuation of Erasmus+ would put additional pressure on internationalization activities in all sectors but would impact the SE, AE, and Youth sector as they have more smaller organisations with less budget for internationalisation activities.</p>
<p><b>The framework of national and horizontal policy priorities is generally well-received as programme stakeholders and beneficiaries note that programme still facilitates the specific needs of beneficiaries and sectors. However, beneficiaries indicate that more information is desirable as only the</b></p>	<p>SE: Internationalisation is included in the sectoral agenda, but other issues are prioritised by school administration such as the teacher shortage, the lag of basic skills in students and student wellness after Covid-19.</p>

<p><b>interpretation of the inclusion and diversity priority is described by the multi-annual inclusion strategy of the NA.</b></p>	<p>VET: Internationalisation is included in the sectoral agenda, targets for student participation and fewer opportunity groups are defined.</p> <p>HE: Stakeholders and beneficiaries note that the state of digitisation is relatively good in the Netherlands compared to other EU countries. In addition, beneficiaries reported that the integration of blended education during Covid-19 went well as this already linked up with existing developments of the sector.</p> <p>AE: currently this sector lacks a sectoral agenda.</p> <p>Youth: Other themes that also play a role, such as mental health and radicalization, also partly tie in with the horizontal themes (inclusion and digitalisation).</p>
<p><b>Several stakeholders indicated that the strength of the Erasmus+ programme is the explicit focus on education allows for collaboration and educational exchanges even though relations are frozen at the highest political level.</b></p>	
<p><b>Programme design</b></p>	
<p><b>The National coordinating stakeholders (Permanent Representation in Brussels, the NAUs and the NAs) indicate to be satisfied with the current process of triangular consultation and coordination activities.</b></p>	
<p><b>Several stakeholders and beneficiaries appreciate the variety of formats for mobility and partnerships and follow-up opportunities for other collaborations to continue established partnerships and internationalization activities. Specifically, synergy with follow-up applications after KA1 for Erasmus accreditation and after KA2 with KA2.</b></p>	<p>VET: successful follow-up application to CoVE after KA2 were also reported</p>
<p><b>Several VET and HE beneficiaries evaluated Erasmus+ Charter positively and stated the document acts as internal agenda setting element for improvement.</b></p>	
<p><b>The Erasmus+ accreditation was positively assessed by beneficiaries from as a stable</b></p>	<p>For HE and VET: Most beneficiaries indicated it enabled easier project applications the</p>



<p><b>source of funding, embedding internationalisation within their organisation and contributes towards sustainable international collaborations.</b></p>	<p>simplification of the final reporting lacked the ability to provide more context for the number of mobilities (for example due to organisational changes).</p>
<p><b>Many experienced beneficiaries rated the simplification measures positively for both KA1 and KA2 in the current programme period and indicated a reduction of the administrative load. However, some beneficiaries indicated that lump sum funding fulfils the need for flexibility but also creates intransparency and discussions among project partners.</b></p>	<p>Some beneficiaries note that the NAs in the EU have different interpretations of financial regulations for KA2 e.g. hotel costs in city of receiving organisation and without established travel costs discussions among project partners.</p> <p>One beneficiary described the administrative workload as 80% of the work for 20% of the exceptions in documentation.</p>
<p><b>Several beneficiaries are positive about the ability to ask for extension, but some beneficiaries indicated the need for longer extensions that transfers the deadline after the summer of the school/academic year.</b></p>	<p>VET and HE: noted that especially after Covid-19 the number of student mobilities was slow in returning to previous level due to high level of uncertainties related to international travel</p>
<p><b>Many beneficiaries indicate that the short-term impact of Erasmus+ participation and outputs are often sustainably embedded within the participating organisation and (international) network of partners. Especially longer mobilities are seen as more effective as these allow participating more time for learning and teambuilding, but these are also difficult to organise for beneficiaries.</b></p>	<p>Note: in addition, staff participation to Erasmus+ is also seen as good employment practice by staff and management.</p>
<p><b>Several beneficiaries are positive about the use of learning agreements for students but indicate that the use of English and complexity of the language in legal documents and participant reports can be difficult for VET students which hinders their understanding of responsibilities and reflection on their participation.</b></p>	
<p><b>Inclusion</b></p>	
<p><b>Many stakeholders and beneficiaries indicated that inclusion measures of shorter mobilities, group context and additional funding for fewer opportunity groups are well-received as they align more with the needs of students and staff. However, some beneficiaries indicated that they are unfamiliar with the needs of fewer opportunity groups as they lack experience with them or fewer opportunity students at their institution.</b></p>	<p>SE: NA staff and beneficiaries indicated that special needs education could benefit from the inclusion top-up for students.</p> <p>VET: beneficiaries indicated an interest in BIPs for their students.</p> <p>HE: beneficiaries were generally positive about the inclusion top-up and the recent changes in regulating the administrative proof. However, they indicated that they were hesitant to promote the opportunity</p>

	<p>due to the uncertainty of the number applications they will receive from fewer opportunity students.</p> <p>Youth: Beneficiaries were positive about the function of preparatory visits, especially when new partners are involved.</p>
<p><b>Many HE-stakeholders and beneficiaries evaluated the digital and hybrid activities of the programme as very positive as they aided the inclusion goals of the programme by reaching fewer opportunity participants. However, they also indicated that these activities should not replace physical exchanges.</b></p>	<p>VET: NA staff indicated that the specifically the VET sector would also be interested in organising virtual exchanges such as BIPs</p>
<p><b>Impact of participation and outputs</b></p>	
<p><b>Several beneficiaries indicated that the current amount in grants, travel allowances, KA2 project management fees could be higher to accommodate higher costs and reimbursements of staff hours.</b></p>	<p>Note: The distance calculator does not take the regional location of the Dutch Caribbean and beneficiaries noted that additional funding is often needed as airfare is expensive which limits opportunities to participate.</p> <p>HE: In addition, they indicate that the amounts for incoming and outgoing staff (KA171) is unequal which leads to more disparity.</p>
<p><b>Many beneficiaries noted that there is no alternative subsidy programme that offers the same kind of internationalisation opportunities in education and indicated a high additional value for the Erasmus+ programme.</b></p>	<p>SE: the NA staff mentioned that the Dutch IFO-subsidy is often used by schools as a first step towards internationalisation and Erasmus+ participation</p> <p>HE: some beneficiaries mentioned the individual travel grants or research grants and the NL scholarship for mobilities and the Horizon programme and Interreg</p>
<p><b>Many beneficiaries identified supporting factors of Erasmus+ participation and impact: the support of management, stable funding and embedding internationalisation in the vision of the organisation and curriculum. Specifically multi-year projects and Erasmus+ accreditation allow the creation of support and acceptance of practical issues such as staff replacement.</b></p>	
<p><b>Participation in Erasmus+ is seen by most sectoral stakeholders and beneficiaries as an important element of good employment practices. The working conditions for</b></p>	<p>SE: Creating attractive employment conditions for teachers with international professionalisation opportunities are</p>

<p><b>educational staff are under pressure due to high workload, meetings and additional (administrative) tasks which leave less time for teaching.</b></p>	<p>important as many new teachers leave the profession within 5 years.</p> <p>HE: Beneficiaries report that the Erasmus+ programme also supports high quality research projects and reaches professors and directors of research.</p>
<p><b>Several stakeholders and beneficiaries positively rate Internationalisation at Home (IaH) and eTwinning activities but also indicate that both have untapped potential as many educational staff are unfamiliar with these activities.</b></p>	<p>SE: Several beneficiaries indicate that younger SE students experience more obstacles for international mobilities due to age and necessity of parental consent.</p> <p>VET: One project beneficiary noted that receiving (more) internationals aids IaH efforts</p>
<p><b>Support of NA</b></p>	
<p><b>Many beneficiaries rate the support of the NA E&amp;T and NA Youth staff positively, helpful, and quick. They indicate that the support is very motivating due to the collaborative attitude of staff.</b></p> <p><b>One beneficiary indicated the wish for one account manager instead of contact via a general email.</b></p>	<p>VET: Some beneficiaries had mixed reviews about the contact and support of NA E&amp;T after the transition from CINOP to Nuffic. While individual staff are helpful the lack of historical/collective memory and high turn-over negatively impacted the quality of the provided support.</p> <p>AE: Several beneficiaries indicated no to little issues with the provided support of the NA E&amp;T after the transition from CINOP to Nuffic.</p>
<p><b>Several beneficiaries rated the Impact tool very helpful for writing and fine-tuning their project application and indicated it improved the quality of their application.</b></p>	
<p><b>The impact of Ukraine invasion is rarely mentioned by interviewed beneficiaries as they indicate they do not use the Erasmus+ funding for Ukrainian refugees or other activities in the context of the Ukraine invasion.</b></p>	<p>SE: A sectoral stakeholder (VO-Council) notes that there are many initiatives in the Netherlands and that the effects differ per region as the inflow allow some schools to integrate Ukrainian students within their regular programme or organise separate classes.</p> <p>HE: One KA1 project highlighted was a University of Applied Sciences InHolland offering a second Erasmus+ periods for Ukrainian students and offering personal and academic assistance.</p>

Table J.2 Analysis of interviews and focus groups of what could be improved of Erasmus+ in the Netherlands

**What could be improved?**

**Sector-specifics**

<b>Policy priorities</b>	
<b>Several stakeholders and beneficiaries indicated that the dissemination of Erasmus+ outputs and promotion of the programme could be improved because most activities are ad-hoc due to limited/lack of funding after the finalization of the project and they see a role for the NAs, sector organisations and professional associations.</b>	
<b>One HE stakeholder (NETH-ER) indicated a need for guidelines for international educational collaboration as the autonomy of educational institutions leaves room for ambiguity and risks in relations with partners from countries that are deemed more high-risk for knowledge management.</b>	
<b>Several stakeholders and beneficiaries indicated the importance of keeping focus of the Erasmus+ programme as the basis to enrich the learning experience and improve the quality of education.</b>	HE: Note that a previous Neth-ER paper argued for the absence of national priorities and focus on the EU education space.
<b>Some VET and Youth beneficiaries indicate that the European dimension of the Erasmus+ programme could be enlarged by focusing on introducing Europe and the operations of European institutions.</b>	
<b>Several Youth beneficiaries indicate that the programme could include more themes such as radicalization, mental health, housing, talking to seniors and making ends meet with your income.</b>	
<b>Programme design</b>	
<b>Stakeholders interviewed (NA, sector organisations and beneficiaries), especially in the field of VET and HE, plea for more Erasmus+ funding for KA1 as the current budgets are often fully committed and internationalization is embedded in their organisation and training offers.</b>	Note: that they also stated that continuing the inclusion and diversity efforts of the programme also necessitates additional funding which is relevant for all sectors but especially for AE and Youth
<b>Many beneficiaries indicated that they need to be informed earlier of administrative changes in Calls and reporting requirements of the programme.</b>	Several beneficiaries from VET and HE indicated this need as they are often larger educational organisations and noted that changing administrative processes take at least one year to implement.
<b>Some beneficiaries noted that funding for the host/ receiving partner organisation has been removed in the current programme period. They are now more dependent on the reciprocity of partners, voluntary efforts of</b>	SE: Several beneficiaries indicated that for accredited schools and schools with strong relations with partners this issue is less relevant as they can fall back on multi-annual projects.

<p><b>staff, and be creative with activities to organise programmes without funding from Erasmus+.</b></p>	
<p><b>Several beneficiaries indicated that the questions of participant reports are too vague for students and staff to reflect and provide useful answers which creates an unrealistic evaluation in the final report. In addition, more space to provide context for implementation and progress of the project is welcome and the manual tracking and responding to participant reports with negative feedback is a high administrative burden.</b></p>	<p>Note: One beneficiary states that the email address that is used to send the participant reports should be changed as it is marked often as spam by software.</p> <p>Note: Some beneficiaries propose that the reporting and administration could use an 'achieving impact' perspective making use of yearly subsidies and final report could be done in collaboration with accountants.</p>
<p><b>Many beneficiaries noted the non-functioning and lack of user-friendly IT tools caused delays in project administration, the necessity of shadow administration and made it difficult to find information. While beneficiaries experienced these issues, the legal deadlines of Calls and reporting remain unchanged increasing the administrative burden.</b></p>	
<p><b>Several beneficiaries report a high administrative burden, especially for smaller organisations and/or newcomers. Some more experienced beneficiaries do indicate that the administrative burden has been reduced compared to the previous programme period (2014-2020).</b></p>	
<p><b>Some beneficiaries indicate that more digitalisation is welcome to reduce the administrative burden, for example by accepting digital signatures for an attendance list and evaluation forms.</b></p>	
<p><b>Several beneficiaries indicated that the responsibility of project coordinator/lead partner as high compared to partner in KA2. Especially the financial risks for the organisations for smaller organisations and additional workload of project management in larger partnerships were mentioned.</b></p>	<p>One beneficiary described the issue of financial risk as it is difficult to renegotiate funding for partners if they fail to meet deadlines and agreements during the project. They indicated a wish to raise the issue with the NA and other beneficiaries to share experiences and develop a collaborative approach.</p>
<p><b>Many beneficiaries identified limiting factors of Erasmus+ participation and impact: the high workload of educational staff, the high administrative burden for application and</b></p>	<p>SE: beneficiaries indicated that yearly training hours for staff are included in the collective labour agreement but that lack of management support and difficulty finding teaching replacements</p>

<p><b>reporting and the difficulty in finding new partners.</b></p>	<p>SE and AE: have smaller and/or non-profit organisations which indicate that the lack of staff capacity acts as a high barrier for participation.</p> <p>VET and HE: have larger educational institutions but participation is limited to a select number of experienced departments and faculties.</p>
<p><b>Several SE and VET beneficiaries noted that eTwinning was helpful to find partners and projects but that they preferred other platforms due to a higher level of user-friendliness such as Teams and Zoom to keep in contact with their partners.</b></p>	
<p><b>Many beneficiaries indicate a need for more knowledge management between projects and sectors and dissemination of good and bad practices for more opportunities for synergy and long-term impact. They see a clear role for the Erasmus+ programme and sectoral stakeholders as this relates to facilitating long-term impact.</b></p>	
<p><b>Many beneficiaries were positive about the opportunity to receive the green top-up to support green travel but indicated that the amount and additional days are insufficient to be a decisive factor.</b></p>	<p>VET and HE: beneficiaries noted that the preconditions such as train operator coverage in EU and shorter and more comfortable travel times also weigh heavily in travel decisions.</p> <p>One beneficiary indicated that the Netherlands has relatively high train costs which made the current amount insufficient for national travel from rural regions and international travel.</p>
<p><b>Inclusion</b></p>	
<p><b>Several HE beneficiaries indicate that more promotion of inclusion measures and investments in outreach must be made to increase the implementation of these funds.</b></p>	<p>Note: while in the Netherlands a link can be made with the additional student grant to provide these students with the inclusion top-up, but GDPR issues and the EU-focus of the programme force educational institutions to create their own check for the inclusion top-up.</p>
<p><b>Several beneficiaries indicate that estimating and budgeting for the number of fewer opportunity participants is difficult at the application phase and applying for additional funds is a lot of extra work</b></p>	

<b>discouraging coordinators to work with these groups.</b>	
<b>Support of NA</b>	
<b>Several stakeholders and project beneficiaries indicated opportunities for outreach by the NA E&amp;T to educational professionals via untapped communication channels such as professional associations, European networks and other sectoral events.</b>	SE: the NA could also focus more in reaching school coalition and communities to increase their outreach.
<b>Several stakeholders indicate that the NA Youth could do more outreach in places other than schools, such as local youth organisations.</b>	
<b>Some beneficiaries from the Dutch Caribbean were positive about the NA E&amp;T but noted that no follow-up was given for their region after the combined visit several years ago.</b>	SE: beneficiaries indicated the exchange needs with organisations in the Netherlands due to the same examination criteria and French and non-EU countries due to regional location of islands. Synergy can be created by combining exchanges to German/Belgium partners with an additional visit to a Dutch school
<b>Many beneficiaries positively assess the impact tool and impact framework of the Dutch NA and wish this focus was more present in the final report.</b>	
<b>Some beneficiaries indicate a wish for more insight into the programme and the choices made therein, e.g. criteria for allocation of funds.</b>	
<b>Some beneficiaries indicate a wish for an NA Confidant to avoid complaints impacting future applications and/or an arbitration body for disagreements with the NA.</b>	

Table J.3 Analysis of interviews with individual participants

<b>Staff</b>	<b>Sector-specifics</b>
<b>Programme design</b>	
<b>Several participants indicate that the current administrative load is required to ensure careful spending by the Erasmus+ programme is high, they indicate that the technical jargon and use of English adds complexity.</b>	This is more relevant for SE and AE participants and newcomers.
<b>HE staff have rated the organisation of BIPs to be successful due to the shorter mobility and potential for IaH. However, they note that the implementation and participation numbers</b>	Note: staff indicated that the physical aspect of a virtual exchange is important to gain academic and intercultural competences.

<b>are likely to grow as many are unfamiliar with this activity.</b>	
<b>Several HE staff have indicated that the green travel top-up acts as an appreciation for more sustainable travel but that the amount is insufficient to be a determining factor.</b>	One beneficiary stated that preconditions such as the lack of quality train infrastructure and long-haul bus routes hamper the green travel intentions of their institution.
<b>Impact of participation and outputs</b>	
<b>Several staff indicated that more interest within the organisation was present than the number of participants and internal selection was done which included a motivation letter, learning goals and strategic management decisions.</b>	Note: one beneficiary explicitly mentioned that the Erasmus Accreditation allowed all interested staff to participate via multiple application rounds
<b>Several staff report that the participation of their organisation in Erasmus+ is dependent on the intrinsic motivation of staff and the lack of management support prevents more resources or recognition to be provided to participants and outputs.</b>	Note: most of the staff reported participating in 1-week long mobilities.
<b>All staff report that participation has a big impact on knowledge exchange, teambuilding, innovation, and professionalization, understanding and acceptance of others and the establishment or growth of their national/international network of partners.</b>	
<b>Several staff indicate that the vision on internationalisation from management / organisation is a key factor for the impact of Erasmus+ participation.</b>	
<b>Several staff report that the national and cultural contextual differences limit the implementation and dissemination of outputs.</b>	
<b>Students</b>	
<b>Programme design</b>	
<b>Some beneficiaries in SE indicated that the lack of cultural/religious matches with host families acted as obstacles for sending and receiving students.</b>	One beneficiary indicated that using holiday homes instead of hotels was a reason that one student was able to receive parental permission for the mobility.
<b>None of the interviewed participants in HE indicated the use of the inclusion top-up but did report that the existence of the funds was communicated before their exchange.</b>	
<b>None of the interviewed participants in HE indicated the use of the green travel top-up and indicated that the amount was</b>	



<b>insufficient to be a decisive factor as comfort and scheduling were key determinants. In addition, the relatively expensive train fares were mentioned in comparison to airfare.</b>	
<b>Impact of participation</b>	
<b>Several students and beneficiaries report that most participants have a positive Erasmus+ experiences and enjoy long-term impact related to personal and academic growth, intercultural competences and knowledge, self-reliance/empowerment and aspirations for international career development.</b>	
<b>Several youth report that participation in a project was a safe environment to work on self-confidence and positive effects on their self-exploration, debating skills, empowerment, growing social network.</b>	
<b>Several students evaluated the support and guidance from their international office and the host institution good before, during and after their foreign exchange.</b>	HE: one participant explicitly mentioned that he was happy to receive help for accommodation of the host university in Italy and the option to follow a language course
<b>Some students indicated a wish for more contact with local students and persons during their foreign exchange as they mainly made contacts in the Erasmus+ social bubble.</b>	
<b>Some students indicated that the lack of or previous experience with a foreign language played a role in choosing the geographical location of their host organisation.</b>	

Table J.4. Analysis of interviews with non-participating organisations

<b>Organisations</b>	<b>Sector-specifics</b>
<b>Policy priorities</b>	
<b>Many staff indicate that their organisation / management has different priorities than internationalisation, innovation and professionalisation activities. Staff interested in Erasmus+ participation must proactively contact their international coordinator or find information themselves.</b>	SE: e.g. lack of capacity due to teacher shortage and less flexible working hours than VET and HE
	VET: e.g. focus on regional connection and businesses over international networks
	VET and HE: e.g. high workload for staff
	AE: e.g. lack of sectoral policies
<b>Many staff and some professional associations indicate that they and their colleagues are unfamiliar with</b>	

<p><b>internationalisation programmes and/or the Erasmus+ programme (KA1, KA2 and eTwinning) for staff. Several interviewees report they only know Erasmus+ due to the student mobility.</b></p>	
<p><b>Some interviewees report that they already feel that their management/ organisation is hesitant to spend the internal training budget which acts as a barrier for Erasmus+ participation.</b></p>	<p>SE: the yearly training budget of 500/600 Euro is included in the collective labour agreement</p> <p>HE: one beneficiary reported that teaching staff can reserve funds collected by their institution from their secondary activities i.e. convention speaker fee for their own projects</p>
<p><b>Some staff indicated that the rejection of their application stopped the momentum of internal support and support at partner organisations for internationalisation activities which prevented the re-submission of their application.</b></p>	
<p><b>Programme design</b></p>	
<p><b>Several staff indicate that the Erasmus+ programme and its horizontal priorities provide one or more opportunities to fulfil the innovation/professionalisation needs of their organisation or learning goals for staff.</b></p>	<p>Note: Some staff indicate that they are the process to or have applied at the time of the interview due to successful participation in the past.</p>
<p><b>Some staff indicate they find it difficult to determine where connection or synergies can be created as outsiders of the programme as lots of projects are taking place.</b></p>	
<p><b>Some staff in SE and HE indicated that the current grant amounts are not worth the cost-effectiveness for the invested resources and that their organisations use internal training or excursion budgets to fund their internationalisation activities.</b></p>	
<p><b>Many staff indicate that they and their colleagues have a negative image or fear the additional administrative workload with participation in Erasmus+ / EU programmes on top of their regular tasks.</b></p>	
<p><b>Several new applicants report that preparation for an Erasmus+ application helped them to focus on creating a strategic internationalisation vision and goals for their future activities, long-term impact and collaboration.</b></p>	
<p><b>Several new applicants indicate that the final publication of a Call is relatively late which</b></p>	

complicates preparation with foreign partners and holidays.

Several new applicants report that their experience with the IT instruments is bad, i.e. unable to write Call details and information which added to the administrative burden.

Some past participants/new applications report that the responsibility of project coordinator is too high and they only (wish to) participate as partner.

#### Inclusion

Several new applicants indicate to be unfamiliar with the inclusion measures and available budgets of the programme or that the criteria are unclear.

Several new applicants of SE and VET indicate that short group mobility would be attractive to their fewer opportunity students and staff due to the organisational burden for staff.

#### Support of the NA

Several new applicants evaluated their contact with the NA E&T as positive and helpful. However, some indicated long response times via mail and the wish for more guidance as newcomers.

