

Mid-term evaluation of educational programmes (2014-2021 Financial Mechanism)

Final Report

January 2022

Authors:

Dominika Safin

Paweł Hess

Toms Feifs

Ionela Bulceag

Commissioned by the Financial Mechanism Office

Conducted and written by Ecorys



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This evaluation was led by Ecorys Polska. For more information, please contact us at: ecorys@ecorys.pl.

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Acronyms

APR	Annual Programme Report
CAWI	Computer-aided web interviewing
DG EAC	Commission's Directorate General for Education and Culture
DPP	Donor Programme Partner
EEA	European Economic Area
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
ESF	European Social Fund
ESIF	European Structural and Investment Funds
FM	Financial Mechanism
FMO	Financial Mechanism Office
GrACE	Grant Administration and Collaboration Environment
HEI	Higher education institution
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NFP	National Focal Point
PA	Programme area
PP	Project Promoter
PO	Programme Operators
STEM	Science, technology, engineering and mathematics
VET	Vocational education and training

Executive Summary

Evaluation objectives and scope

The purpose of this evaluation was to provide insights into ways to enhance the effects of the educational programmes under the EEA and Norway Grants on educational institutions, staff, and students. The overall objectives of the evaluation were to:

- ▶ Assess the extent to which the programmes' approaches and activities are likely to enhance the quality and relevance of education and training as per priorities of the European policy cooperation (ET2020).
- ▶ Explore whether there are alternative (more efficient or effective) ways of achieving the same results.
- ▶ Assess the extent to which the educational programmes under the EEA & Norway Grants have an added value compared to EU measures in this area.

The evaluation covered all eight programmes that have an outcome linked to programme area 3 (Education, Scholarships, Apprenticeships and Youth Entrepreneurship) implemented in eight countries: Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia. It focused on the components of the programmes falling under outcomes linked to PA3 and considered projects contracted up until the July 2021. The eight educational programmes were assessed against the five evaluation criteria of efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, relevance, coherence, and in terms of bilateral cooperation.

Evaluation methodology

The evaluation adopted a mixed-methods approach. Qualitative and quantitative research and analytical methods were used. Desk research covered (i) guidelines for the EEA Financial Mechanism and Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014 – 2021, (ii) financial and indicator data from the Grant Administration and Collaboration Environment (GrACE) system, (iii) programme-level documentation: Memorandums of Understanding, programme agreements, concept notes, Annual Progress Reports, risk assessments, information about calls, and (iv) other information sources such as reports from previous evaluations of EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms and Education and Training Monitor reports.

Qualitative primary data was collected by way of 42 semi-structured interviews. These included interviews with representatives of the FMO, Programme Operators (POs), National Focal Point (NFP), Donor Programme Partners (DPPs), Project Promoters (PPs), and the European Commission. In addition, the evaluation team implemented an online survey with PPs and an online survey with donor project partners. Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis, quantitative data analysis techniques, and triangulation.

The main limitations of the evaluation included the continuously changing implementation status, great diversity of the programmes, the early stage of implementation of some programmes, and low response rates in the surveys with PPs and donor project partners.

Key findings and conclusions

Relevance

All POs and NFPs of the eight educational programmes consider their programmes to be highly relevant to the education and training needs in their countries, particularly regarding teacher competencies, vocational education and training, and higher education. The national stakeholders also perceive the programmes as fully corresponding with the key policy priorities and strategies in education and training in the Beneficiary States. The alignment of the programmes with national needs and policy priorities is supported by stakeholder consultations held at the programme development stage in each Beneficiary State. However, the evaluators'

assessment of the intended results of the programmes in the context of the key challenges identified in the EU Education and Training Monitor 2020 and relevant 2020 European Semester Country Reports indicates room for improvement. All DPPs highlight that efforts to improve the alignment of the programmes with the critical education and training needs in the Beneficiary States are warranted.

Relevance of the programmes for the target groups is boosted by dedicating special lines of support to vulnerable groups, and more such support is needed. However, better need assessments and feasibility studies are required to ensure the demand for such projects on the part of beneficiary organisations. Programme relevance was somewhat affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and, except for Poland, Beneficiary States have not substantially adapted activities financed by the Grants.

Coherence

Most of the educational programmes' intervention areas are also covered by the Erasmus+ programme. National stakeholders believe that this is highly appropriate, given the great needs in their countries. The key informants perceive much of the value-added of the Grants in terms of volume effects, even in the face of the new, expanded Erasmus+ programme budget. National stakeholders also see the Grants as distinct because they focus on themes (e.g. climate change, clean energy, environmental conservation, and sea resources) that are not well covered by Erasmus+ and place more emphasis on bilateral cooperation.

At the project level, multiple interrelations exist between the initiatives financed from the Grants and those by other EU sources, especially the Erasmus+ programme. Many PPs and donor project partners use their networks developed under Erasmus+ programme for the implementation of projects financed from the Grants, and vice versa. Most also use the experiences from applying and implementing a project financed from one of the sources for the roll out of projects under the other. Some PPs also achieve different, complementary outputs under the two sources of financing as part of a broader, more comprehensive initiative. Instances of complementarities and synergies between projects financed from the educational programmes and ESF and ERDF financing were also identified.

However, for various reasons, planning for complementarities and synergies between the Grants and Erasmus+ at the programme level is limited. The type of projects funded by the educational programmes and ESIF are regarded as too different in size and objectives by many POs to actively plan for their coherence. The key challenge to using Erasmus+, ESIF, or other sources of funding to build on the results of the educational projects is the lack of predictability of the time of disbursement of the Grants to the PPs in the Beneficiary States.

Efficiency

Most of the educational programmes are approximately mid-way through their planned implementation period. The programmes that have advanced the furthest are LV-RESEARCH, CZ-EDUCATION and EE-RESEARCH. These programmes, along with PL-EDUCATION, RO-EDUCATION, and PT-INNOVATION, are expected to use almost all the available funding. The SK-INNOVATION programme is unlikely to make use of all available funding. Despite considerable delays in Slovenia, using all available funding is still possible, provided no further unexpected issues arise. However, re-allocation of funding from some areas to others may yet be required.

The evaluation showed that PO institutional capacity and experience are the main factors affecting programme performance. Institutions which manage other funds or Erasmus+ National Agencies are able to more efficiently implement programmes funded by the Grants. At the project level, approximately half the projects sampled are progressing as planned, with the other half experiencing delays. The most important factor hindering timely implementation is the COVID-19 pandemic. Many activities were either postponed or moved online.

Effectiveness

Six out of eight educational programmes are highly likely to achieve most targets. These include CZ-EDUCATION, EE-RESEARCH, LV-RESEARCH, PL-EDUCATION, PT-INNOVATION, RO-EDUCATION. The SK-INNOVATION and SI-EDUCATION are unlikely to achieve many of their targets. Institutional capacity of the Programme Operator was found to be a key factor contributing to the achievement of programme results. Elements that facilitated effectiveness include experience in programme management, staff cohesion and competence, access to potential project promoters and proven methods of cooperation with stakeholders.

The evaluation found that a stronger thematic focus may make up for a PO's limited experience in the field of education, small staff size, or lack of access to potential project promoters. Programmes with a thematic focus may benefit from domain-specific expertise of institutions acting as Programme Operators. A stronger focus facilitates effectiveness especially in the case of programmes with relatively small financial allocations, and programmes where education is accompanied by other programme areas (e.g. research or innovation).

The technical and organisational capacity of PPs to achieve the planned results varies between the entities eligible for support in educational programmes. Public schools and VET institutions tend to be less equipped in staff and competence to prepare high-quality applications and implement international projects smoothly. Higher education institutions, private schools and enterprises are more likely to have the resources, experience and know-how necessary for successful application and implementation.

Capacity building activities could be aimed at increasing project relevance to target groups' needs, strengthening partner cooperation, and exchanging experiences in project management. Such support would contribute to overall programme effectiveness by strengthening project promoters in lagging areas (e.g. VET), or those who struggle at the application or implementation stage (e.g. public schools).

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to drive uncertainty about achieving results of projects which involve short and long-term mobility.

Sustainability

The POs and NFPs across the Beneficiary States plan for sustainability to varying extents and in different ways. Most Beneficiary States included reflections on ways to ensure sustainability in their programme concept notes. The key strategies to promote sustainability used by the national authorities include obliging PPs to reflect on the sustainability of the intended results in their proposals, promoting and disseminating results, and ensuring that the projects concern high political priorities. In some Beneficiary States, a perception that capturing longer-term effects of 'soft' measures financed by the programmes is not possible results in a lack of strategies to promote sustainability. The programmes and projects lack mechanisms to monitor results several years after the programme completion.

Most stakeholders expect the key results in most projects to continue five years after the projects' completion. This pertains to both institutional cooperation and mobility projects, although the effects of mobilities are less likely to be visible. The majority of both PPs and donor project partners plan to use the lessons learnt while implementing the projects for future initiatives. Many already use their experiences for implementing new projects financed from the Grants, Erasmus+, or Horizon 2020. The continuation of inter-institutional cooperation is one of the key results that is expected to sustain in the long term. This was especially the case of longer-term institutional cooperation, where multiple outputs and ties were developed as part of the joint implementation of projects.

Barriers to sustainability include long periods between the subsequent financial mechanisms, turnover in human resources at individual organisations, and a potential lack of follow-up funding for the continuation of results.

Bilateral cooperation

Bilateral cooperation has been effective overall, and the benefits of collaboration are evident to all stakeholders involved. Cooperation provided new knowledge about education and training practices to partners involved, offered new ideas for educational projects, and led to new inter-institutional relations. The support and active involvement of DPPs in programme design and implementation was considered valuable by the POs consulted. This involvement continued despite the pandemic, providing helpful recommendations and advice to POs in the process of adapting their programmes to COVID-19 circumstances.

The Bilateral fund has been extremely useful in facilitating networking between partners and its flexibility in terms of possibilities to reallocate funding was highly appreciated by the POs consulted. However, the pandemic has posed significant challenges, and less than half of the funding awarded has been used to date.

There is room for improvement regarding bilateral cooperation on the project level. A lack of communication between donor project partners and PPs constitute a significant challenge to effective cooperation. In some cases, the limited capacity and resources of donor project partners could hinder the execution of projects despite the initial interest in bilateral cooperation. The high number of Beneficiary States compared to the number of Donor States limits the availability of donor project partners to actively participate in projects.

Differences in administrative procedures of Beneficiary States and administrative mechanisms in place to ensure sound financial management of public funds (e.g., rules for accounting and financial reporting) constitute other key obstacles impacting the effectiveness of bilateral cooperation.

Recommendations

Recommendations for the current Financial Mechanism

- ▶ We advise that the FMO and the DPPs mobilise support to the Slovenian authorities to help implement the SI-EDUCATION programme.
- ▶ To facilitate sustainability of results, the FMO and the DPPs should support the POs to promote and disseminate the project results as a way to bolster continuity of results.
- ▶ We recommended that the FMO and the POs generate further lessons learnt regarding the relevance and coherence of the programmes as a basis for a potential future FM.

Recommendations for the future Financial Mechanism

- ▶ The FMO and the POs should ensure a better coverage among the projects of the critical challenges in education and training in both the Beneficiary and the Donor States.
- ▶ The POs should ensure a greater focus on inclusive education in the programmes to improve their relevance to the needs of the most vulnerable learners.
- ▶ To enhance the quality and relevance of education and training in the Beneficiary States, both during and beyond the pandemic, the FMO should advise the Donor and Beneficiary States to shift the focus from short-term mobility to longer-term institutional cooperation.
- ▶ The FMO and the DPPs should encourage a narrower thematic scope of programmes managed by POs without extensive experience in implementing educational programmes.
- ▶ With support from the FMO and the DPPs and with a view to facilitate planning of projects and synergies with other initiatives, and to support the engagement of donor project partners, the POs should make the launching of the calls for proposals more predictable.

- ▶ To facilitate the engagement of donor project partners, the FMO, in collaboration with the POs and the DPPs, should look for ways to harmonise the application timelines and procedures among the EEA/Norway Grants programme countries.
- ▶ To improve complementarities and synergies with Erasmus+ and ESIF, the FMO and the DPPs should work with the POs to plan for complementarities in terms of target groups and activities supported by the programmes on the one hand and Erasmus+, ESIF, and other EU funding on the other hand.
- ▶ To ensure that the POs have sufficient capacity to implement the programmes, Erasmus+ National Agencies should be the preferred PO. In case of mixed-area programmes, the FMO and the DPPs should support the POs to adapt to education-specific requirements.
- ▶ The FMO and the POs should invest in improving the competencies of current and prospective PPs in designing relevant and comprehensive projects, collaborating with partners, and managing international projects.
- ▶ The FMO and the DPPs should work with the POs to design strategies for the measurement and continuation of achieved results in the long term.
- ▶ The DPPs and the POs should enhance bilateral cooperation by improving communication at both programme and project level.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Policy context

Improving access to and quality of education has been one of the critical components of the European Union's strategy for supporting economic and social cohesion and sustainable growth of the EU Member States and regions. 'Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning' was one of the 11 thematic objectives set out in the **Europe 2020 strategy**. To guide efforts in this area, **the following targets were set at the European level to be achieved by 2020:**

- ▶ at least 95% of children should participate in early childhood education
- ▶ fewer than 15% of 15-year-olds should be under-skilled in reading, mathematics and science
- ▶ the rate of early leavers from education and training aged 18-24 should be below 10%
- ▶ at least 40% of people aged 30-34 should have completed some form of higher education
- ▶ at least 15% of adults should participate in learning
- ▶ at least 20% of higher education graduates and 6% of 18–34-year-olds with an initial vocational qualification should have spent some time studying or training abroad
- ▶ the share of employed graduates (aged 20-34 with at least upper secondary education attainment and having left education 1-3 years ago) should be at least 82%

In 2017, the importance of education and training was further reaffirmed with the proclamation of the **European Pillar of Social Rights**. The Pillar states that 'everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and lifelong learning in order to maintain and acquire skills that enable them to participate fully in society and manage successfully transitions to the labour market'.¹ More recently, as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to create new and exacerbate existing education and training policy challenges, investing in skills has been made a key priority of the **EU's COVID-19 Recovery plan**.

The EU provides significant funding and facilitation for policy cooperation in education and training to support the Member States in their efforts to strengthen education and training systems. Much of EU's support for policy cooperation is supplied under the **strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020)**. The ET 2020 framework directly supports the achievement of the Europe 2020 targets by providing the Member States with opportunities to exchange knowledge and build best practices for education policy and reform. This support includes working groups, peer-learning activities, and reporting on Member States' progress towards achieving the ET 2020 objectives² and benchmarks as part of the annual Education and Training Monitor.

The ET 2020 framework addresses outcomes from early childhood to adult, vocational, and higher education. For instance, it is implemented through the **Copenhagen process** centred on cooperation in the vocational education and training (VET) area. The process is aimed at: (i.) reinforcing the European dimension in VET, (ii.) increasing information, guidance, counselling, and transparency of VET; (iii.) developing tools for the mutual recognition and validation of competencies and qualifications; and (iv.) improving quality assurance in VET.

¹ European Commission website, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles_en

² The ET 2020 objectives are aligned with the Europe 2020 strategy targets

The **European Higher Education Area (EHEA)** is another key EU initiative for reinforcing cooperation on education. It is an international collaboration to adapt the participating countries' higher education systems through structural reforms and shared tools. The ultimate goal of EHEA is to increase staff and students' mobility and to facilitate employability.

In terms of EU financing for education and training, it is being channelled through two main financing streams: the Erasmus+ Programme and the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF). With budgets of 14.7 billion EUR in the 2014-2020 perspective and 26.2 billion EUR for the 2021-2027 period, **Erasmus+** is the single largest programme for financing education and training in the EU. It funds mobility and cooperation initiatives in higher education, vocational education and training, school education (including early childhood education and care), adult education, youth, and sport. It has the following components³:

- ▶ Key Action 1: Learning Mobility of Individuals – supporting mobility projects for learners and staff in higher education, VET, school education, adult education and youth, and Youth Participation Activities.
- ▶ Key Action 2: Cooperation among organisations and institutions – supporting Partnerships for Cooperation, Partnerships for Excellence, Partnerships for Innovation, Capacity Building in the field of youth, and Not-for-profit European sport events.
- ▶ Key Action 3: Support to policy development and cooperation – covering actions for policy development, reform and implementation, policy cooperation, and social dialogue in the education, training and youth fields.
- ▶ Jean Monnet actions – offering opportunities in the field of higher education and other fields of education and training with a focus on spreading knowledge about the European Union integration matters.

Promotion of education and training is also a central objective of the **European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF)** which were set up to implement the EU's cohesion policy. In the 2014-2020 perspective, the EU allocated approximately EUR 39.2 billion (including EU and national co-financing) to European Social Fund (ESF) support for education and training. This represents 32% of the total planned funding for the ESF.⁴

Most ESIF funds for education and training fall under Thematic Objective 10 ('Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning'). However, they are also channelled under Thematic Objectives 8 ('Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility') and 9 ('Promoting social inclusion, and combating poverty and all forms of discrimination'). They are implemented via regional Operational Programmes in all EU Member States. It is important to note that, as per the Common Strategic Framework, which translates the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy into possible actions of the established funds, ESIF should be linked with Erasmus+. This suggests a role for the ESIF in reinforcing and multiplying measures developed under Erasmus+.⁵

Over the last decade, national and EU efforts towards improving education and training systems resulted in a general improvement in educational attainment levels in Europe.⁶ For the EU as a whole, progress was made in most domains, from early childhood education to adult learning. However, more efforts are needed to achieve

³ European Commission (2021) Erasmus+ Programme Guide 2021, available at:

https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/resources/documents/erasmus-programme-guide-2021_en

⁴ Ecorys, Ismeri Europa (2020) Study supporting the evaluation of ESF support to education and training for the Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.

⁵ Coyne, M. et al. (2018) Research for CULT Committee – ESIF and culture, education, youth & sport – The use of European Structural and Investment Funds in policy areas of the Committee, European Parliament, Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies, Brussels

⁶ Ecorys, Ismeri Europa (2020) Study supporting the evaluation of ESF support to education and training for the Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.

the change envisaged by EU policy-makers in the fields of education and training. For instance, most of the Europe 2020 targets related to higher education attainment, mobility, adult learning, graduates' employment rate, and early school leaving, which were set to be achieved in the EU by December 2020, were not met. In the areas of adult learning and reducing underachievement of basic skills, the EU as a whole has made no progress in this area since 2009. Targets regarding mobility were also unmet. The higher education attainment target was the only target met. Despite falling short of the targets, great strands toward reduced early school leaving and improved participation in early childhood education and care.⁷

In light of these challenges and policy objectives, the EEA and Norway Grants represent a vital contribution to strengthening education and training systems in the EU. The following section provides an overview of the EEA and Norway-financed programmes specifically aimed to improve human capital and knowledge base in Europe.

1.2 Overview of educational programmes

The 2014-2021 Norwegian Financial Mechanism and the European Economic Area (EEA) Financial Mechanism (hereafter referred to as '2014-2021 FMs') provide financing to eight programmes that include programme area (PA) 3 'Education, Scholarships, Apprenticeships and Youth Entrepreneurship' (hereafter referred to as the 'educational programmes'). These programmes are established under the priority sector *Innovation, Research, Education and Competitiveness*. Other PAs which fall under this priority sector include Business Development, Innovation, and SMEs (PA1), Research (PA2), Work-life balance (PA4), and Social Dialogue – Decent Work (PA5).

The 2014-2021 FMs provide a total of €136.1 million for educational programmes, out of which €63 million covers activities directly linked to PA3. Over three quarters (€104.1 million) of the total budget for the educational programmes come from the EEA Financial Mechanism and one quarter (€32 million) from the Norway Mechanism.

Educational programmes contribute to the EEA and Norway Grants' overall objective to reduce social and economic disparities within the EEA. Specifically, they aim to contribute to **the objective of PA3, which is to enhance human capital and knowledge base**. They are intended to be aligned with and support the EU's education and training policy. As per the EEA and Norway Grants' Guidelines for Educational Programmes⁸:

'The educational programmes shall contribute to increasing both the quality and relevance of education and training at all levels. They shall also contribute to the development of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the European Strategic Framework for Cooperation in Education and Training (ET2020) as well as the Copenhagen process aimed at improving Vocational Education and Training (VET).'

Programmes linked to PA3 allocate funding to the following areas of support:

- ▶ Institutional cooperation at all levels of education between donor and beneficiary countries;
- ▶ Enhancing the quality and relevance of education and training in the beneficiary countries at all levels of education;

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ EEA and Norway Grants 'Guideline for Educational Programmes: Rules for the establishment and implementation of programmes falling under programme area 3 "Education, Scholarships, Apprenticeships and Youth Entrepreneurship"

- ▶ Cooperation and partnerships between education, research and the world of work, including exchange of knowledge and best practice between stakeholders and professional networks and the world of work across institutions and countries;
- ▶ Traineeships, apprenticeships and work placements;
- ▶ Youth entrepreneurship;
- ▶ Improving adult participation in lifelong learning;
- ▶ Professional development of teachers;
- ▶ Higher education student learning mobility and staff mobility between donor and beneficiary countries.

Importantly, all EEA and Norway-financed programmes also have a second, equally important objective – to contribute to the **strengthening of bilateral relations between Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, and the Beneficiary States**. As per the 2014-2021 Blue Book: 'The donor and beneficiary countries share common challenges in the education sector. Programme and project cooperation and mobility of students and staff are encouraged to support learning, knowledge development and sharing of best practice.'

The eight programmes with an outcome linked to programme area 3 are being implemented in eight countries: Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia. In comparison with the previous financial mechanisms, the programmes offer a much wider scope of support to education and training. For instance, education-related financing within the 2009-2014 mechanisms was limited to environmental education, inter-institutional cooperation for research and mobility (within the Research and Scholarship PA), and lifelong learning (within the Global Fund for Decent Work). In this context, the educational programmes represent novel interventions within the Grants.

All but one of the educational programmes are managed by public bodies – line ministries or governmental offices, agencies, and foundations. Slovakia is an exception, where the Research Agency is independent of the government. All programmes are prepared and implemented in partnerships with at least two Donor Programme Partners.

The programmes differ significantly in their focus areas, the scope of the activities proposed, and design. Total grant sizes awarded for the programmes with outcomes linked to PA3 range from €6,5 million for CZ-EDUCATION to €38 million for PT-INNOVATION. However, since these programmes differ in their host programme area, the total grant sizes are not indicative of the shares of resources dedicated to educational activities under each programme. In Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, and Slovenia, PA3 is the host programme area. In special Estonia and Latvia, Research and Scholarships (PA2) is the host area, while in Portugal and Slovakia, education activities are planned under PA1 – Business Development, Innovation and SMEs. Accordingly, while all or most of these grants in Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, and Slovenia are dedicated to educational activities, smaller shares of the total grants are devoted to PA3 in Estonia, Latvia, Portugal and Slovakia.

Programmes with PA3 as their host area – CZ-EDUCATION, PL-EDUCATION, RO-EDUCATION, SI-EDUCATION – finance a wide range of educational activities (from staff and student mobility to institutional cooperation). They also target most or all levels of education. The other four programmes – EE-RESEARCH, LV-RESEARCH, PT-INNOVATION, and SK-INNOVATION have narrower or more thematically specific foci. The activities in Estonia and Latvia are closely linked to research activities and therefore focus on higher education. In turn, education activities under PT-INNOVATION have a specific thematic focus on marine issues. Table 2 in Annex I provides information on the key features of each programme evaluation, including the PA3-specific outcomes to be achieved.

For each country, a set of special concerns was defined, further contributing to their diversity. The special concerns vary from improving the situation of the Roma population to developing systemic solutions in enhancing the competencies of educators and taking measures for easing the transition of pupils from schools to the labour market. Lastly, it is worth mentioning that the specifics of the programme area require that: all programmes address gender disparities in education and training, priority is given to bilateral partnerships offering added value, and all programmes address inclusive education.

2.0 Purpose and methodology

2.1 Purpose and scope of the evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation was to **provide insights into ways to enhance the effects of the educational programmes under the EEA and Norway Grants on educational institutions, staff, and students**. The overall objectives of the evaluation were to:

- ▶ Assess the extent to which the programmes' approaches and activities are likely to **enhance the quality and relevance of education and training** as per priorities of the European policy cooperation (ET2020).
- ▶ Explore **whether there are alternative (more efficient or effective) ways of achieving the same results**.
- ▶ Assess the extent to which the educational programmes under the EEA & Norway Grants have **an added value compared to EU measures in this area**.

The evaluation was formative. It assessed the programmes against the evaluation criteria to uncover how well the programmes fit and are performing so far, and what difficulties arise and why. The evaluation provides both: a) a potential early warning regarding recurring or/and significant problems that may occur, and b) a summary of how well the programme plans and activities are progressing towards achieving the programme area objectives. In this way, the evaluators hope to provide a strong evidence basis for any potential adaptations or modifications to ensure the eventual achievement of expected results.

The evaluation was also intended to feed into the discussion about a potential future financial mechanism. It aims to provide the Donor States and the Financial Mechanism Office (FMO) with **the knowledge and recommendations on strategic matters to ensure that the potential future educational programmes yield substantial results**. It provides input on how the design of the programmes can support the overall goals of increasing the quality and relevance of education more efficiently and effectively.

The evaluation covered all eight programmes that have an outcome linked to programme area 3 (Education, Scholarships, Apprenticeships and Youth Entrepreneurship) implemented in eight countries: Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia. It focused on the components of the programmes falling under outcomes linked to PA3. It considered projects contracted up until the 4 July 2021.

The eight educational programmes were assessed against five evaluation criteria (efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, relevance, coherence) and in terms of bilateral cooperation. The set of pre-defined questions, alongside operationalised questions, is presented in the evaluation matrix in Annex II.

2.2 Evaluation methodology

For the purpose of this evaluation, a mix of qualitative and quantitative research and analytical methods were used. Such an approach allowed for triangulation of information sources and data, as well as gathering rich material and ensuring robust analyses.

2.2.1 Desk research

Secondary information sources were used at every stage of the evaluation. Desk research covered a range of documents and data, including:

- ▶ Guidelines for the EEA Financial Mechanism and Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014 – 2021,
- ▶ Financial and indicator data from the Grant Administration and Collaboration Environment (GrACE) system,
- ▶ Programme-level documentation: Memorandums of Understanding, programme agreements, concept notes, Annual Progress Reports, risk assessments, information about calls,
- ▶ Additional information sources: reports from previous evaluations of EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms, Education and Training Monitor reports, European Semester Country Reports, documentation of Erasmus+ and national education policies and strategies.

2.2.2 Primary data collection

In total, 37 semi-structured interviews were conducted at the programme level. In order to gain insight into implementation progress and the challenges encountered, the interviews were held with Programme Operators (POs) and National Focal Point (NFP) representatives of each of the educational programmes. Additionally, for programmes in an advanced stage of implementation, we also conducted interviews with Project Promoters (PPs). Most of the interviews were individual, however, in some cases, multiple representatives of an institution participated.

Table 1: Sample structure at the programme level

Programme	Number of IDIs at programme level	Population size – Project Promoters survey	Number of collected responses – Project Promoters survey
CZ-EDUCATION	6	41	16
EE-RESEARCH	5	5	5
LV-RESEARCH	5	10	3
PL-EDUCATION	6	76	24
PT-INNOVATION	5	30	7
RO-EDUCATION	6	78	30
SI-EDUCATION	2	0 (no projects implemented)	0
SK-INNOVATION	2	0 (no projects implemented)	0
Total	37	240	85

The evaluation also involved discussion with representatives of the Financial Mechanism Office and high-level stakeholders – the Donor Programme Partners and the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC). These consultations were conducted through five individual in-depth interviews and one focus group discussion. All interviews were conducted based on topic guides prepared during the Inception Phase of the assignment and were approved by the FMO.

Quantitative information on the experiences and opinions of PPs and donor project partners was collected via two dedicated online surveys, using computer-aided web interviewing (CAWI). In the survey with PPs, the questionnaire was translated to national languages. Overall, 85 PPs implementing projects in the evaluated educational programmes participated in the survey, out of the 240 contacted e-mail addresses (a 35% response rate). Among the 352 project partners from donor countries, 60 completed the survey (17% response rate).

2.2.3 Limitations

The key limitations to the evaluation included:

- ▶ **Continuously changing implementation status:** The progress and number of projects contracted kept changing dynamically in the course of the evaluation. To address this challenge, a temporal scope for the desk research (including analysis of indicators' achievement) was delineated during the initial phase of the assignment. However, to provide the FMO with the most up-to-date information, the evaluators considered all latest developments in the programmes reported by the interviewed stakeholders.
- ▶ **Diversity of the programmes:** Due to the differences in the programmes' scope, area of focus, etc., the evaluation ensured an appropriate level of analysis of each programme. Varying levels of resources were earmarked for desk research, interviews, and reporting at programme level, with extra resources allocated to the largest and most diverse programmes. The evaluation team prepared standardised templates for internal reporting and mapping of results. Interview notes and eight programme-level fiches were prepared, bringing the findings from desk research and primary data collection separately for each programme.
- ▶ **Lack of availability to participate in the interviews by national authorities** from Slovenia during the period previewed for data collection. Given the delays in the programme implementation, organisational changes, and limited human resources on the side of the Slovenian PO and NFP, the evaluators could not speak with Slovenian authorities during the fieldwork proper. However, after the FMO's intervention, interviews were finally conducted in November. To the extent possible, the findings were included in the draft Evaluation Report.
- ▶ **The unavailability of some selected PPs for interviews:** several PPs selected and contacted for interviews were unavailable or unwilling to participate. In response to this, in consultation with the FMO, the evaluation team selected substitute PPs in line with the sampling criteria. These included the same Beneficiary State, institution type, project type, intended outcomes, and grant size.
- ▶ **Generic email addresses to PPs and donor project partners:** The contact information of the PPs and donor project partners made available to the evaluation team from GrACE often included generic e-mail addresses. In response to this, the evaluators contacted the DPPs who provided additional, personalised contact details. However, the additional contact details were only obtained a few days before the closing of the survey. In effect, the overall response rate in the donor project partner was low. Concerning PPs, additional information from POs could not be requested in time. Thus, the response rate from the survey with the PPs was also lower than expected.
- ▶ **Lack of possibility of field visits:** due to COVID-19 -related restrictions and safety concerns, all fieldwork was carried out remotely. The lack of a possibility to carry out field visits hindered more spontaneous interactions with PPs and prevented on-site observations, which would have been helpful for the evaluators in their analysis.
- ▶ **Lack of interviews with the donor project partners:** No qualitative interviews with the donor project partners were carried out. In effect, their perspectives in this report are based on their answers to the online survey.

3.0 Key findings and conclusions

3.1 Relevance

This chapter examines the extent to which the programme designs relevant are relevant to the Beneficiary States' national contexts. It takes into account how the pandemic affected the relevance of the programmes. The extent to which the programme designs are coherent with national education and training strategies in the Beneficiary States is also outlined.

CONCLUSIONS:

- The educational programmes are highly relevant to the education and training needs in the Beneficiary States, particularly regarding teacher competences, VET, and higher education. The programmes are also perceived by the national stakeholders as fully corresponding with the key policy priorities and strategies in education and training in the Beneficiary States. However, critical challenges such as adult education, early school leaving, teacher shortages, and gender imbalances could be addressed to a greater extent by the programmes. The current gaps in these areas are linked with the current framing of the programmes objective as 'enhanced human capital and knowledge base' which favours projects focused on knowledge exchange at the level of individuals.
- The alignment of the programmes with Beneficiary State needs and priorities is supported by stakeholder consultations held at the programme development stage in each Beneficiary State. Programmes with both broader and narrower scopes are equally relevant to Beneficiary State needs. Yet, it is easier to ensure programme relevance in both the Beneficiary and the Donor States with a narrower programme scope.
- Relevance of the programmes for the target groups is boosted by dedicating special lines of support to vulnerable groups, and more such support is needed. However, better need assessments and feasibility studies are required to ensure the demand for such projects on the part of beneficiary organisations.
- The relevance of the programmes was negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. With the exception of Poland, the type of activities financed were not adapted to the education and training needs in the Beneficiary States as affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The attractiveness of mobilities for beneficiary organisations also significantly reduced due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.1.1 To what extent are programme designs relevant to the country contexts?

Relevance to key needs and policy priorities in the Beneficiary States

All interviewed PO and NFP representatives believe that the programmes are fully relevant to the education and training needs in their countries. Most frequently, they mention the alignment of the programmes with the need for greater internationalisation of higher education institutions (HEIs) in their countries. All POs of programmes with higher education elements referred to the value of the programmes in addressing this need. The role of the programmes in strengthening the capacities of HEIs to cooperate internationally was most emphasised by stakeholders of the Latvian and Estonian RESEARCH programmes. In these two cases, the focus

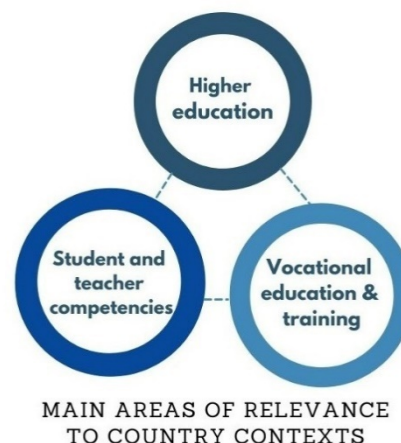
on international collaboration and exchange serves to complement the research work supported by the bulk of the two programmes' financing.

While greater internationalisation in higher education is needed, there is room for greater responsiveness to the key national challenges in this area. This is the case even for Latvia and Estonia, which exclusively focus on higher education. In Estonia, a relatively low completion rate of higher education degrees means that the future labour market needs will not be met.⁹ Thus, improving completion rates is essential.¹⁰ In addition, better aligning higher education to the labour market and learner needs in Estonia is crucial.¹¹ In Latvia, there are too few science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) graduates, and the LV-RESEARCH programme is very relevant in this regard. In addition to supporting mobility in higher education, it finances three pre-defined projects aimed to promote STEM education by increasing the attractiveness of, and interest in, STEM and STEM education.

In both of the Baltic states, large gender gaps (to the disadvantage of men) in higher education exist and are not covered by the EE-RESEARCH and LV-RESEARCH programmes. At the same time, **the Blue Book states that 'all programmes shall address gender disparities in education and training'**. In 2020, the gender gap in tertiary educational attainment among 25-34 year-olds stood at 22% (with 33% for men and 55% for women) in Estonia.¹² In Latvia, the gap equalled 21% (with 34% for men and 55% for women).¹³ Gender gaps in tertiary education attainment are also present in Norway and Iceland and, in 2020, accounted to 18% and 16% respectively.¹⁴ On the other hand, in 2019 there were twice as many males (18.7) in Latvia as opposed to females (9.0) per thousand inhabitants graduating tertiary education in STEM.¹⁵ Gender inequalities in STEM were even more pronounced in Norway, while the gap was much smaller in Iceland. While the gender gap did not exist in Liechtenstein, the number of STEM graduates had fallen in this country considerably over the last couple of years. This data suggests substantial room for potential cooperation, exchange and learning between the Donor and Beneficiary States in this area. Large gender gaps also exist in the other Beneficiary States, varying from 14% in Portugal to 21% in Slovenia.¹⁶

Vocational education and training was another area where most interviewed PO and NFP representatives highlighted the relevance of the programmes to national needs and priorities. The emphasis of the programmes on VET is visible from their design. All four EDUCATION programmes have an outcome that is dedicated to VET or work-based learning. Additionally, although it is not explicitly mentioned in the intended outcomes, work-based learning is also an important component of the Portuguese and Slovak INNOVATION programmes. At the same time, some countries, such as Czech Republic, experienced a low number of applications from VET institutions. According to the Czech PO and NFP, this is linked to the low capacity of VET institutions to lead international projects and the difficulty in finding donor project partners for such collaborations.

National stakeholders (POs and NFPs) representing the programmes with the broadest scope¹⁷ highlight that their programmes correspond with the general education needs in their countries. In this area, programme relevance is most often described in terms of their contribution to improving the **competencies and skills of**



⁹ OSKA (2018), Estonian Labour Market Today and Tomorrow: 2018, available [here](#)

¹⁰ EU Education and Training Monitor 2020 – Estonia, available [here](#)

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² OECD (2021) Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators, available [here](#)

¹³ OECD (2021) Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators, available [here](#)

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Eurostat: Graduates in tertiary education, in science, math., computing, engineering, manufacturing, construction, by sex - per 1000 of population aged 20-29, Tertiary education (levels 5-8) [educ_uoe_grad04]

¹⁶ OECD (2021) Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators, available [here](#)

¹⁷ CZ-EDUCATION, PL-EDUCATION, RO-EDUCATION, and SI-EDUCATION

teachers and students. In fact, each of these programmes dedicates considerable funding to mobility actions and related opportunities for teachers and students to learn and test alternative training methods and new ideas.

A review of the projects and opinions of the DPPs indicate that the programmes address some critical education and training needs in the Beneficiary States to a limited extent. It appears that despite the broad scope of half of the programmes, critical areas such as early school leaving, lifelong learning, and teacher shortages are underrepresented in the projects' coverage. This is linked with the perceptions of national stakeholders as to the objective of the educational programmes. In fact, **the national authorities from the Beneficiary States see the primary value of the programmes in transferring knowledge from Donor State entities to the Beneficiary State institutions, rather than supporting system-related changes.** They consider the programmes to be complementary to other, more extensive funding sources (e.g. ESIF) which they see as better suited to tackle system-related challenges such as early school leaving or teacher shortages. As some DPPs point out, this is partly because of the way the objective of the educational programmes – 'enhanced human capital and knowledge base' – is framed. They rightly argue that if the Grants are to contribute to improved relevance and quality of education, that should explicitly be their aim.

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated some existing needs and led to new challenges in education and training in the Beneficiary States. **Except for Poland, the programmes did not address the Beneficiary States' education and training needs brought to the fore by the COVID-19 pandemic.** In addition to exacerbating the digital divide and unequal access to quality education and training, the pandemic severely disrupted lifelong learning and VET across OECD countries.¹⁸ Several PO and NFP representatives of other programmes regretted that their programmes do not provide funding to address low digital literacy among both students and teachers, as well as poor digital infrastructure in schools and at home. Stakeholders from Czech Republic and Romania, in particular, highlighted that these needs should be covered in future similar programmes. This is understandable since the programmes were developed prior to the pandemic. However, as the case of Poland shows, it is possible to adjust the programmes to emerging needs. PL-EDUCATION was the only programme that was adapted to respond to the education and training needs brought to the fore by the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to the ongoing pandemic, the Programme Operator of PL-EDUCATION added a distance learning priority to a call for proposals in 2021. The change was assessed as highly relevant by the DPPs and was thus approved. Notably, the scope of this added priority covers not only distance learning methods but also the well-being of students and teachers in the context of an online environment.¹⁹

Alignment with interests of the beneficiary organisations and needs of the target groups

All programmes recorded a relatively high demand for financing for projects in most areas, confirming the programmes' relevance. Yet, low interest was seen in several calls supporting initiatives targeted at specific groups. The latter included calls dedicated to supporting Roma students in Czech Republic and precarious workers in Slovenia. Based on the relevant PO testimonies, rather than suggesting a low relevance of these measures, the limited interest may be linked to the challenges related to working with these specific target groups. Another reason for this could be the low relevance of these measures for organisations in the Donor States, leading to difficulties in finding suitable donor project partners for these projects.

Calls dedicated to projects with substantial components of staff or student mobility that were launched after the outbreak of the pandemic also saw a lower demand. For example, this was the case of the Latvian scholarships calls, the most recent one receiving only five project applications. According to the PO, this was largely due to COVID-19 circumstances that made it impossible to organise an in-person networking event. Even though online mobilities could be organised instead, it appears that they are not being seen as attractive options by the potential beneficiary organisations and/or target groups.

¹⁸ See for instance OECD (2021) Implications of the COVID-19 Pandemic for Vocational Education and Training

¹⁹ Key informant interview with PL-EDUCATION's Programme Operator

The potential of most educational programmes to address the education and training needs of the most vulnerable groups could be improved. Only the Czech and Romanian programmes dedicated special lines of support to marginalised learners (Roma communities), even though addressing inclusive education is one of the programme area specifics. Nevertheless, the PO of CZ-EDUCATION underlined that the form of support should be revisited, given the low interest of applicants in the relevant calls. In turn, the Programme Operators from Poland and Slovakia noted the need for greater targeting of support to assist the most disadvantaged groups. In Poland, this could involve efforts to reduce unequal opportunities in education and training between children and youth living in urban and rural areas. In Slovakia, the PO stressed the need for increased investments towards inclusion and battling stereotypes. Given that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to deepen the unequal access to quality education and early learning across Europe,²⁰ greater attention to the needs of the most vulnerable pupils and students in all programmes is advisable.

Ensuring relevance of programme design

Relevance of the programmes to the national educational needs is supported by stakeholder consultations carried out at the inception of the programmes. The interviewed PO and NFP representatives of all of the eight programmes organised at least one such consultation in each country. Most of these consultations gathered not only policy-makers, but also a wide range of other stakeholders. For instance, in Romania, academics, education experts, teachers, principals, student representatives were also invited. In Portugal, the participants included academics and other experts, R&D centres, companies, state laboratories, vocational training schools, nautical schools, environmental NGOs, and other foundations. In Slovenia, the public consultation was attended by 43 participants hailing from educational and research institutions, ministries, NGOs, regional development agencies, and an association of municipalities. All PO and NFPs underlined that the consultations were essential in deciding how to plan the programmes.²¹

According to the PO and NFP respondents, **the consultations also served to ensure that the programmes are fully aligned with national policy priorities and strategies.** Most NFP and PO respondents interviewed stated that they had additional consultations with relevant line ministries to ensure this. The CZ-EDUCATION PO also reported that efforts were made to align the programme with national education and training strategies still under preparation. In effect, the CZ-EDUCATION programme was aligned to specific priorities such as education towards democratic values, inclusion, teacher preparation and education, and transition to employment. No tensions between the programmes and national policies were identified in the course of the research.

The collected evidence suggests that **although the thematic scope of the programme does not notably affect its relevance to education needs and priorities in the Beneficiary States, it can affect their relevance for Donor State entities.** The evaluation found that both broader EDUCATION programmes²² as well as more focused programmes such as PT-INNOVATION are highly relevant to policy needs in the Beneficiary States. However, it is more feasible to ensure alignment with the education and training needs and priorities in both Donor and Beneficiary States with narrower programmes. When covering a large number of thematic areas, the possibility that some topics would not correspond to the needs in the Donor States increases. This does not mean that the programmes need to be narrower in scope. But it is one possible strategy to ensure this. Other strategies include carrying out ex-ante evaluations of the programmes' relevance to both country needs and priorities.

While programmes' objectives are relevant to national needs and policy priorities, it is questionable whether projects which focus on short-term mobility can address the critical education and training needs in the Beneficiary States. As most DPPs point out, the majority of projects in some programmes (such as RO-EDUCATION) rely on short-term mobility activities to improve teacher and student competencies and exchange of practices. While the DPPs acknowledge the value of such projects, they believe they are insufficient to address the critical challenges in most Beneficiary States such as poor alignment of VET with the labour market needs. To

²⁰ OECD (2021) The state of school education: one year into the COVID-19 pandemic available [here](#)

²¹ Key informant interviews

²² CZ-EDUCATION, PL-EDUCATION, RO-EDUCATION, and SI-EDUCATION

improve programme potential to address these needs, the DPPs suggest shifting the focus of the programmes towards even more longer-term institutional cooperation. Institutional cooperation projects are more suitable to address such challenges because they tend to be more comprehensive (covering a wider range of activities) and longer. According to the DPPs, this would also improve the incentives of VET organisations in the Donor States to become donor partners in the projects financed by the EEA and Norway Grants.

3.2 Coherence

This section outlines how the programmes complement and synergise with the Erasmus+ programme and ESIF. It also explores opportunities to enhance synergies or identify points of difference between EEA and Norway Grants and EU funding.

CONCLUSIONS:

- Most of the educational programmes' intervention areas are also covered by the Erasmus+ programme. National stakeholders believe that this is highly appropriate, given the great needs in their countries. POs and NFPs also see the Grants as distinct because they focus on themes (e.g. climate change, clean energy, environmental conservation, and sea resources) that are not well covered by Erasmus+ and place more emphasis on bilateral cooperation.
- While planning for complementarities and synergies between the Grants and Erasmus+ at the programme level is limited, multiple interrelations exist between the programmes at the level of projects. Firstly, PPs and donor project partners use their networks developed under Erasmus+ programme for the implementation of projects financed from the Grants, and vice versa. Secondly, they use the experiences from applying and implementing a project financed from one of the sources for the roll out of projects under the other. Thirdly, some PPs achieve different, complementary outputs under the two sources of financing as part of a broader, more comprehensive initiative.
- Instances of complementarities and synergies between the educational programmes and ESF and ERDF financing were identified in the case of individual projects. However, the type of projects funded by the educational programmes and ESIF are regarded as too different in size and objectives by many POs to actively plan for their coherence.
- Using Erasmus+, ESIF, or other sources of funding to scale up, and build on, the achieved results would be easier if the timing of the disbursement of the Grants' funding were more predictable.

3.2.1 To what extent do the programmes complement or have synergies with the Erasmus+ programme and other EU initiatives?

Coherence with Erasmus+ programme

Much of the financing for educational projects by EEA and Norway and the Erasmus+ programme is dedicated to the same intervention areas. The alignment of intervention areas is particularly strong between the educational programmes and Key Actions 1 and 2 of the Erasmus+ programme. As outlined in section 1.1, Key Action 1 focuses on the learning mobility of individuals and Key Action 2 on cooperation among organisations and institutions. A comprehensive comparison of specific thematic areas and project types would require an in-depth examination of the projects financed from both sources. However, what is clear is that Key Actions 1 and 2 of Erasmus+ generally cover a wider range of projects than the Grants.

According to all of the POs and NFPs interviewed, dedicating more funding to mobilities and institutional cooperation than already available as part of Erasmus+ is the right strategy. They explain that the needs for

improved internationalisation of HEIs, quality of VET, and competencies of teachers and students are so vast that all investments in these areas are valuable. In other words, the key informants perceive much of the value-added of the Grants in terms of volume effects, even in the face of the new, expanded Erasmus+ programme budget.

National stakeholders consider that the central role of EEA EFTA countries in the Grants translates to the financing of projects that are different from those funded by Erasmus+. Firstly, several POs noted that the Grants' emphasis on EEA Grants countries means that the thematic focus of the funded projects is different from those financed by the Erasmus+ programme. As the POs explained, Iceland and Norway bring in specific thematic expertise that the PPs often capitalise on. Consequently, many educational projects entail components related to climate change, clean energy, environmental conservation, and sea resources. According to the PO of PL-EDUCATION, such 'niche' topics would be hard to implement as part of Erasmus+ projects.

In addition, the POs and the NFPs believe that **the Grants' emphasis on bilateral cooperation makes them more accessible for organisations and institutions that are less experienced in international cooperation.** In contrast, most projects financed by Erasmus+ require multilateral cooperation arrangements. However, bilateral cooperation in the form of Small-scale Partnerships was recently introduced as part of Erasmus+ to increase the accessibility of the programme for smaller organisations. Effectively, as noted by one DPP representative, this aspect of the Grants is no longer unique.


Some POs reported efforts to create complementarities and avoid overlaps between Erasmus+ and the Grants at the programme level. For example, in Latvia, PPs were invited to highlight complementarities with Erasmus+ projects at the application stage. In Romania, the national authorities decided to implement capacity building activities for target groups that would not be eligible under Erasmus+. Specifically, one call covered training for educational experts such as school inspectors, counsellors, and teacher trainers.

Nevertheless, the assertion of 'doing more of the same' prevails across the Beneficiary States. Consequently, **actual planning by national authorities to facilitate complementarities and synergies between the two funding sources is limited.** Beneficiary States such as Slovakia and Slovenia, where the PO is not the same institution as the Erasmus+ National Agency, reported planning for complementarities to be especially difficult. Yet, strategizing for complementarities and synergies with Erasmus+ was also minimal in the Beneficiary States such as Poland and Czech Republic, where POs also serve as Erasmus+ National Agencies.

At the project level, some PPs report complementarities and synergies between their Erasmus+ and Grants' projects.

Most surveyed PPs build on their networks developed as part of Erasmus+ to apply for the educational projects financed from the EEA and Norway Grants. As many as 60% of the PPs who completed the survey said they used their networks developed under Erasmus+ to apply for projects financed by the EEA and Norway Grants. Another 19% said they used their EEA and Norway Grants' networks to apply for Erasmus+ projects.

60% of surveyed Project Promoters used their Erasmus+ networks to apply for EEA & Norway funds

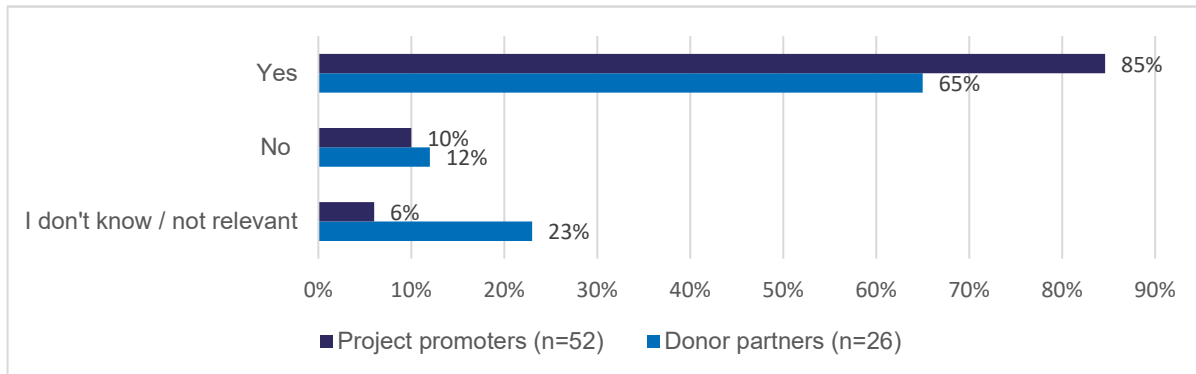


SURVEY WITH PROJECT PROMOTERS

The majority of the surveyed PPs and donor project partners use their experiences gained from Erasmus+ to implement EEA and Norway Grants, or vice versa. As displayed in Figure 1, 85% of the surveyed PPs and 65% of the donor project partners use the experiences gained as part of one of the sources of financing to implement projects funded by the other source. Many respondents noted that the administrative and managerial requirements within the Grants and Erasmus+ are the same; therefore, participation in one has made it much easier to apply for funding with the other. Specific areas noted included contracting and bookkeeping, documenting the project, communicating with suppliers, planning the project and budget, including unit costs, and reporting results.

Some PPs and donor project partners also noted that they used the knowledge, know-how or approaches developed as part of their Grants or Erasmus+ funded projects in their project financed from the other source. Examples of transferred elements included 'knowledge on inclusion and education for social innovation and entrepreneurship' and 'training skills and educational resources for working with youth in non-formal learning settings'.

Figure 1: Did/do you use your experiences gained from the Erasmus+ for the implementation of EEA and Norway Grants, or vice versa?



Source: CAWI surveys with PPs and donor project partners

Lastly, **several PPs interviewed reported implementing complementary activities financed from the Grants and Erasmus+ to achieve a larger goal.** For instance, one Portuguese PP used the Grants' financing for digitalising the ship chartering process to design solutions that reduce management costs and promote the digital transition in shipping. In parallel, the PP used Erasmus+ financing to strengthen staff capacities in the same area. However, as some POs noted, planning for project synergies is complicated because the calls within the educational programmes are not continuous. Their timing is also difficult to predict for the PPs and donor project partners.

The lack of communication between DG EAC and the FMO hinders complementarities and synergies between the programmes. As highlighted by the DG EAC representatives interviewed, the European Commission invests considerable resources into identifying the key challenges in education and training in all of the EU Member States and generating evidence for the relevance, impact, and sustainability of Erasmus+ actions. Evidence from the evaluation shows that the DPPs and POs are familiar and use this evidence to inform the programmes' development. However, the limited human resources to engage in strategic planning at the FMO's side restrict the FMO's availability to conduct in-depth analyses of this evidence. In this context, regular exchanges with DG EAC could help to provide the FMO with vital information about potential gaps and areas where complementarities could be created. This would be especially important for future potential financial mechanisms. Such interaction could also be used to establish a joint plan for encouraging organisations to use Erasmus+ and the Grants funding to generate larger, higher-level, and more sustainable results. This would be especially important for EEA and Norway funded educational programmes managed by different institutions than Erasmus+ National Agencies.

Coherence with ESIF

Complementarities and synergies of the educational programmes with ESIF are less visible than those with the Erasmus+ programme. The national authorities in some Beneficiary States, such as Romania or Slovenia, reported that complementarity between the programmes and ESIF was planned and intended. However, the authorities struggled to explain how this coherence is programmed in more detail. **The primary way the POs and NFPs interviewed tried to ensure coherence was by consulting the programme concept notes with national authorities responsible for ESIF implementation.**

The limited efforts to pursue coherence between the educational programmes and ESIF in the Beneficiary States are related to a prevalent perception that the two financing sources are too different in their aims and scope. Specifically, ESIF is seen as leading to more systemic work in education and training, while the Grants are seen as a key means to enhance bilateral cooperation with the Donor States. In addition, a large part of ESIF financing is implemented by regional authorities in the Beneficiary States, through the Regional Operational

Programmes. One respondent noted that this 'dispersion' of ESIF managing agencies could create additional challenges to the possible collaboration of key stakeholders of the Grants and ESIF.

At the same time, **some complementarities between educational programmes and ESIF funding was identified at the level of individual projects.** For example, in Latvia, activities delivered by the Norway and EEA Grants educational projects take place in the buildings renovated with the support of the European Regional Development Fund. Authorities from Romania confirmed that ESIF's funding for education and training infrastructure is complementary with the usually 'soft' measures financed from the EEA and Norway Grants. However, one interviewee noted that the bulk of ESIF funds for educational infrastructure in Romania is allocated to early childhood education (ECE) institutions. In this context, coherence with the Norway and EEA Grants, which do not finance activities at the ECE level, is limited.

Some respondents noted that the lack of a clear timeline for the disbursement of resources of the educational programmes makes it difficult for organisations to plan the implementation of related projects. In this context, a clear delineation of the timeline for the publication and duration of calls is expected to facilitate scaling up and building on the achieved results using Erasmus+, ESIF, or other funding sources.

Beyond ESIF, synergies between the SI-EDUCATION programme and funding from the EU Structural Reform Support Programme were identified in Slovenia and confirmed by the national authorities. The two financing channels provide funding for two projects, both contributing to establishing the Barnhus protocol in Slovenia. The Council of Europe leads the project supported by the EU Structural Reform Support Programme. As reported by the Slovenian interviewees, it entailed 'background work' and developing skills of relevant professionals (e.g. judges, prosecutors, the police, social workers and medical professionals) on how to support child victims of sexual abuse. In turn, the SI-EDUCATION project is a pre-defined project titled 'Barnahus/Children's House' is centred on developing infrastructure – a building in which children receive appropriate care in line with the Barnhus protocol. The Slovenian Ministry of Justice implements the pre-defined project.

Slovenia's experience with the Barnhus project suggests a potential for synergies between the educational programmes and large EU-funded projects. As the above example indicates, larger, pre-defined projects implemented by governmental stakeholders may favour such synergies.

3.3 Efficiency

This section examines the capacities of the POs to assess whether they can make effective use of the funding. It outlines whether and how the choice of PO affects programme implementation and the achievement of results. It identifies the main PO characteristics that make them best positioned to implement the programmes. The section also zooms in on the main factors that cause delays in implementation, indicating how the FMO and the DPPs can better support the POs and the PPs to manage for success.

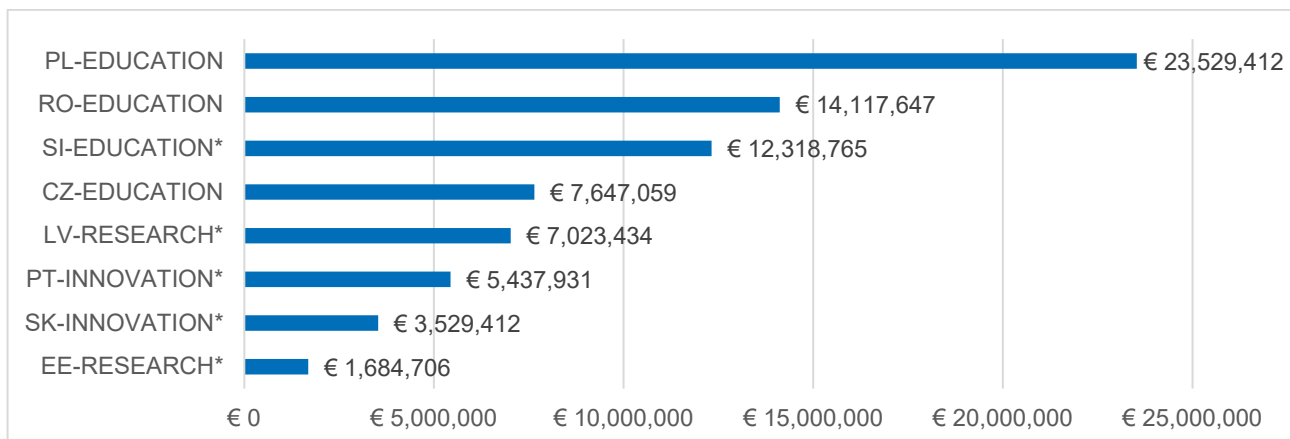
CONCLUSIONS:

- The educational programmes are approximately mid-way through their planned implementation period. The programmes that have advanced the furthest are LV-RESEARCH, CZ-EDUCATION and EE-RESEARCH. These programmes, along with PL-EDUCATION, RO-EDUCATION, and PT-INNOVATION, will expectedly use all of the available funding.
- The SI-EDUCATION and SK-INNOVATION have experienced critical delays. The Slovak programme is unlikely to make use of all available funding. In Slovenia, it may still be possible to use all available funding, provided no further unexpected issues arise. However, re-allocation of funding may yet be required.
- PO capacity and experience are major factors affecting programme performance. Institutions which manage other funds or Erasmus+ National Agencies are able to more efficiently implement programmes funded by the Grants.
- At the project level, approximately half the projects sampled are progressing as planned, with the other half experiencing delays. The most important factor hindering timely implementation is the COVID-19 pandemic. Many activities were either postponed or moved online.

3.3.1 Overview of programme implementation progress

The educational programmes vary significantly in terms of allocated funding (Figure 2). The allocation to the largest programme, PL-EDUCATION, amounts to €23.5 million, compared with €1.7 million for the smallest, EE-RESEARCH.

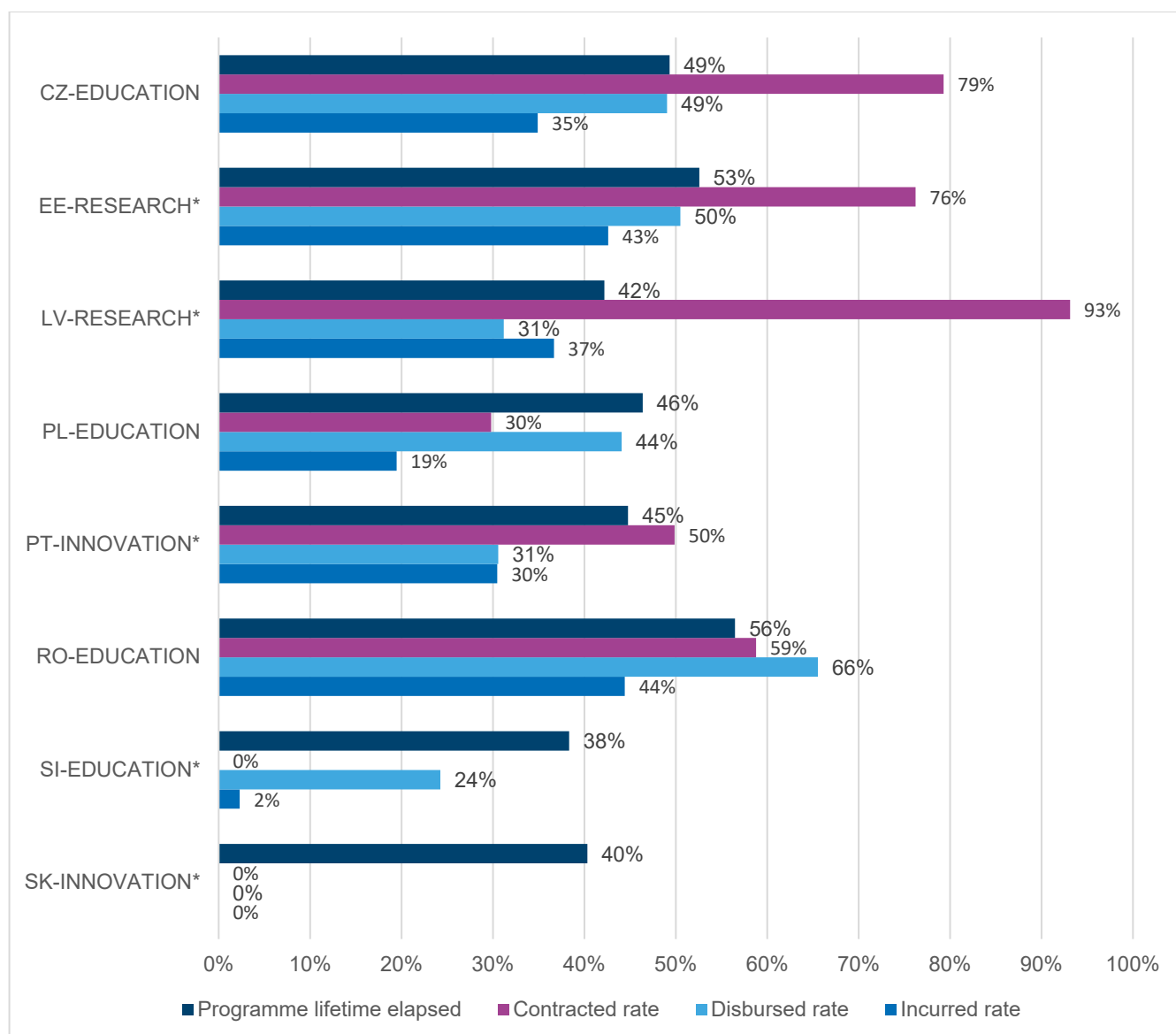
Figure 2 Eligible expenditure in the educational programmes



* The programme includes multiple areas; only amounts attributed to PA3 education are shown
Source: GrACE programme data (retrieved on 10.11.2021)

As of mid-November 2021, most programmes are nearly halfway through their planned implementation period. The programme RO-EDUCATION is the most advanced timewise (56%) and SI-EDUCATION – the least (38%). However, the analysis of financial data available in GrACE highlights that fund contracting and absorption does not necessarily reflect the programmes' advancement, as shown in Figure 3. The programmes in Latvia, Czechia, and Estonia have the most significant contracted rates (respectively, 93%, 79% and 76% of the total eligible expenditure), indicating significant progress in programme implementation. On the other hand, programmes in Slovenia and Slovakia are severely delayed, with no projects contracted, suggesting that the committed funds may not be eventually absorbed. The Portuguese and Romanian programmes present a contracted rate similar to programme lifetime. The rate for the programme in Poland visible in GrACE data is low (30%). However, this is because projects selected in the merged 2020-2021 call were not yet considered in the system.

Figure 3 Elapsed programme lifetime and financial progress



* The programme includes multiple areas; only amounts attributed to PA3 education are shown
Source: GRACE programme data (retrieved on 10.11.2021)

3.3.2 To what extent do the programmes fit for the current institutional and administrative capacities of the Programme Operators and Project Promoters? What are the main factors that cause delays in implementation and in what ways?

The capacity of the Programme Operator is a major factor affecting the timely implementation of a programme, as evidenced by the financial data presented above and information gathered in interviews at the Fund and programme levels. **Institutions that manage other funds or function as Erasmus+ National Agencies seem to perform better in programme implementation.** This is visibly the case of the RO-EDUCATION, PL-EDUCATION and CZ-EDUCATION programmes. Experience in managing prior EEA and Norway Grants and other educational programmes brings multiple benefits. These include sector and policy know-how, the existence of cooperation networks with potential PPs, staff competences, access to information systems facilitating project application and management, and – last but not least – experience in programme management and operation itself. All these elements increase efficiency. Additionally, experienced institutions are able to ensure that an adequately-sized team manages the programme. Unsurprisingly, in the period within the scope of this evaluation, the single external factor causing significant delays was the COVID-19 pandemic. POs possessing experience and capacity could respond adequately and relatively quickly to this challenge.

The important fact is that the three cases mentioned above are programmes dedicated to education (PA3) and do not include other thematic areas, such as research or innovation. But, in the evaluators' view, it is secondary to the aforementioned experience-and-capacity factor. The programmes LV-RESEARCH and PT-INNOVATION exemplify that **it is possible for operators to efficiently implement education measures in programmes that do not focus solely on this area.** The case of the PT-INNOVATION programme shows that after initial difficulties, it is possible for a PO without prior sector-specific education experience to adapt and build adequate capacity in terms of staff size and competence, as well as design mechanisms to implement education measures successfully.

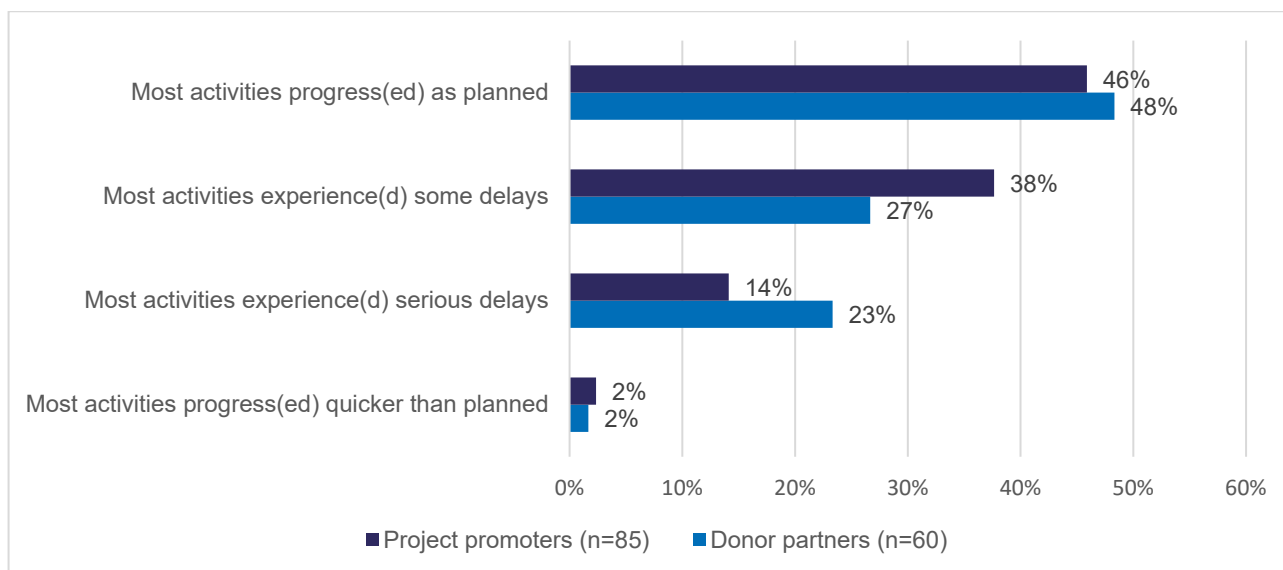
An efficient implementation is also not a function of fund size. As visualized above, CZ-EDUCATION, LV-RESEARCH and PT-INNOVATION, which involve some € 5.4 – 7.4 million allocated to the education area (PA3), display progress adequate to the programme lifetime elapsed. On the other hand, the SI-EDUCATION programme, which disposes of the third-largest allocation (€ 12.3 million), is significantly delayed.

The interviews conducted within this evaluation also indicate that **POs with insufficient staff size or competence for programme management experience difficulties.** To a degree, this is a function of the institutional setup and dynamics between the NFP and PO. It mainly applies when they function as units of the same institution and lack clearly divided and practically implemented, separate responsibilities. Qualitative evidence suggests that these organisational deficiencies coincide with an approach of decision-makers wherein EEA and Norway Grants' educational programmes are perceived as small vis-à-vis ESIF funds. Such a configuration of factors results in significant problems in programme implementation, as in the cases of SK-INNOVATION and SI-EDUCATION.

The Slovak programme is unlikely to make use of the available funding. In Slovenia, if no external challenges appear, using the available funding is still possible. However, re-allocation of funding from some areas to others may be needed. In some areas (e.g. related to tackling precarious work) in Slovenia the number of applications was very low. The FMO and the DPPs should be ready to approve and support the re-allocation of funds in these areas to other areas which experienced high applicant interest.

Somewhat different factors affected delays at the project level. PPs and donor project partners were asked to assess project implementation progress in the online surveys (Figure 4). **In nearly half of the cases, the activities were viewed as progressing according to plan.** Slightly more respondents indicated that the projects were delayed (52% of Project Promoters' and 50% of donor partners' responses). The stakeholders differed in their assessment of delays, with donor project partners declaring having experienced serious delays more often than PPs (23% and 14%, respectively). This difference could have multiple causes and should be interpreted carefully. It may stem from a positive bias of the PPs, or indicate deficiencies in communication between PPs and donor project partners about project progress.

Figure 4 Project Promoters' and partners' assessment of project implementation progress

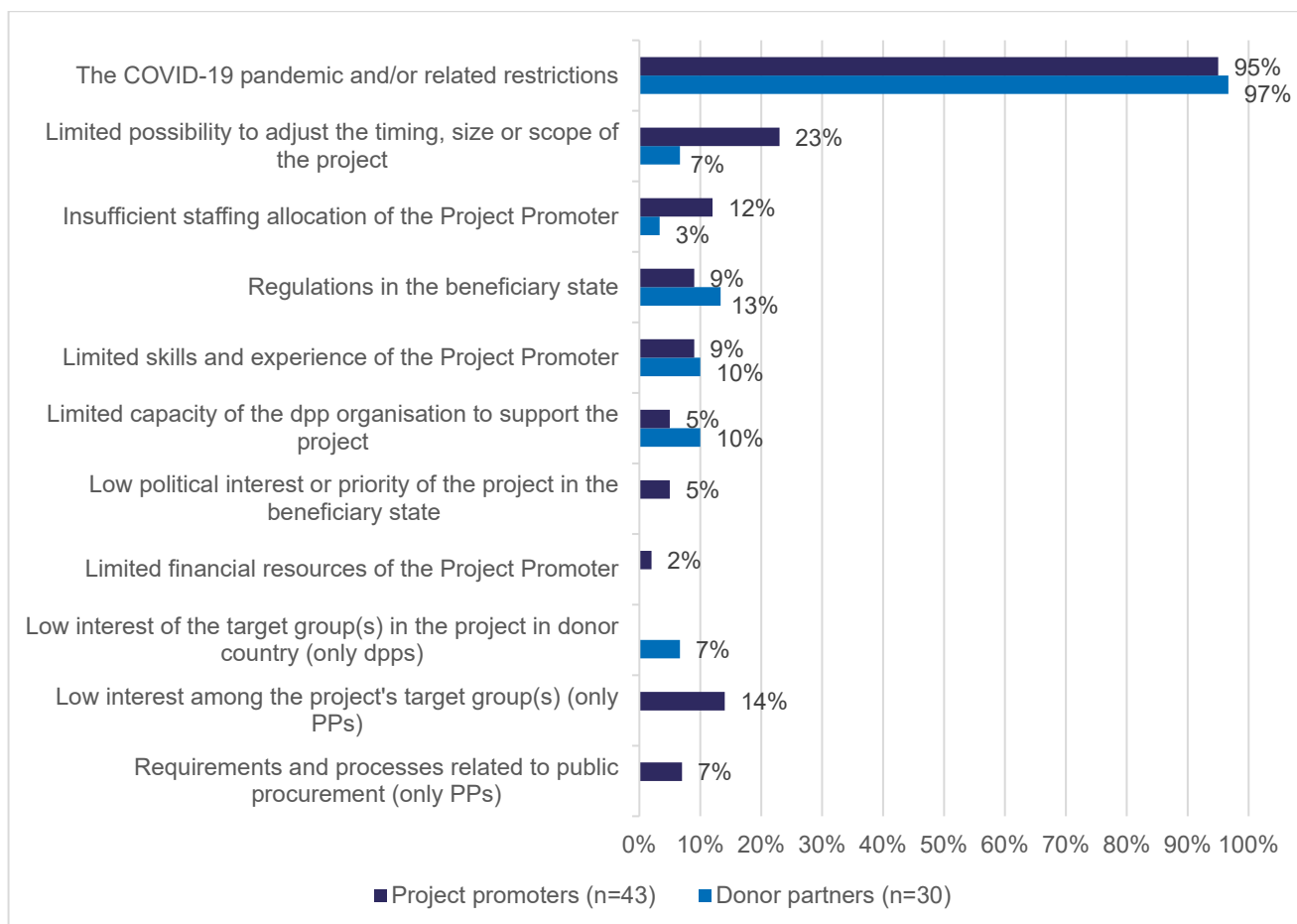


Source: CAWI surveys with Project Promoters and donor project partners

The most influential factor affecting project implementation was the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions imposed in response. It was indicated as a cause of delays by nearly every survey respondent (Figure 5). Other factors behind delays included:

- ▶ Limited flexibility in reviewing the timing, size or scope of the project (23% of PP and 7% of donor project partner responses). Qualitative evidence suggests that this was not only related to programme constraints but also PP capacity – some changes to project activities were necessary due to improper planning at the application stage.
- ▶ Organisational capacity and competence: insufficient staffing in PPs (12% of PP responses), limited capacity of the donor project partner to support the project (10% of donor project partner responses), limited skills and experience of the PP (9% of PP and 10% of donor project partner responses), and – to a marginal degree – financial resources (2% of PP responses). Qualitative information also indicates that some delays were caused by lack of staff continuity which resulted in the need to ‘catch up’ with the project.
- ▶ Regulatory and political environment: in the Beneficiary State (9% of PP and 13% of donor project partner responses), primarily related to public procurement (7% - PP), and a lesser degree – low priority in the broader education and training policy agenda (5% - PP).
- ▶ Low interest of the target groups: either among the entire project target groups (14% of PP responses) or in the target groups in the Donor State (7% of donor project partner responses).

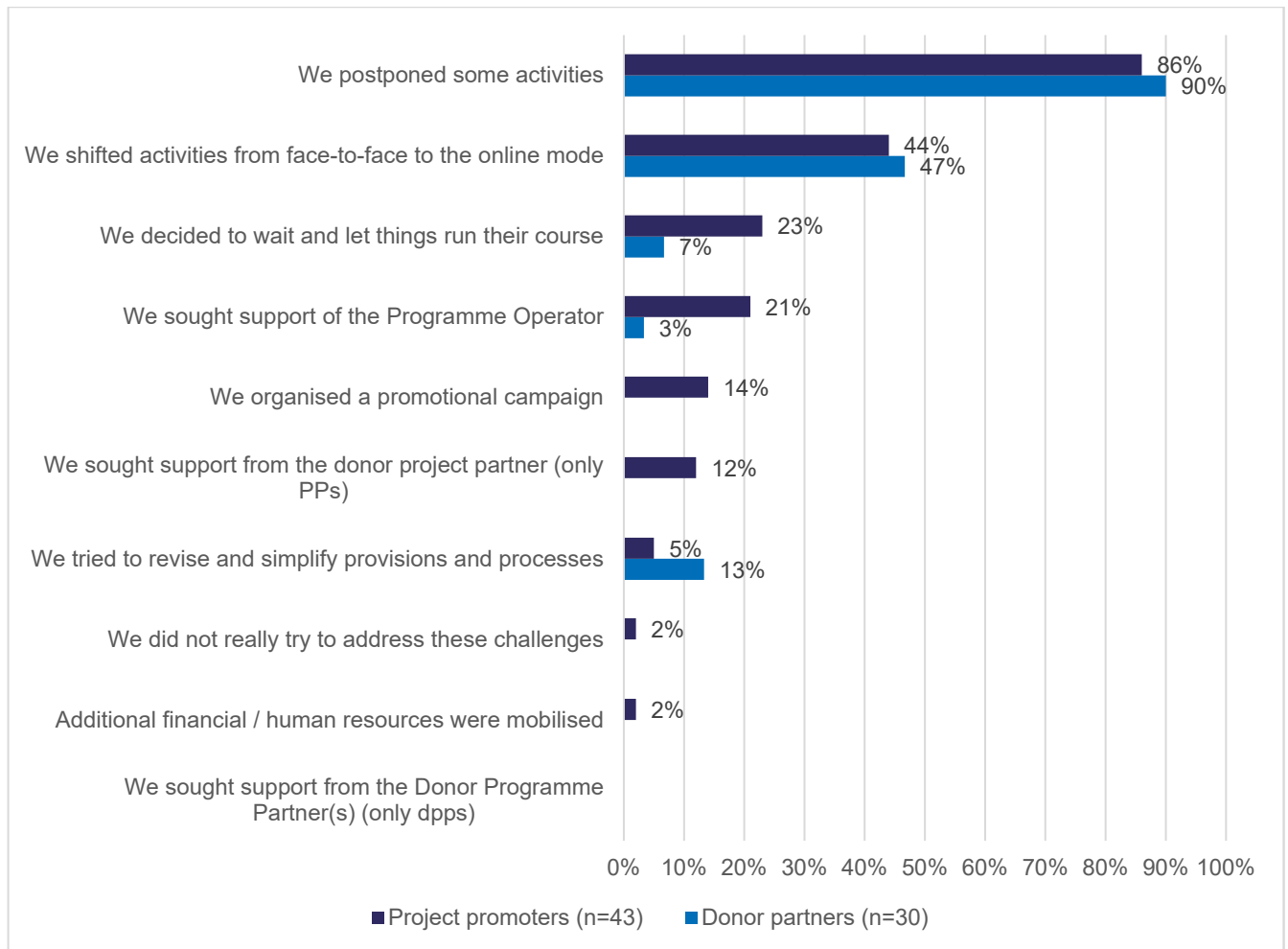
Figure 5 Factors causing delays in project implementation



Source: CAWI surveys with Project Promoters and donor project partners

In response to the pandemic, most PPs and partners postponed some planned activities (86% of PP and 90% of donor project partner responses) **and shifted others online** (44% of PP and 47% of donor project partner responses). As the qualitative data gathered in the study indicates, adapting to the online mode was only possible in projects that did not involve international mobility – these were put on hold until travel restrictions imposed due to the pandemic were lifted. The possibility of moving exchanges online was available; however, PPs viewed this mode as ineffective in reaching project goals. Project Promoters consulted with POs when deciding whether to postpone activities or move them online. Interestingly, responses to the survey indicate that while one in five PPs actively sought the support of the PO, a similar number were passive and waited for things to run their course. Other reactions to delays included organising promotional campaigns to boost the target group's interest (14% of PP responses) and simplifying processes and provisions (5% of PP and 13% of donor project partner responses).

Figure 6 Actions undertaken in response to delays



Source: CAWI surveys with Project Promoters and donor project partners

3.4 Effectiveness

This chapter outlines how likely the programmes are to achieve the planned outcomes. It analyses the main factors that affect the achievement or non-achievement of the planned outcomes.

CONCLUSIONS:

- The CZ-EDUCATION, EE-RESEARCH, LV-RESEARCH, PL-EDUCATION, PT-INNOVATION, RO-EDUCATION programmes are highly likely to achieve most targets. The SK-INNOVATION and SI-EDUCATION are unlikely to achieve many of their targets.
- The capacity of the Programme Operator is a key factor contributing to the achievement of programme results. Elements that facilitated effectiveness include experience in programme management, staff cohesion and competence, access to potential Project Promoters and proven methods of cooperation with stakeholders.
- The findings confirm that programmes with well identified target group needs and high relevance are more likely to be effective. Relevance translates to higher interest of Project Promoters in calls, allowing the Programme Operator to select the highest-quality projects for funding.
- A stronger thematic focus may make up for a PO's limited experience in the field of education, small staff size, or lack of access to potential Project Promoters. Programmes with a thematic focus may benefit from domain-specific expertise of institutions acting as Programme Operators. We find this focus as a factor important to effectiveness especially in the case of programmes with relatively smaller financial allocations, and programmes where education is accompanied by other programme areas (e.g. research or innovation).
- PP capacity varies between the entities eligible for support in educational programmes. Public schools and VET schools are less equipped in staff and competence to provide high-quality applications and implement projects smoothly. HEIs, private schools and enterprises are better equipped in resources, experience and know-how necessary for successful application and implementation.
- Capacity building activities could be aimed at increasing project relevance to target groups' needs, strengthening partner cooperation, and exchanging experiences in project management. Such support would contribute to overall programme effectiveness by strengthening Project Promoters in lagging areas (e.g. VET), or those who struggle at the application or implementation stage (e.g. public schools).
- The COVID-19 pandemic continues to fuel uncertainty about achieving results of projects which involve short and long-term mobility.

3.4.1 How likely are the programmes to achieve the planned outcomes, including taking into account the special concerns of each programme?

The overview of programme implementation presented in section 3.3.1 of this report includes information on the available funding's contracted, disbursed, and incurred rates. The summary indicates the programmes' likelihood of achieving their intended results. Additional information was gathered by analysing calls for proposals launched in each of the eight programmes under evaluation (Table 2).

The number of calls launched closely followed the initial planning for most programmes, with a few minor adjustments. In the case of Portugal, the FMO approved a fund reallocation, and a call was launched to finance

initiatives for the ocean literacy component under the Small Grant Scheme. Important adjustments were made in the programmes in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, in PL-EDUCATION, the call planned for 2020 was not implemented, and instead, the funds allocated were moved to a merged call launched in the spring of 2021. In the case of the CZ-EDUCATION programme, one call is yet to be launched in early 2022. The implementation of pre-defined projects closely followed the initial planning for all the programmes.

Table 2 Planned and launched calls for proposals in PA3

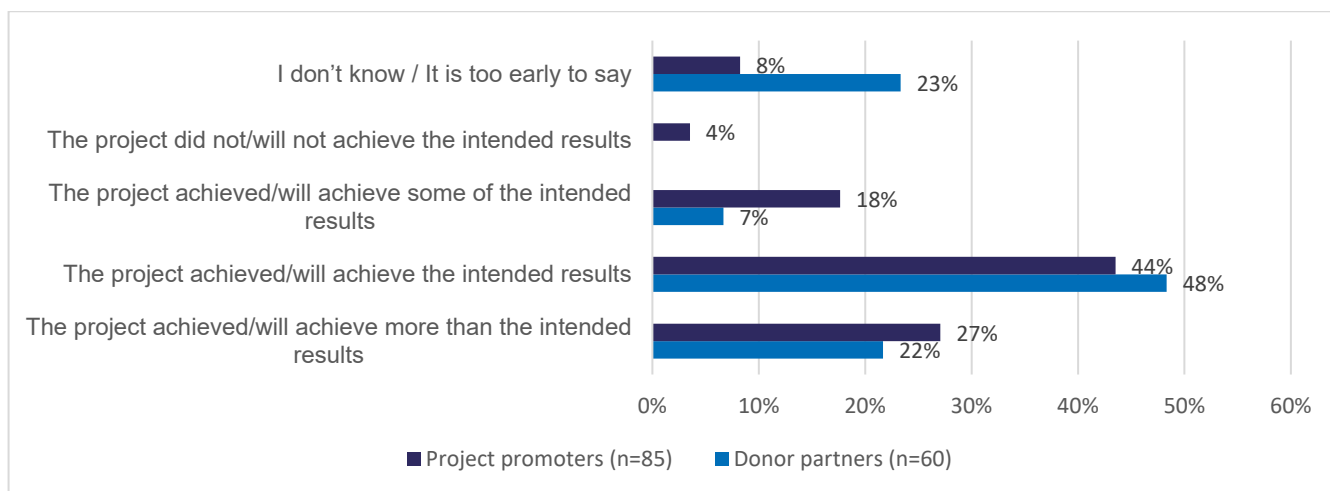
Programme name	Number of calls initially planned	Number of calls launched	Pre-defined projects planned	Pre-defined projects implemented
CZ-EDUCATION	12	13	0	0
EE-RESEARCH	3	3	2	2
LV-RESEARCH	1	1	4	4
PL-EDUCATION	3	2	0	0
PT-INNOVATION	1	2	1	1
RO-EDUCATION	25	25	0	0
SK-INNOVATION	0	0	0	0
SI-EDUCATION	1	1	0	0

Source: GrACE programme data (retrieved on 10.11.2021), Programme Concept Notes, Annual Programme Reports.

According to GrACE data, a significant part of the allocation is not yet contracted in several programmes. The selection of projects from recent calls is ongoing, or calls are still planned for launch. However, interviews with PO representatives suggest that **six programmes are highly likely to achieve their intended results**. The most impactful challenge, the COVID-19 pandemic, is discussed in section 3.4.2 below. The two exceptions are: i) **the SK-INNOVATION programme, which will not achieve the planned results for education (PA3), and ii) the SI-EDUCATION programme, where a severe delay in implementation may prevent achieving the planned results fully.**

Survey results show that, **at the project level, most Promoters and donor partners are optimistic that intended results will be achieved**. There are 71% of the PPs and 70% of the donor project partners who anticipate that all or more than the intended results will be achieved (see Figure 7). These results can be viewed as supporting the PO representatives' assessment.

Figure 7 Assessment of project result achievement



Source: CAWI surveys with Project Promoters and donor project partners

A summary of the status of achieved vs. expected programme level results at output and outcome levels across all programmes is presented in Annex III. As expected, no progress was achieved for the SK-INNOVATION and SI-EDUCATION programmes as no projects have been implemented so far. In the cases of CZ-EDUCATION, EE-RESEARCH, and RO-EDUCATION, targets have already been achieved for a small number of indicators. However, most projects are still being implemented, and their results have not been realised or reported thus far.

3.4.2 Which factors affect the achievement or non-achievement of the planned outcomes?

Several factors have impacted the effectiveness of the implementation of the programmes. These are discussed below.

Factors enabling the achievement of results

As already noted on the efficiency and timeliness of programme implementation, **a key factor contributing to the achievement of results is the capacity of the Programme Operator**. Elements such as experience in programme management, staff cohesion and competence, access to potential Project Promoters and proven methods of cooperation with stakeholders facilitated the effectiveness of programmes' implementation. This was especially visible in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, which tested Programme Operators' capacities. Some were able to adapt relatively quickly and: i) responded with flexibility managing the programme (e.g. by rescheduling or adding calls, reallocating funds between outcomes), ii) introduced new tools to facilitate necessary programme activities (such as online platforms for networking between Project Promoters and potential donor project partners), and iii) offered openness to adjusting project schedules and modes of activities. Support from the Programme Operator was mentioned by Project Promoters as one of the most important factors facilitating result achievement (53% of responses in CAWI survey, see Figure 8). Together with mitigating actions undertaken by the FMO, all these adjustments led to implementation progress.

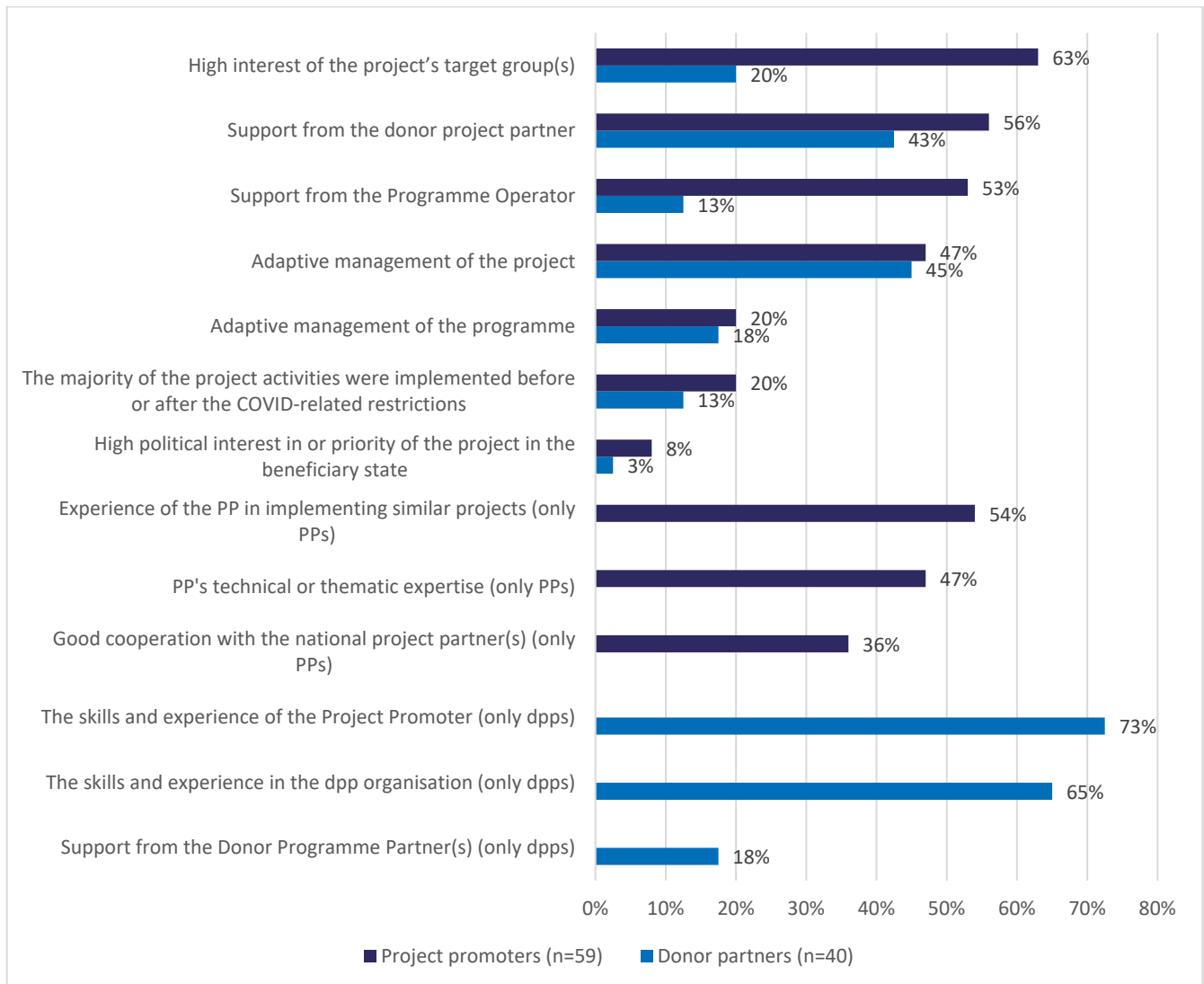
At the programme level, effectiveness is strengthened by good programme relevance, that is, the adequacy of programme design to actual target group needs. The interviewed stakeholders highlighted this element and said it to be displayed by the interest of Project Promoters in calls. Indeed, some programmes noted applications amounting to sums significantly exceeding the available funding. As a result, high-quality projects can be selected, reserve applicant lists created, and operators have more flexibility should the need for fund reallocation occur.

When discussing results, some POs expressed that although programmes are implemented effectively, they do not have a significant systemic influence. They implicitly suggested that higher funding would lead to greater expected results. In the evaluators' view, however, the size of available financing does not influence effectiveness but impact. In fact, even the larger interventions cannot impact education systems on a country scale due to inevitably limited fund size (as compared to systemic needs). To a degree, the effect of scale can translate to higher effectiveness and efficiency as some actions and processes can be replicated. However, in our assessment, the expected results of the programmes are adequate to their allocations.

We found that **in case of the smaller programmes and programmes that include multiple programme areas aside from education, having a thematic focus can facilitate effective implementation.** Such a focus can, to a degree, make up for deficiencies in a PO's experience in the education field, limited staff size, or lack of access to potential Project Promoters. It can also allow the programme to benefit from domain-specific expertise of institutions acting as Programme Operators, as exemplified by the PT-INNOVATION programme. It is also important to note that in the view of Donor Programme Partners' representatives, a stronger thematic focus could significantly increase the ability to absorb demand for cooperation on the side of Donor States.

Overall, there seems to be a trade-off between a broad scope of actions possible in a 'stand-alone' EDUCATION programme and a thematically focussed, 'multi-area' programme. The first one comes with weaker links to other programmatic areas, while in the second one, education is accompanied by such areas as innovation or research, which could lead to synergies. Both approaches have their strengths and weaknesses and should be considered in accordance with the needs of target groups and specific conditions of the Beneficiary State. Again, programme relevance – derived from a sound diagnosis – is crucial and eventually determines programme effectiveness. In any case, sharing experiences between Programme Operators could prove beneficial to effectiveness by providing an opportunity for mutual learning about best practices in programme management and implementation. Such support would be especially beneficial to less experienced POs.

Figure 8 Factors facilitating the achievement of project results



Source: CAWI surveys with Project Promoters and donor project partners

At the project level, similar factors impact effectiveness as at the programme level. Survey respondents noticed the significance of target group interest (63% of PP indications); the experience of the PP (54% of PP and 73% of donor project partner indications) and the donor partner (65% of donor project partner responses); and technical or thematic expertise (47% PP responses). Additionally, adaptive management was viewed as crucial to effective project implementation by PPs and donor partners. In the context of the pandemic, many PPs shifted project activities online or amended project schedules where such adaptations could not be introduced.

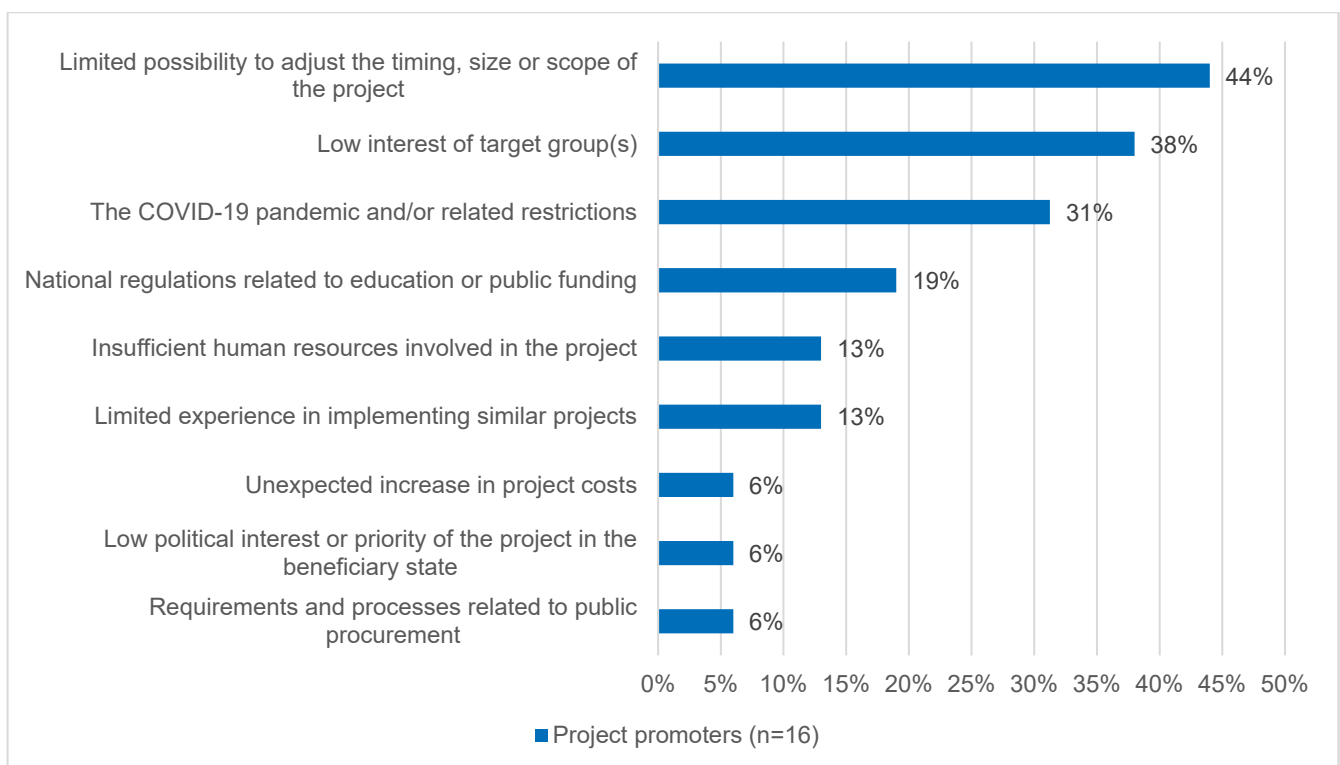
Survey results also evidence the importance of cooperation. As many as 56% of PPs and 43% of donor project partners indicated that support from the donor project partners helped achieve results. Interviewees noted that prior cooperation with donor project partners facilitated effective project implementation, as did experience in conducting education and training actions funded from other sources, such as Erasmus+. This indicates that capacity-building activities to ensure project relevance to target groups' needs and strengthen partner cooperation could improve programme effectiveness. For example, sharing information and good practices was organised in the Czech Republic, where the PO held seminars about financial and content-related topics to help Project Promoters run their projects smoothly.

Factors hindering the achievement of results

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted project implementation, causing delays and threatening the achievement of results. Projects related to institutional cooperation or education quality (e.g. programme and curricula development) were affected to a lesser degree and usually adapted by holding activities online. In turn, projects which involved short-term and long-term mobility, such as study visits and staff or student exchanges, needed to postpone their implementation. The pandemic resulted in travel restrictions, with some countries like Norway effectively closing borders. **To an extent, this factor still drives uncertainty about achieving mobility-related results, even considering the possibility of further project timeframe extension.** Project Promoters and participants are reluctant to shift to online exchanges, as they feel that there is added value in physical presence in the host, donor country. In our assessment, however, mobility projects will be successfully implemented thanks to the accessibility of vaccination in countries of the Global North.

During the desk research stage, national legislation, especially related to public procurement, was perceived as hindering the effectiveness of project implementation. To some extent, this influence was confirmed by quantitative data (see Figure 9). However, **the qualitative material gathered during the evaluation suggests that the impact of this factor was limited.** Such experiences were reported in Latvia and Portugal and are related to considerable costs in pre-defined projects and specific national regulations regarding private entities. Mitigating this factor seems to be outside the scope of the EEA and Norway Grants' possible influence.

Figure 9 Factors hindering the achievement of project results



Source: CAWI surveys with Project Promoters and donor project partners

The research conducted during the evaluation highlights **a notable difference in stakeholder capacity between the various types of entities eligible for support in educational programmes.** While higher education institutions, private schools and enterprises can provide high-quality project proposals, those of other PPs, such as public schools and VET institutions, were lacking. Similarly, the capacity and know-how of public schools and VET institutions in project implementation were also lower. This observation was particularly voiced in Poland but is also relevant for Czech Republic and Romania. VET institutions in both Beneficiary and the Donor States are also significantly less internationalised compared to HEI institutions. Since VET education often requires work

placements in companies, mobility is considerably more complex than in higher education. Both these issues further complicate successful project implementation and achievement of results in this particular field of education. The analysis of programme reporting and interviews held with POs suggest that an adequate answer to these challenges is still elusive.

3.4.3 How could programme results be better measured at the outcome level, reflecting the *raison d'être* of the programmes?

The overall objective - enhanced human capital and knowledge base – is realised in the educational programmes in a number of support areas, all of which involve a strong component of bilateral cooperation. Within programme result frameworks, the links between outputs and outcomes are logical and well defined. Indicator progress is measured based on Project Promoters' reporting and through surveys directed to project participants or education institutions. In the evaluator's assessment, the frameworks present a balanced approach to capturing programme effects, and include tangible output measures, as well as means to monitor outcomes such as improved skills and competencies.

According to the PO and NFP interviewees, the current monitoring framework is well suited to capturing programme results. However, as noted earlier, the programmes do not have a significant impact on education and training systems in the Beneficiary States, due to the limited size of the interventions. This issue was also raised by DPPs, who noted that few projects attempt to support more systemic challenges in education and training, which would have more long-lasting effects than short-term mobility. The current programmes may therefore be seen as leaning towards results at the individual level – of a person or institution – instead of wide-scale transferability or scalability.

As discussed before with regard to relevance, the postulated shift would involve focusing on long-term institutional cooperation, and would require adjustments in the types of supported projects (while building to the unchanged objective of enhanced human capital and knowledge base). Should this shift be introduced, adequate changes in result frameworks would be necessary. Indicators would need to be focused on measuring effects of cooperation between institutions, and at the outcome level would need to measure cooperation quality, intensity and continuity.

Considering the relation between the Grants and other sources of financing for education and training, especially ESIF, as well as limitations in programme size and possible influence, we believe that result measurement could be improved by monitoring the links between projects. This could mean considering coherence with other activities implemented by a PP, building on previously developed project outputs, or scaling up an initiative of a different Promoter or partner. Consequently, programme results would be viewed as contributing to systemic improvement, and in connection to other actors' activities instead of isolation.

3.5 Sustainability

In this chapter, we explore the extent to which the key stakeholders in the Beneficiary States plan for the sustainability of results. In doing so, we look at the different strategies and processes used by the Programme Operators and Project Promoters to ensure that results will continue. Subsequently, we outline the extent to which the programmes' results are likely to continue in five years. For this, we highlight the key factors facilitating and hindering the sustainability of results. We also look at whether and how the results and lessons learned of the projects will be used for future initiatives.

CONCLUSIONS:

- The POs and NFPs across the Beneficiary States plan for sustainability to varying extents and in different ways. Most consider sustainability in their programmes. The key strategies include obliging PPs to reflect on the sustainability of the intended results in their proposals, promotion and dissemination of results, and ensuring that the projects address issues of high political priorities. Overall, however, none of these approaches is comprehensive and supported by a programme-level mechanism to monitor results several years after the programme completion. In some Beneficiary States, there is a perception that capturing longer-term effects of 'soft' measures financed by the programmes is not possible. This severely undermines planning and strategy development for sustainability.
- Most respondents and interviews expect the key results in projects to continue in five years after the projects' completion. This pertains to both institutional cooperation and mobility projects, although the latter's effects are less likely to be visible. The majority of both PPs and donor project partners plan to use the lessons learnt while implementing the projects for future initiatives. Many already use their experiences for implementing new projects financed from the Grants, Erasmus+, or Horizon 2020. Above all, the continuation of inter-institutional cooperation is one of the key results that is expected to sustain in the long term. This was especially the case of longer-term institutional cooperation, where PPs and donor project partners developed jointly multiple outputs and ties as part of their projects.

3.5.1 To what extent are sustainability considerations included into the programmes' design?

Most national authorities in the Beneficiary States considered the sustainability of their programmes at the design stage. National authorities in Estonia, Latvia, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia included possible strategies to support sustainability in their concept notes. The other two Beneficiary States – Czech Republic and Poland – did not. To some extent, this reflects the varying extents to which POs and NFPs across the programmes think of, and plan for, sustainability.

One of the ways POs aim to reinforce the sustainability of results is by encouraging Project Promoters to include sustainability considerations in their proposals. In the case of Latvia and Slovenia, all PPs were required to include a section in their proposals on how they plan to ensure sustainability of results. Slovenian authorities also reported that they pay particular attention to the capacities of the PPs and their potential to ensure continuity of results. This effort builds on Slovenia's prior experiences with managing other funds, where the 'soft' measures supported did not sustain after the projects' completion.

Promotion and dissemination of the project results is another way national stakeholders plan to bolster their sustainability. For instance, the Latvian PO (Ministry of Education and Science) stated that they will invite the higher education institutions that took part in mobility projects financed by the Grants to shape education policies in Latvia. In the view of the PO, this will help to ensure that the results of the teacher mobility projects will last.

In Romania, the PO reported making efforts to increase the visibility of project results to encourage the PPs to develop future projects on their basis. The PO admitted that, across various financing sources, the results of many educational initiatives could not be identified a few years after the projects' completion. Based on this observation, the PO organises annual capitalisation conferences to provide the participants with knowledge and inspiration for future projects.

Findings from Portugal and Slovenia show that closely aligning the programmes with issues of high political priority is seen by the key informants as conducive to the sustainability of results. The focus of the PT-INNOVATION on blue growth and the "triangle" of education, research, and innovation mirrors Portugal's policy goals. It is a part of a broader national strategy to make Portugal a desirable partner in education and training in sea-related areas and enhance future growth. These policy priorities are so high on the government agenda that they became part of the latest National Recovery and Resilience Plan.²³ The Plan has a strategic axis dedicated to marine and maritime issues and positions education and research as critical investment areas to support blue growth and innovation. In Slovenia, the interviewed authorities were not sure about the sustainability of most results. However, one interviewee noted: 'We are not concerned about the sustainability of the Barnhus project. It is a high political priority, so it will be continued with our funds.'

Planning for sustainability in some programmes is hindered by a perception of some POs and NFPs that the results of 'soft' interventions are impossible to capture. While 'intangibility' of such results was raised in many interviews, the belief that the effects of capacity building and exchange activities are not possible to measure limited planning for sustainability, especially in Poland. The NFP of PL-EDUCATION suggested that 'it is not possible to evaluate how the knowledge can sustain in participant's heads after the training'. The NFP respondent stated that no sustainability considerations were included in the programme planning documents for this reason.

Across the Beneficiary States, no strategies, tools, and mechanisms to monitor the sustainability of their results have been set up at the level of programmes. While individual PPs reported attempts to track the results of their projects in time, these efforts do not provide mechanisms to monitor the results in the medium to long term.

At the project level, the most frequently mentioned steps taken to ensure sustainability included the dissemination of knowledge products and the transfer of knowledge from teachers to their peers. Placing materials developed in the course of the project online was mentioned by several respondents, some also highlighting the open-source access to their work. In Latvia, two PPs also envisaged continuous improvement of their training activities and programmes based on user feedback as a way to ensure their long-term sustainability. All three Latvian PPs consulted also worked on developing a teacher network that will be instrumental in continuing projects' activities. The PPs also planned for complementary funding and active outreach and promotion.

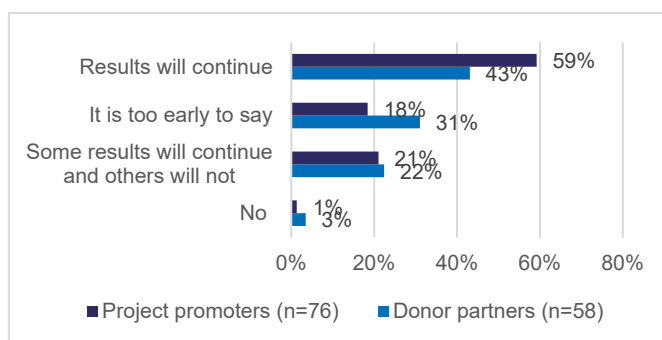
²³ [Recovery and resilience plan for Portugal | European Commission \(europa.eu\)](https://european-council.europa.eu/media/en/press-operations/infographic-123466.pdf)

3.5.2 To what extent are the results achieved likely to be sustained in five years?

Findings gathered from the surveys and interviews show that most respondents expect their project results to last in five years. As shown in Figure 10, 59% of surveyed PPs and 43% of surveyed project donor partners believe that all results of their projects will continue in five years. An additional one-fifth of both PPs and donor project partners anticipate that some results will continue while others will not. Most of the remaining respondents from both groups think it is "too early to say" whether results will continue.

When asked about the sustainability of their project's results, most PPs and donor project partners referred to the developed learning materials, curricula and other learning tools. Many reported that they already disseminated the education and training materials developed among the teachers and students in their institutions. Several respondents mentioned that the materials would be placed online and freely accessible for wider audiences as well.

Figure 10: "In your view, will the results of the EEA and Norway Grants educational project you were/are involved in continue in 5 years?"



Source: surveys with PPs and donor project partners

The vast majority of the POs and PPs interviewed believe that the trained teachers and students will use the competencies they gained or strengthened in their teaching for many years ahead. Several respondents reported that the knowledge and approaches learnt as a result of project collaborations will be used to improve the existing curricula and the learning delivery methods. For instance, one of the PPs who completed the survey said they learned a new way of organising seminars with students. Another stated that they improved their expertise in 'conducting workshops in a particular thematic area'. Interviews also revealed instances where the knowledge and skills gained by the targeted teachers are being (or are planned to be) passed on to a greater number of teachers through peer-to-peer learning. According to the PO of LV-RESEARCH, for example, learnings from the supported projects will be transmitted through the State Education Content Centre to teachers in other schools. Peer-to-peer learning in schools was also reported by one PP benefitting from the CZ-EDUCATION programme.

For many PPs, continued inter-institutional collaboration is a result that is going to last the longest. Partnerships developed as part of institutional cooperation projects specifically are perceived as having the most potential to sustain. The surveys and interviews revealed that the relationships formed between organisations and institutions in Beneficiary and Donor States are expected to last for many years. This was especially the case of longer-term institutional cooperation, where multiple outputs and ties were developed as part of the joint implementation of projects. For instance, in Estonia, where the majority of projects activities were realised as part of a broader collaboration between institutions, 80% of the surveyed PPs believed that the results of their projects would continue in five years (Table 3).

Table 3: 'In your view, will the results of your EEA and Norway Grants project continue in 5 years' time? (n=76)

	CZ-EDUCATION	EE-RESEARCH	LV-RESEARCH	PL-EDUCATION	PT-INNOVATION	RO-EDUCATION	Total
Results will continue	44%	80%	67%	46%	50%	54%	53%
Some results will continue	13%	10%	0%	21%	33%	23%	19%
It is too early to say	31%	0%	0%	21%	17%	12%	16%
No	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
No answer	6%	10%	33%	13%	0%	12%	11%

Source: survey with Project Promoters

Most effects of short-term mobilities are also expected to last by the majority of POs and PPs, although they may be least visible of all of the results achieved. Over half (51%) of the surveyed PPs leading projects with mobility said that all of the results of their project last will in 5 years, and another 18% believe that some results will continue (see Table 4). Only 1% of surveyed PPs with projects with mobility said that the results will not last. Several interviewees across the programmes spoke of the long-lasting effects of travelling abroad on learners, such as learning new cultures, languages, and greater tolerance. Highlighting that student mobility improves the participants' chances to take up work experience abroad, the PO of the CZ-EDUCATION explained that:

[In five years] cooperation between our and Norwegian schools will continue. The students' improved language skills will remain, they won't be afraid and will want to start travelling more. They will be able to expand their horizons and become more open-minded. This can also motivate them to work abroad.

Speaking of teacher mobility, the LV-RESEARCH PO expects that the scholarships projects will strengthen the interest of Latvian HEIs in international mobility, contribute to the adoption of good practices, lead to the development of new research programmes, and boost the institutions' research capacity.

Table 4: 'In your view, will the results of your EEA and Norway Grants project continue in 5 years? (n=76)

	Project includes mobility	Project does not include mobility	Total
Results will continue	51%	59%	53%
Some results will continue	18%	24%	19%
It is too early to say	19%	6%	16%
No	1%	0%	1%
No answer	10%	12%	11%

Source: survey with Project Promoters

At the same time, several interview and survey respondents noted that not all knowledge acquired by students and teachers might be relevant in five years. Such doubts were voiced for both mobility and institutional cooperation projects. In their answers to the survey, one PP noted that 'not everything is relevant. The main thing is to travel to each other and learn and adopt new practices'. Several PPs across the Beneficiary States noted the rapidly changing nature of education approaches. One said: 'educational methods and tools are evolving rapidly. There will certainly be new opportunities [for cooperation]'. Another noted: 'some topics will be obsolete in 2-3 years, others will expand'. A couple of respondents from Poland also referred to the continuous and dynamic changes in the education law as factors potentially rendering some projects' out of date'. Similar observations concerning sustainability and the continued relevance of individual courses were made by the PO of CZ-EDUCATION. However, the respondent underscored that teachers would continue to apply the approaches and methodologies they learn to develop new and update existing courses:

It is important to react to new challenges and needs, [curricula] aren't static but dynamic. But the things that will last are the social skill experiences for the teachers, along with adaptiveness, experience and ability to react.

78% of surveyed Project Promoters will use the lessons learnt for future initiatives

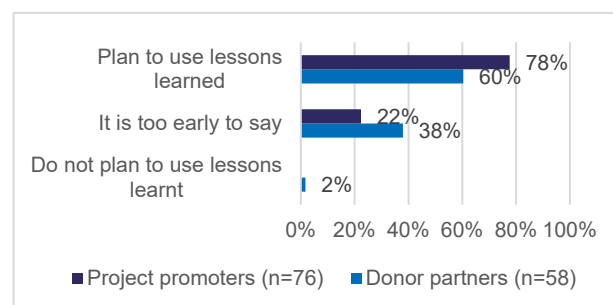


SURVEY WITH PROJECT PROMOTERS

As shown in Figure 11, 78% of the PPs and 60% of the donor project partners who completed the evaluation surveys plan to use the lessons learnt from implementing their educational projects for future initiatives. Tens of interviewed and surveyed PPs reported that they had already commenced or applied for new projects financed by the Grants, Erasmus+, or Horizon 2020.

One of the main ways in which the surveyed organisations and institutions use the lessons learnt for future initiatives is by building on the achieved results to develop new projects. Commonly, the surveyed PPs mentioned that they will be implementing more projects in a similar area tried and tested during their EEA and Norway Grants-financed project. Others plan to complement the achieved results with other initiatives. For example, one interviewee from Czech Republic said that while their first project allowed to increase knowledge about specific topics, the second project entails the development of the in-depth methodology, based on the findings from the first one.

Figure 11: “Do you plan to use the lessons learned from the implementation of your educational EEA & Norway Grants project for future initiatives?”



Source: surveys with PPs and donor project partners

The surveyed PPs equally often reported **using the experience and good practices learnt to implement subsequent projects.** This included good practices related to education, international cooperation, and the more technical side of applying for, and managing, projects financed from the Grants or Erasmus+. For example, one PP explained that:

The challenge is to settle the budget for results of intellectual work in person-days. The experience gained here is and will be very useful. We also found the methods of risk assessment in the project useful.

Another PP spoke of implementing lessons learnt about partnerships in the following way:

Implementing the project in uncertain pandemic conditions taught us to communicate better and be more flexible; project partnerships were also tested. We hope that these experiences will bear fruit in the future and translate into further projects, whether under the EEA, Erasmus + program or another financial mechanism.

The interviewed POs, NFPs, and PPs raised several key obstacles to scaling up and continuing results. Many pointed out that the current transition periods between subsequent financial mechanisms are long and lead to discontinuity in results and partnerships. A smoother transition between financial mechanisms was suggested as an essential way to support sustainability. To support the continuation of collaborations, one PP suggested the creation of a database of Donor State organisations willing to cooperate within the EEA and Norway Grants to be used by PPs in the Beneficiary States. More intensive promotion of the programmes was also suggested. Several PPs postulated for greater coverage of educational equipment and infrastructure as a way to support the continuity of the 'soft' measures financed.

The POs of PT-INNOVATION and SK-INNOVATION programmes observed that stronger cooperation within national stakeholders could support more longer-term, system-level impacts. As shown in Table 5 below, **PPs who are a local or regional governmental body were generally most confident about the continuity of their project results.** However, even among these PPs, **potential loss of results due to turnover in resources and lack of follow-up funding for the continuation of results was voiced.**

In the survey with PPs, NGOs and VET institutions also tended to be more optimistic about the continuity of their project results. However, such comparisons should be treated with caution at this stage, as they may be influenced

by the stage of progress of particular projects. Across the different organisation types, zero to marginal shares of PPs said that their project results will not continue.

Table 5: 'In your view, will the results of your EEA and Norway Grants project continue in 5 years? (n=76)

	Higher education institution	Primary or secondary school	VET institution	Regional or local authority	NGO	Enterprise
Yes	42%	45%	67%	73%	67%	50%
Some results will continue	31%	0%	8%	9%	17%	50%
It is too early to say	17%	36%	8%	18%	8%	0%
No	0%	9%	0%	0%	0%	0%
No answer	11%	9%	17%	0%	8%	0%

Source: survey with Project Promoters

3.6 Bilateral cooperation

A key focus of the educational programmes is strengthening bilateral cooperation between entities from Donor and Beneficiary States. Strategic bilateral actions can contribute to increasing the political, administrative and technical dialogue in the areas of mutual interest, as well as strengthening cooperation in research and education. This section explores the extent to which bilateral partnerships add value to the implementation and results of educational programmes, as well as to POs, DPPs, donor project partners, and PPs. It also addresses the barriers to effective bilateral cooperation, and how partnerships could be further enhanced.

CONCLUSIONS:

- Bilateral cooperation has been effective overall, and the benefits of collaboration are evident to all stakeholders involved. Cooperation provided new knowledge about education and training practices to partners involved, offered new ideas for educational projects and led to new inter-institutional relations. The support and active involvement of DPPs in programme design and implementation was considered to be very valuable by the POs consulted. This involvement continued despite the pandemic, providing helpful recommendations and advice to POs in the process of adapting their programmes to COVID-19 circumstances.
- The Bilateral fund has been extremely useful in facilitating networking between partners and its flexibility in terms of possibilities to reallocate funding was highly appreciated by the POs consulted. However, the pandemic has posed significant challenges, and less than half of the funding awarded has been used to date.
- There is room for improvement regarding bilateral cooperation on the project level. A lack of communication between donor project partners and PPs constitute a significant challenge to effective cooperation. In some cases, the limited capacity and resources of donor project partners could hinder the execution of projects despite the initial interest in bilateral cooperation. The high number of Beneficiary States compared to the number of Donor States limits the capacity of donor project partners to actively participate in projects.
- Differences in administrative procedures of Beneficiary States and administrative mechanisms in place to ensure sound financial management of public funds (e.g., rules for accounting and financial reporting) constitute other key obstacles impacting the effectiveness of bilateral cooperation.

3.6.1 To what extent is the overall bilateral objective of the EEA and Norway Grants considered in the programme design and implementation?

Concerning the programme design phase, bilateral cooperation is operationalised in the MoUs, concept notes and programme agreements as the key tools used to define the objectives, ambitions and funding available for strengthening bilateral relations between the Donor States and the Beneficiary States. These documents also outline the areas covered by the bilateral cooperation, its anticipated advantages as well as the main types of joint bilateral activities (e.g. meetings, programmes, and workshops) to be delivered by bilateral project partners (including the key indicators for outputs and results of this cooperation).

Bilateral cooperation is operationalised at the implementation phase through (i) DPPs as entities holding first-hand information on the implementation of bilateral partnerships at the programme and project level; (ii) donor project partners as holders of information at the project level; and (iii) Bilateral fund utilised for strengthening the collaboration between Donor and the Beneficiary States, for example through seminars, conferences, international travel, and exchange programmes; (iv) call for proposals setting out the available budget, objectives, scale and scope of initiatives to be supported, as well as eligibility criteria and selection criteria.

The review of programme results frameworks indicates that at the output and outcome levels, the bilateral cooperation objective is measured through indicators such as (i) the level of satisfaction with the partnership, (ii) the level of trust between cooperating entities in Donor and the Beneficiary States, (iii) the number of letters of intent on future collaboration agreements, (iv) joint applications for further funding, (v) the share of cooperating organisations that apply the knowledge acquired from the bilateral partnership, and (vi) the number of projects involving cooperation with a donor project partner.

The qualitative analysis of interviews with POs and National Focal Points shows that, in most cases, the DPPs were extensively involved in the programme design phase. The support offered by DPPs ranged from aiding the development of the programme concept, operational design, examining documentation to assist PO's strategic planning, supporting partner identification activities during project development phases, and doing partner eligibility checks.

Regarding the programme implementation, interviewees highlighted the active role of DPPs in supporting project selection, providing advice on selection criteria, monitoring project execution and providing feedback and recommendations. The strong involvement of the DPPs continued despite the pandemic. The DPPs provided POs with recommendations and advice for adapting their programmes to COVID-19 restrictions. In addition, they delivered training and support in reporting on strategic and operational levels. The PO implementing the PL-EDUCATION programme praised the DPPs' approach, defining it as open and focused on collaboration and consensus-building, while still being goal-oriented and time-efficient.

Bilateral cooperation is also operationalised through the Bilateral fund, which is used for strengthening the collaboration between Donor States and Beneficiary States. **The systematic analysis of qualitative interviews indicates that overall the bilateral fund has been extremely useful.** Although not fully utilised, the POs and NFPs found the fund valuable for various purposes. Evidence suggests that in most cases, the fund was used to organise events (e.g., conferences, networking events, and meetings) to encourage project applications, facilitate networking between potential partners, present project results to relevant stakeholders, and share experiences and ideas for future initiatives.

Interviewees appreciated the fund's flexibility as its resources could be reallocated to thematic areas that were not affected by COVID-19 or for planning future face-to-face events. For example, in Portugal, a portion of the fund was moved to develop bilateral cooperation on high-quality literacy initiatives. In the case of Poland, according to the PO, the fund will be used to organise two events in 2022 for PPs and donor project partners, while another meeting between POs and DPPs will take place in 2023. Furthermore, the PO in Latvia was planning to use the fund to create an online platform for mainstreaming project results. One key challenge highlighted by a NFP was agreeing to finance initiatives that have a very low budget.

Based on the analysis of programme results frameworks, against the target of 625 projects involving cooperation with a donor project partner, less than half (242 projects or 39% of projects) reported having a donor project partner. A large majority of donor project partners reported involvement in project implementation to some extent. When asked to assess their involvement in implementing the projects, 55% of 56 donor project partners reported they were reasonably involved in the project implementation, while 43% were highly involved. Only 2% indicated they had limited involvement in the implementation. Similarly, a large majority of PPs (85% out of 84 respondents) indicated that their project was implemented in cooperation with a donor project partner, while only a small minority, 15%, indicated that their projects did not involve a donor project partner.

The success of bilateral cooperation was mostly attributed to DPPs' support, prior programme experience of POs and PPs, as well as the good communication and exchanges that facilitated mutual learning. Stakeholders reported that cooperation would have been more effective if travel restrictions had not been imposed and, in some cases, acknowledged that there is potential for improvement. In particular, the main hindrance to effective bilateral cooperation has been the limited capacity of donor project partners, DPPs, and administrative and communication barriers. A more in-depth analysis of barriers and facilitators to bilateral cooperation is provided in Section 3.6.3.

3.6.2 How are bilateral partnerships adding value to the implementation of the programmes and for the different stakeholders?

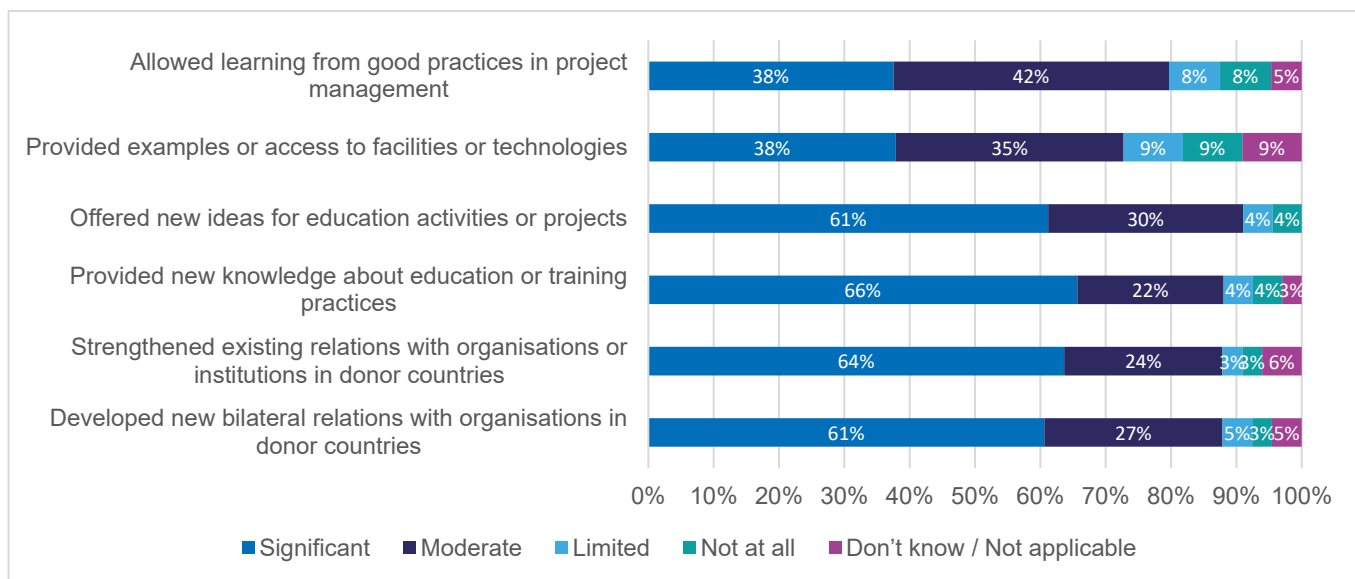
According to all stakeholders consulted, bilateral cooperation added significant value to the educational programmes. This has been highlighted through the analysis of qualitative data capturing the views of POs, NFPs and PPs, as well as the analysis of survey responses of donor project partners and PPs.

Most PPs (91%) that manage projects with bilateral relations indicated that the support of their donor project partners was very useful or useful. When asked about the extent to which the support provided by their donor project partners was helpful in the design and implementation of their project, a small majority (53%) of the 67 PPs who responded to the survey rated the support received as very useful, while more than a third (37%) indicated that it was useful. Only a small share (9%) of PPs concluded that the support from their donor project partners was somewhat helpful in the design and implementation of their project.

Interviewees indicated the importance of bilateral relations for mutual learning, the transfer of knowledge, management culture, values, administrative procedures, innovative approaches, and new technical content. The survey findings further support the evidence regarding the benefits of cooperation with donor project partners (Figure 13). Over 60% of the PPs reported that bilateral cooperation provided significant benefits in terms of new knowledge about education or training practices (66%), strengthened existing relations with organisations or institutions in donor countries (64%), providing new ideas for educational activities or projects (61%) and developing new bilateral relations with organisations in donor countries (61%).

Furthermore, a bilateral cooperation was an important vehicle for the transfer of good practices in project management and accessing new ideas and technologies. More than one-third (38%) of PPs indicated that bilateral cooperation provided significant benefits for their project management, with a further large minority (42%) of respondents indicating that the cooperation had a moderately positive impact in this area. More than one-third (38%) of PPs also believed that bilateral cooperation provided them with examples or access to facilities or technologies. For example, Portuguese PPs pointed out that through the cooperation, they have been able to gain access to the equipment they would not have been able to obtain otherwise.

Figure 12: To what extent did cooperation with the donor project partner bring the following benefits to your organisation or institution (n=67)?

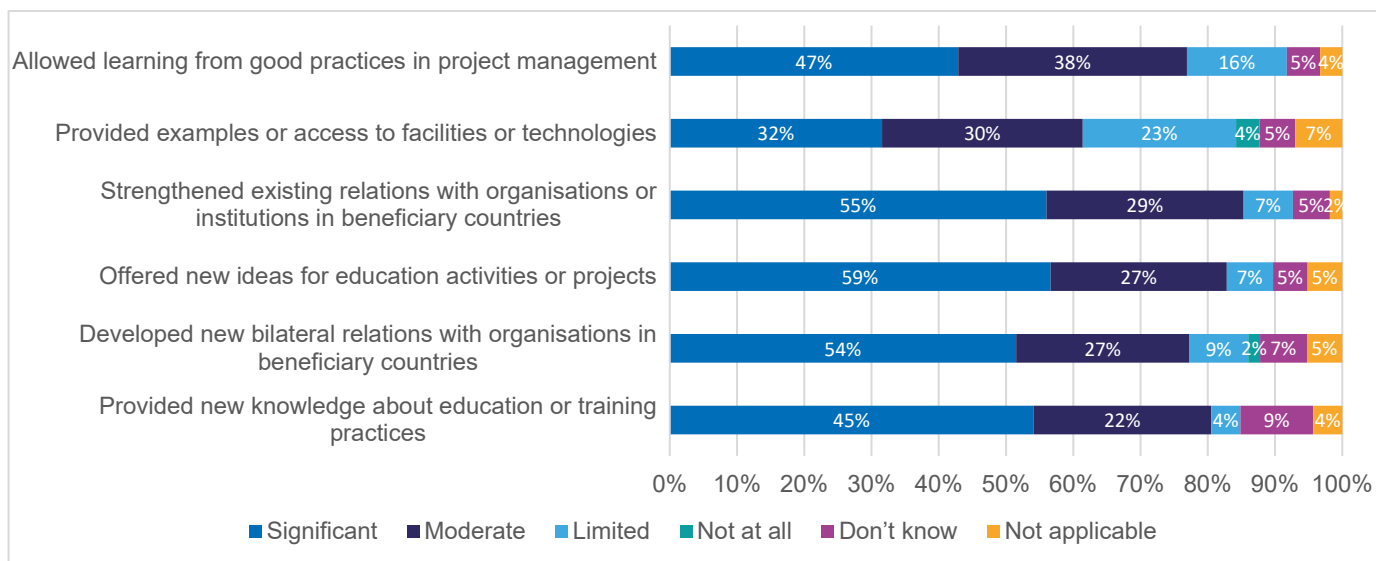


Source: Project Promoters survey responses

The surveyed donor project partners also reported considerable gains from bilateral cooperation for their organisations or institutions²⁴. As illustrated by Figure 14, over 50% of respondents to this survey indicated that, to a significant extent, the collaboration with PPs offered new ideas for their educational activities or projects (59%), strengthened existing relations (55%) and helped to develop new bilateral ties with organisations in Beneficiary Countries (54%). In addition, 47% of donor project partner respondents reported that bilateral collaboration allowed them to learn from good practices in project management, and 45% indicated it provided new knowledge about education and training practices.

²⁴ It needs to be noted that the number of responses to this survey was low, with only 56 donor project partners completing the questionnaire.

Figure 13: To what extent did cooperation with the Project Promoter bring the following benefits to your organisation or institution? (n=56)



Source: Donor project partners survey

Respondents of both (PP and donor project partner) surveys also noted that **bilateral cooperation fostered multicultural exchanges and learning of different cultures and languages between institutions and organisations, benefiting from the Grant support in the Donor and Beneficiary States**. Moreover, the stakeholders consulted saw bilateral cooperation as a factor increasing the attractiveness of future collaborations among the institutions and organisations benefiting from Grant support. Other benefits of bilateral cooperation reported by PPs and donor project partners included the transfer and adoption of new methodologies, sharing of information on policy developments, and cooperation under other EU programmes.

3.6.3 In what ways could bilateral cooperation be further enhanced?

Factors hindering and facilitating bilateral cooperation

Whilst stakeholders were overall satisfied with the benefits of bilateral cooperation, evidence from the interviews highlights several main barriers and factors facilitating active, strong, and effective bilateral cooperation. However, the results of the surveys conducted among the PPs and donor project partners indicate that there was a discrepancy in the extent PPs and donor project partners see the potential for improvement in their cooperation. **Whereas most donor project partners considered that no further improvement of their cooperation with PP is necessary, a large share of PPs reported that cooperation with donor project partners could be enhanced.**

When prompted whether anything could be improved in their cooperation with PPs, 93% of the 58 donor project partners that took part in the survey responded 'No', whilst only 7% indicated that further improvements could be made. The qualitative analysis of the four open-ended answers to this survey question suggests that **donor project partners considered navigating specific requirements of Beneficiary States difficult**, given the differences in project management. According to the donor project partners, overcoming the barriers to effective bilateral cooperation could also require more frequent meetings and more support during scientific visits.

In contrast, **only a small majority (54%) of the 69 respondents to the survey among PPs were content with the existing collaboration**, while an equivalent share (46%) considered that cooperation with their donor project partner could be improved. The qualitative analysis of the 22 open-ended answers to this question indicated that the PPs would benefit from more communication and meetings with donor project partners and that carrying out

more joint projects and mobilities could facilitate future bilateral cooperation. Furthermore, PPs considered that training on funding rules, budgeting, and cultural awareness training would also contribute to establishing effective collaboration.

Based on qualitative analysis of the interview results with POs, NFPs, and PPs, the main barriers to effective bilateral cooperation can be categorised as follows:

- ▶ **Lack of capacity of donor project partners:** A significant barrier in the implementation of Grant supported projects raised during the interviews was donor project partners' lack of human resources. In some cases, this lack of capacity hindered cooperation on projects despite initial interest in bilateral cooperation. A high number of Beneficiary States and PPs, compared to the number of Donor States and donor project partners, and the latter's involvement in several projects, were among the factors limiting donor project partners' capacity and availability to engage with PPs.
- ▶ **Communication issues:** Qualitative evidence from the interviews undertaken suggest that language barriers and, in some cases, a lack of communication between PPs and donor project partners constitute another barrier to effective cooperation, creating additional challenges for programme implementation.
- ▶ **Administrative issues:** Differences in administrative procedures also constituted a barrier to bilateral cooperation evoked by PPs and donor project partners alike. For example, delays of payments to teachers caused by timesheets not being shared with the PPs and the information-sharing agreements in the case of a project implemented as part of the CZ-EDUCATION programme. Evidence from the survey among the donor project partners confirms that navigating specific administrative requirements of Beneficiary Countries was also perceived as a barrier to bilateral cooperation by the donor project partners.
- ▶ **Lack of interest of students from Donor States:** In the case of the RO-EDUCATION and EE-RESEARCH programmes, interviewees pointed out that the lack of interest shown by donor project partners also constituted a key obstacle for the implementation of mobilities for students from donor countries. According to the DPPs, this low interest was linked to the low relevance of some programme areas (e.g., mobility in VET) in the light of the Donor States' policy priorities. The interest of donor project partners in cooperation on mobility was especially low in some Beneficiary States e.g., Romania. Based on the DPPs' observations, this was related to the perceived minimal commonalities between the Donor States and Romania.
- ▶ **COVID-19 related barriers:** The pandemic represented a significant barrier to mobility-related projects, networking, and collaboration activities. According to a number of interviewees consulted, the limitations imposed by the pandemic on mobility projects resulted in less efficient bilateral cooperation.
- ▶ **Harmonisation/Integration:** The implementation of the 'Mobility for Education about Energy and Ecology & Digital Competencies for Education 4.0' project in Czech Republic showed that integrating all institutions into one platform to avoid scheduling issues of students' classes was technically difficult. The lack of a joint strategy between the PPs and donor project partners to recruit students for mobilities was also a critical barrier, affecting student interest to travel and conduct research in the Beneficiary State.

Despite the several challenges identified based on the data collected through the stakeholder interviews, findings highlight the following key facilitators facilitating bilateral cooperation:

- ▶ **Adaptative approach:** A significant facilitator to effective bilateral cooperation was the ability of POs, PPs and donor project partners to quickly adapt to the changes brought by external circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, re-design programmes' requirements and projects' methodologies to move collaborative activities online.
- ▶ **Existing experience:** The analysis of interviews with PPs, POs, NFPs and DPPs clearly illustrates that previous collaborative experience at project and programme level strengthens bilateral cooperation. Several PPs interviewed highlighted benefits (e.g., developed partnerships, better understanding of partner roles, more anticipatory planning and concrete future plans) of past bilateral cooperation on their current projects or

for their future projects planned. POs and NFPs with past programme experience found it easier to keep their programmes on track and adapt these programmes to COVID-19 circumstances. DPPs with past knowledge on how programmes were designed and delivered (in other countries) at operational level could provide helpful assistance and support based on this past experience.

- ▶ **Project design:** In the case of the ClassroomLab project and Creative Industries Learning Module (CCILM), the project design aided bilateral cooperation. As the project was planned for deployment only online, the pandemic posed no significant challenges, and the virtual environment was thus well suited for bilateral collaboration.
- ▶ **Good communication between the partners:** Maintaining strong communication through frequent project calls and coordination meetings contributed to building bilateral relationships and enabling donor project partners and PPs to take ownership of their projects.

Possible ways for improving bilateral cooperation

Based on the evidence collected and reviewed in the context of this evaluation, the main ways to enhance bilateral cooperation are as follows:

- ▶ **Improved communication and frequent exchanges:** One donor project partner who completed the survey suggested that it would be helpful if the PO organised regular meetings with them to discuss the progress and potential challenges of their project. Ongoing collaborative exchanges were also found to facilitate the development of interpersonal relations, shared experience, and common goals.
- ▶ **Simplifying administrative and financial mechanisms:** The analysis of PPs open-ended survey responses indicated that more straightforward and less bureaucratic administrative and financial mechanisms could facilitate bilateral cooperation. One donor project partner who completed the online survey also suggested simplifying the rules for accounting and financial reporting. They noted that Erasmus+ projects like Centres of Vocational Excellence could be used for inspiration. Furthermore, having the relevant documents in English could further enhance the added value to cooperation. Some donor project partners suggested that rules on scholarships and financial management could be centralised and the same rules applied in all Beneficiary States. They reported that they spend too much time on administration and abiding by the rules at the expense of content-related work.
- ▶ **Promotional activities:** The analysis of PPs survey responses indicates that increasing awareness of Grant supported projects and their benefits (to potential donor project partners) could facilitate more effective bilateral cooperation. Providing more information to potential partner institutions on the EEA Grants could also increase the number of new partnerships created.

4.0 Recommendations

4.1 Recommendations for the current Financial Mechanism

- **We advise that the FMO and the DPPs mobilise support to the Slovenian authorities to help implement the SI-EDUCATION programme.** Place more pressure on Slovenian government to attribute appropriate human resources to the management of the SI-EDUCATION programme. This could include making remaining disbursements conditional on increasing current human resources. Prepare for the swift re-allocation of funds from some areas (such as the call for projects supporting precarious workers) to other areas which received greater interest. The areas which received greater interest should be established with the Slovenian authorities. Lastly, jointly with the Slovenian authorities, develop a plan for continuity of work in the case of a COVID-19-related lockdown.
- **To facilitate sustainability of results, the FMO and the DPPs should support the POs to promote and disseminate the project results as a way to bolster continuity of results.** This could include the organisation of capitalisation conferences and promotional campaigns. For the remaining calls, the FMO could encourage the POs to attribute extra points to applicants with a plan for sustainability of results.
- **We recommend that the FMO and the POs generate further lessons learnt as a basis for a future potential FM.** In the final evaluation of the programmes commissioned by the FMO, carry out a comprehensive review of all projects financed to identify areas of critical importance that are currently not covered by many EEA and Norway Grants projects. On that basis, create incentives for implementing projects in these areas for the future FM.

4.2 Recommendations for the future Financial Mechanism

- **The FMO and the POs should ensure a better coverage among the projects of the critical challenges in education and training in both the Beneficiary and the Donor States.** Based on (i) a comprehensive review of projects suggested for the current FM (see recommendation above) and (ii) an assessment of needs and policy priorities in the Donor States, the POs should ensure that funding is directed to these areas (e.g. adult education, quality VET, and gender imbalances in education and training). As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, projects supporting digital learning, i.e. learning that is accompanied by technology or by instructional practice that makes effective use of technology.
- **The POs should ensure a greater focus on inclusive education in the programmes to improve the programmes' relevance to the needs of the most vulnerable learners.** These efforts should be based on thorough needs assessments of the most vulnerable groups in the Beneficiary States, taking into account the pandemic's effects on their access to quality education. If no such secondary needs assessments exist, they should be carried out by the POs. It is recommended that each programme contains at least one outcome dedicated to the most vulnerable learner groups. This could include funding for digital learning projects that aim to secure the access, participation, and success of all learners, with a focus on the most vulnerable. Horizontal measures (such as extra funding for mobilities of persons with disabilities or from low-income families) to ensure the relevance to the needs of these groups could also be introduced. In Romania and Czech Republic, the POs should re-consider current approaches to targeting Roma communities, potentially by expanding the programme areas of support to include more comprehensive support and Roma target groups' participation.

- **To enhance the quality and relevance of education and training in the Beneficiary States, both during and beyond the pandemic, the FMO should advise the Donor and Beneficiary States to shift the focus of the programmes from short-term mobility to longer-term institutional cooperation.** For this, it is recommended to modify the objective of the programmes from 'enhanced human capital and knowledge base' to 'enhanced quality and relevance of education'. The FMO should also ensure that the programmes' results frameworks are structured to reflect these changes. In terms of projects, this could include working on assessment forms, curriculum content, quality of teaching, student participation, centres of excellence in education. However, the FMO and the POs should explore if shifting the focus towards institutional cooperation will not exclude organisations with less experience in implementing comprehensive, international projects.
- **The FMO and the DPPs should encourage a narrower thematic scope of programmes managed by POs without extensive experience in implementing educational programmes.** A degree of narrowing the thematic scope of programmes managed by experienced POs should also be considered to ensure the relevance of the programmes to policy priorities and needs in both Beneficiary and Donor States.
- **With support from the FMO and the DPPs, the POs should make the launching of the calls for proposals more predictable to facilitate planning of projects and synergies with other initiatives, and to support the engagement of donor project partners.** For this, the POs could develop and distribute among the potential PPs and donor project partner organisations clear timelines for publishing the remaining calls;
- **To facilitate the engagement of donor project partners, the FMO should harmonise the application timelines and procedures among the EEA/Norway Grants programme countries.** This could include (i) establishing a regular time for publishing calls for proposals and advance notices and (ii) centralising rules on scholarships and financial management to apply the same rules in all Beneficiary States.
- **To improve complementarities and synergies with Erasmus+ and ESIF, the FMO and the DPPs should work with the POs to plan for complementarities in terms of activities and target groups supported by the programmes on the one hand, and Erasmus+, ESIF, and other EU funding on the other hand.** The POs should consider allocating extra points to applications with a plan for complementarity across the programmes. The FMO and the DPPs should consider encouraging the POs to implement more pre-defined projects implemented by governmental bodies to enable synergies with larger, more systemic projects financed from the ESF and ERDF. In addition, further alignment of the programmes' rules for financial reporting with those of Erasmus+ should be considered, if possible, to facilitate procedural complementarity. Finally, the FMO should hold talks with DG EAC and maintain regular communication.
- **To ensure that the POs have sufficient capacity to implement the programmes,** Erasmus+ National Agencies should be the preferred PO. In case of mixed-area programmes, the FMO and the DPPs should support the POs to adapt to education-specific requirements. This could involve support from an Erasmus+ National Agency, or POs from other countries. Such support should be funded adequately under programme management cost category.
- **The FMO and the POs should invest in improving the competencies of current and prospective PPs in designing relevant and comprehensive projects, collaborating with partners, and managing international projects.** For instance, the FMO could organise capacity building activities aimed at ensuring project relevance to target groups' needs and strengthening partner cooperation and exchanging experiences in project management. Such support should focus on strengthening the capacities of Project Promoters in lagging areas (e.g. VET), or those who struggle at the application or implementation stage (e.g. public schools).
- **The FMO and the DPPs should work with the POs to design strategies for the measurement and continuation of achieved results in the long term.** Potentially using the monitoring mechanisms in ESIF

as example, the FMO could develop a model for a mechanism for monitoring long-term results of the interventions. This could include monitoring 6 months and 2 years after the intervention. The FMO should also create a strategy for continuation of results to be implemented across the programmes. The strategy could build on existing efforts of individual POs to encourage sustainability (e.g. promotion of results, capitalisation conferences, obliging PPs to include sustainability in their design).

- **The DPPs and the POs should enhance bilateral cooperation by improving communication at both programme and project level.** For this, the FMO / the DPPs could create a database of donor project partner organisations interested in further cooperation to be used by PPs for partnership building. It is also recommended to organise regular meetings between DPPs, POs, donor project partners and PPs to discuss progress made at programme and project level, respectively, and address potential challenges.

Annex I: Overview of evaluated programmes

Table 6: Key features of evaluated programmes

Programme short name	Programme areas ²⁵	Grant (EUR)	Programme operator	Donor Programme Partner DPP	Expected programme results (outcomes) linked to PA3	PA3-relevant special concerns	# Projects under PA3*
CZ-EDUCATION	PA03	6,500,000 (EEA)	Czech National Agency for International Education and Research	HK-dir, AIBA	<p>Outcome 1: Strengthened institutional cooperation at all levels of education, with a special focus on democracy and citizenship education</p> <p>Outcome 2: Improved skills and competences of students, staff and other educational experts at all levels of education (mobility)</p> <p>Outcome 3: Improved quality of work-based learning and youth entrepreneurship</p> <p>Outcome 4: Increased inclusion of disadvantaged groups including the Roma population (inclusive education)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The programme shall be open to cooperation at all levels of education. Institutional cooperation, as well as mobility for staff and students at all levels of education, including apprenticeship, shall be targeted. This programme shall include support of inclusive education and contribute to the improvement of the situation for disadvantaged groups including the Roma population. The programme shall address democracy and citizenship education and related topics. 	57
EE-RESEARCH	PA02 , PA03	7,100,000 (EEA)	Ministry of Education and Research - Estonia	AIBA, HK-dir, RCN, RANNIS	<p>Outcome 2: Improved skills and competences of students and staff in higher education</p> <p>Outcome 3: Competence of educational staff increased, related to working with special education needs (SEN)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The possibility of joint calls for proposals together with the relevant designated Programme Operators in the Republic of Latvia and the Republic of Lithuania, on Joint Baltic Research and Education, shall be explored when developing the concept note 	10
LV-RESEARCH	PA02 , PA03	8,500,000 (EEA) 6,000,000 (Norway)	Ministry of Education and Science of Latvia	RCN, HK-dir, RANNIS, AIBA	<p>Outcome 2: Improved skills and competences of students and staff in higher education and research</p> <p>Outcome 3: Enhanced regional knowledge development of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approximately € 1,500,000 of the programme grant (from the EEA Mechanism) is allocated to PA3 	4
PL-EDUCATION	PA03	20,000,000 (EEA)	Foundation for the Development of the Education System	HK-dir, AIBA, RANNIS	<p>Outcome 1: Improved skills and competences of students and staff in all fields of education, with four components (professional development of staff, mobility and institutional cooperation for VET and general education)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The programme shall include, inter alia, mobility in higher education, apprenticeships, institutional cooperation, and inclusive education (for e.g. disabled and intercultural students). 	97
PT-INNOVATION	PA01 , PA02, PA03	38,000,000 (EEA)	Directorate General for Maritime Policy	IN, RANNIS, RCN, HK-dir	<p>Outcome 4: Education, training and cooperation in marine and maritime issues enhanced</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A pre-defined project in the area of capacity building in maritime education and training will be developed in the concept note phase. 	30

²⁵ The host programme area is indicated in bold.

RO-EDUCATION	PA03	12,000,000 (EEA)	National Agency for Community programmes in the Field of Education and Vocational Training	HK-dir, AIBA	<p>Outcome 1: Improved skills and competences of students and staff in Higher Education (HE)</p> <p>Outcome 2: Strengthened institutional cooperation in the HE area, based on common needs</p> <p>Outcome 3: Improved skills and competences of educational experts (school inspectors, teacher trainers, counsellors)</p> <p>Outcome 4: Improved quality of work-based learning</p> <p>Outcome 5: Increased institutional capacity of schools to ensure an effective inclusion of Roma children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 10% of the combined total eligible expenditure of the programme shall target the improvement of the situation for the Roma population. Synergies with the programmes: Research; Business Development, Innovation and SMEs; Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency, Energy Security; and others where relevant 	125
SK-INNOVATION	PA01, PA03	6,000,000 (EEA) 14,000,000 (Norway)	Research Agency	IN, HK-dir, AIBA	<p>Outcome 2: Education and Employment potential enhanced in Slovakia in Green Industry Innovation and Welfare and Ambient Assisted Living technologies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to 15% of the total eligible expenditure of the programme shall be set aside for a component addressing PA3, which shall be implemented in the form of a small grant scheme. 	0
SI-EDUCATION	PA03, PA04, PA16	1,500,000 (EEA) 12,000,000 (Norway)	Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy - Slovenia	HK-dir, AIBA	<p>Outcome 1: Improved institutional cooperation at all levels of education (formal and informal)</p> <p>Outcome 2: Improved skills and competences of students and staff involved in mobility and Institutional cooperation Between Slovenia and Donor States</p> <p>Outcome 3: Education and social environment to support disadvantaged groups improved</p> <p>Outcome 4: Improved work-life balance (WLB)</p> <p>Outcome 5: Improved skills for good governance and cooperation in the provision of child victim services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The programme shall support, inter alia: Pilots and models for developing systematic solutions in enhancing competences of teachers, professors and other academic staff; Improved cooperation of stakeholders on local, regional and national level; Measures for easing the transition of pupils from schools to the labour market; Measures to improve work-life balance, with an emphasis on women's economic empowerment Cooperation with Norwegian entities and international organisations at project level shall be encouraged. 	0

* As of 04.07.2021

Annex II: Evaluation matrix

Table 7: Evaluation Matrix

	Evaluation questions	Operationalised questions	Data collection methods ²⁶	Data sources ^{27 28}	Analysis methods / Comments
Relevance					
1.	To what extent are programme designs relevant to the country contexts?	To what extent do the programmes' objectives and design respond to the key challenges in the respective Beneficiary States' education and training systems?	DR IDIs	NFPs POs Category 1 docs Category 5 docs	Thematic analysis
2.	To what extent are programme designs coherent with national strategies?	To what extent are the programmes' planned outcomes and approach aligned with national priorities, strategies and policy objectives in the education and training domain? Are there any tensions (e.g., objectives which are potentially contradictory, or approaches which are causing inefficiencies) between the programme designs and national strategic and policy objectives?	DR IDIs	NFPs POs Category 1 docs Category 5 docs	Thematic analysis
Coherence					
3.	To what extent do the programmes complement or have synergies with the Erasmus+ programme and other EU initiatives?	To what extent do the educational programmes and the Erasmus+ programme build on each other's individual strengths and compensate for each other's limitations in relation to promoting learning mobility and institutional cooperation in education, training, youth, and sport? <i>[complementarity]</i>	DR IDIs	NFPs POs DG EAC EACEA Category 1 docs	Thematic analysis

²⁶ DR – Desk research; IDIs – In-depth Individual Interviews; OS – online survey, FGI – focus group interview

²⁷ FMO staff – Financial Mechanism Office staff; NFP – National Focal Point; PO – Programme Operator; PP – Project Promoters; DPP – Donor Programme Partners; Dpp – Donor project partners; DG EAC – DG Education, Youth, Sport and Culture staff; EACEA - European Education and Culture Executive Agency

²⁸ The following are types of documentation to be reviewed as part of desk research:

- ✓ Category 1 docs: Programme development docs including MoUs, Concept Notes (and their memos), Programme (Implementation) Agreements
- ✓ Category 2 docs: Programme implementation documentation including Annual Progress Reports, Strategic Reports, Interim Financial Reports, and annual progress reports from the DPPs
- ✓ Category 3 docs: Data from GRACE
- ✓ Category 4 docs: Previous monitoring, evaluation, review, and assessment reports of the Grants carried out by national counterparts and those contracted by the FMO.
- ✓ Category 5 docs: Other sources including EU, national policy documents, reports, briefs, and websites

		<p>To what extent do the agents, resources, or activities of the educational programmes and Erasmus+ programmes interact (influence or act upon each other)? (e.g. this could happen through informal meetings between individuals or teams from educational programmes and Erasmus+ funded programmes seeking synergy, through to much more formal institutional and governance arrangements, or through activities intersecting and having an effect on the planned outcomes.) <i>[synergies]</i></p> <p>To what extent do these interactions result in outcomes that are greater than the value of their individual effects? <i>[synergies]</i></p> <p>Was complementarity or some level of coordination or harmonisation between the educational programmes and the ESIF financing (Thematic Objectives 10, 9 and 8) considered when designing the programmes? If so, how and what value added does it bring? If not, why not?</p>		Category 5 docs	
3.a	<p>What opportunities are there to either enhance synergies or identify points of difference?</p>	<p>How can interactivity between the agents, resources, or activities of educational programmes and Erasmus+ be enhanced for achieving outcomes that are greater than the value of both intervention's individual effects?</p> <p>How can the educational programmes be adapted/modified (in current and future financial mechanisms) to enhance their value-added vis-a-vis the Erasmus+ programme?</p>	DR IDIs	NFPs POs DG EAC EACEA Category 1 docs Category 5 docs	Thematic analysis SWOT analysis
Efficiency					
4	<p>To what extent are the programmes fit for the current institutional and administrative capacities of the Programme Operators and Project Promoters?</p>	<p>To what extent are the educational programmes' sizes, areas of focus, implementation modalities (presence and number of calls, pre-defined projects, small grant schemes) and other characteristics adequate for the current institutional and administrative capacities of the Programme Operators and Project Promoters?</p>	DR IDIs FGI OS	FMO staff DPPs PPs PO Dpps Category 2 docs Category 3 docs Category 4 docs	Thematic analysis Descriptive statistics SWOT analysis
5.	<p>To what extent are the Programme Operators and Project Promoters able to make effective use of the available funding?</p>	<p>What is the progress of allocation & absorption of funding as compared to the funds committed to the sectoral and bilateral outcomes?</p> <p>How likely is it that the committed funds will be absorbed?</p> <p>To what extent are the POs and PPs able to ensure that the committed funding brings about the intended results?</p>	DR IDIs OS	NFPs PO PPs Dpps Category 2 docs Category 3 docs Category 4 docs	Descriptive statistics Financial analysis Thematic analysis SWOT analysis

6.	What are the main factors that cause delays in implementation and in what ways?	<p>What internal (e.g. related to programme design or stakeholders' capacity etc.) factors lead to delays in the implementation of programmes and projects? In what ways?</p> <p>What external (e.g. related to the country's legal and administrative frameworks) factors cause delays in the implementation of the programmes and project? In what ways?</p>	DR IDIs OS	PO PPs Dpps Category 3 docs	Thematic analysis SWOT analysis Descriptive statistics
6a.	How can factors causing delays best be mitigated?	<p>What are the most successful measures for reducing the severity and seriousness of delays?</p> <p>What do the successful examples of mitigating delays have in common?</p>	DR IDIs OS	PO PPs Dpps	Thematic analysis
6b.	How does the choice of Programme Operator affect implementation and the achievement of results? What characteristics tend to be most influential?	How does the type (ministry, Erasmus+ National Agency, other governmental body), thematic focus (e.g. bodies focusing on education vs those on research and innovation), and experience (e.g. with Erasmus+) of PO entities affect the implementation and the achievement of results?	IDIs	Category 2 docs Category 3 docs FMO staff POs DPPs	Thematic analysis SWOT analysis
6c.	How can the FMO and Donor Programme Partners better support Programme Operators and Project Promoters to manage for success?	<p>Is the current support provided by donor project and programme partners to POs and PPs adequate to the PPs and POs' needs?</p> <p>What are the main ways in which DPPs and donor project partners can provide better support to POs and PPs?</p>	IDIs OS	POs PPs	Thematic analysis
Effectiveness					
7.	How likely are the programmes to achieve the planned outcomes, including taking into account the special concerns of each programme?	<p>What is the status of achieved vs expected programme-level results (progress) at output and outcome levels?</p> <p>How is achievement of the stipulated special concerns progressing?</p> <p>Are the targets reasonable and achievable?</p> <p>As implementation progresses, are appropriate systems and processes in place so that results can be achieved?</p> <p>Are remaining risks likely to affect achievement of results or are they are adequately managed for?</p>	DR IDIs FGI OS	FMO staff NFPs POs PPs DPPs Category 1 docs Category 2 docs Category 3 docs Category 4 docs	Indicators' analysis Thematic analysis Descriptive statistics
8.	Which factors affect the achievement or non-achievement of the planned outcomes?	Which internal (e.g. stakeholder capacity, support provided) factors facilitate the programmes' and projects' achievement of results (at outcome and output level)?	DR IDIs FGIs OS	FMO staff NFPs POs PPs	Thematic analysis SWOT analysis

		<p>Which internal (e.g. stakeholder capacity, support provided) factors hinder the programmes' and projects' achievement of results (at outcome and output level)?</p> <p>Which external factors (e.g. the national legal frameworks and administrative regulations, systemic bottlenecks in the education and training systems) facilitate the programmes' and projects' achievements (at outcome and output level)?</p> <p>Which external factors (e.g. the national legal frameworks and administrative regulations, systemic bottlenecks in the education and training systems) hinder the programmes' and projects' achievements (at outcome and output level)?</p>		<p>DPPs Dpps Category 2 docs Category 4 docs</p>	
9.	<p>How could programme results be better measured at the outcome level, reflecting the raisons d'être of the programmes?</p>	<p>Do the outcome level indicators adequately reflect the purpose (i.e. to enhance human capital and knowledge base and enhance bilateral cooperation) of the programmes?</p> <p>How could the measurement of results be improved to better reflect the purpose (i.e. to enhance human capital and knowledge base and enhance bilateral cooperation) of the programmes?</p>	<p>IDIs FGI</p>	<p>FMO staff NFPs POs DPPs</p>	<p>Thematic analysis</p>
Bilateral cooperation					
10.	<p>To what extent is the overall bilateral objective of the EEA and Norway Grants considered in programme design and implementation?</p>	<p>How is the bilateral cooperation objective operationalised at the level of outcomes and outputs in the programmes' result frameworks?</p> <p>What percentage of the projects are implemented in cooperation with a donor project partners?</p> <p>To what extent are the DPPs involved in the programme design and implementation?</p> <p>To what extent are the donor project partners involved in the programme design and implementation?</p> <p>To what extent is the bilateral fund used?</p>	<p>DR IDIs FGI</p>	<p>Category 2 docs Category 4 docs NFPs POs DPPs</p>	<p>Thematic analysis</p>
11.	<p>How and to what extent are bilateral partnerships (at programme and project level) adding value:</p> <p>a.) to the implementation and results of educational programmes?</p> <p>b.) to Programme Operators, Donor Programme Partners,</p>	<p>Does the support provided by the DPPs to the POs bring in new sectoral competences and experience useful for Programme implementation?</p> <p>Does the support provided by the donor project partners to the PPs bring in new and useful ideas and expertise and leads to improved project implementation?</p> <p>To what extent does the networking, exchange, sharing and transfer of knowledge, technology, experience and good practices between DPPs and the POs and between the dpps and the PPs benefit the DPPs and the donor project partners?</p>	<p>DR IDIs FGI OS</p>	<p>Category 2 docs Category 4 docs Category 5 docs NFPs POs DPPs PPs dpps</p>	<p>Thematic analysis Descriptive statistics</p>

	Project Promoters and Donor Project Partners?	Does the support provided by DPPs and donor project partners to POs and PPs result in strengthened capacity and expertise for the DPPs and donor project partners?			
13.	In what ways could bilateral cooperation be further enhanced?	What are the key obstacles to strong and effective bilateral cooperation? How could these be overcome?	IDIs OS FGI	NFPs POs DPPs PPs dpps	Thematic analysis
Sustainability					
14.	To what extent are the expected benefits of the programmes likely to be sustained in the five years following programme completion?	To what extent are the results achieved likely to be sustained in five years? To what extent are sustainability considerations included into the programmes' design? What are the strategies, systems and processes used by the POs and PPs to ensure that results will be sustained? Are the results and lessons learned of the projects being (or are planned to be) used for future initiatives?	DR OS IDIs	Category 1 docs PPs DPPs	Thematic analysis

Annex III: Review of indicators' achievement

Table 8: Indicator analysis

Programme	Indicator level	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Achievements until end of December 2020	Status (achieved, exceeded, in progress, no progress)
CZ-EDUCATION	Outcome 1: Strengthened institutional cooperation at all levels of education, with a special focus on democracy and citizenship education	Level of satisfaction with institutional cooperation	N/A	3.5	5	Exceeded
		Number of institutions which apply new methods for democracy and citizenship education	0	36	4	In progress
		Number of institutions which apply new methods for inclusive education (including Roma inclusion)	0	15	0	No results reported yet
		Number of intellectual outputs generated by institutional cooperation projects (joint curricula, learning resources, etc.)	0	50	5	In progress
	Output 1.1: Knowledge and good practice shared	Number of peer-learning activities carried out (workshops, seminars, round tables, etc.)	N/A	20	11	In progress
		Number of people attending peer-learning activities	N/A	320	62	In progress
	Outcome 2: Improved skills and competences of students, staff and other educational experts at all levels of education (mobility)	Level of overall satisfaction with mobility period	N/A	4	4.78	Exceeded
		Share of students who declare improved skills and competences through mobility	N/A	80%	97.22 %	Exceeded
		Share of mobile staff and educational experts who declare that they have acquired new knowledge through mobility	N/A	80%	100%	Exceeded
		Number of ECTS credits received by the higher education students in mobility projects	0	300	724	Exceeded
	Output 2.1: Short-term learning mobility of students in secondary and higher education between the Czech Republic and donor states realised	Number of students from the Beneficiary State participating in exchanges in secondary and higher education	0	160	28	In progress
		Number of students from the Donor States participating in exchanges in secondary and higher education	0	70	8	In progress
	Output 2.2: Mobility of staff and other educational experts at all levels of education between the Czech Republic and donor states realised	Number of staff and educational experts from the Beneficiary State participating in exchanges	0	120	26	In progress
		Number of staff and educational experts from the Donor States participating in exchanges	0	60	10	In progress
	Outcome 3: Improved quality of work-based learning and youth entrepreneurship	Level of satisfaction with the partnerships and cooperation developed between VET institutions and companies	N/A	3.5	-	No results reported yet
		Share of staff in participating VET institutions who declare improved skills and competences	N/A	80%	-	No results reported yet

		Share of company tutors who declare improved skills and competences	N/A	80%	-	No results reported yet	
		Share of participating VET students who declare to be better aware of youth entrepreneurship opportunities	N/A	80%	-	No results reported yet	
	Output 3.1: Joint partnerships between VET schools and companies implemented		Number of partnerships established, following the ECVET requirements	0	7	0	No results reported yet
			Number of staff (VET teachers and tutors) from the Beneficiary State participating in study visits in VET	0	20	0	No results reported yet
			Number of staff (VET teachers and tutors) from the Donor States participating in study visits in VET	0	10	0	No results reported yet
			Number of curricula re-designed by the VET schools and companies to match the needs of the local labour market	0	2	0	No results reported yet
	Output 3.2: Joint projects fostering youth entrepreneurship through education and training implemented		Number of VET students receiving training to support the sense of entrepreneurship	0	40	0	No results reported yet
			Number of training modules/courses for teachers and tutors realised	0	5	0	In progress
EE-RESEARCH	Outcome 2: Improved skills and competences of students and staff in higher education	Number of students with received ECTS credits	0	150	121	In progress	
		Number of joint intellectual outputs created in cooperation projects	0	10	1	In progress	
	Output 2.1: Cooperation projects implemented in higher education	Number of joint events (courses, summer/winter schools, workshops, seminars, etc.)	0	15	2	In progress	
	Output 2.2: Facilitated professional mobility of staff (HEI workers and academic staff) and students in higher education	Number of students from Estonia in exchanges	0	100	0	No results reported yet	
		Number of students from Donor States in exchanges	0	50	0	No results reported yet	
		Number of staff from Estonia in exchanges	0	100	0	No results reported yet	
		Number of staff from Donor States in exchanges	0	50	0	No results reported yet	
	Output 2.3: Increased quality of study programme in Norwegian language and literature	Number of students taking part in Norwegian language and literature lecturers at Tartu University	0	132	30	In progress	
	Outcome 3: Competence of educational staff increased, related to working with special education needs (SEN)	Share of teachers who reported improved competencies in SEN	N/A	75%	96.43%	Exceeded	
		Number of articles submitted to peer-reviewed publications	0	4	3	In progress	
	Output 3.1: Capacity building activities implemented	Number of training courses organized	0	4	5	Exceeded	
		Number of public lectures and seminars organized	0	4	3	In progress	
		Number of researchers supported	0	10	21	Exceeded	

		Number of teachers trained	0	150	28	In progress	
LV-RESEARCH	Outcome 2: Improved skills and competences of students and staff in higher education and research	Number of students with received ECTS credits	0	90	0	No results reported yet	
		Output 2.1: Facilitated learning mobility in higher education (HE) (students and staff) between Beneficiary State and Donor States	Number of staff from Latvia in exchanges	0	100	0	No results reported yet
		Number of staff from Donor States in exchanges	0	50	0	No results reported yet	
		Number of students from Latvia in exchanges	0	80	0	No results reported yet	
		Number of students from Donor States in exchanges	0	10	0	No results reported yet	
	Outcome 3: Enhanced regional knowledge development of STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics)	Number of pupils and students who benefitted from education and training programmes organised in Innovation Centres	0	800	0	No results reported yet	
		Share of teachers who self-reported improved competencies in teaching STEM	N/A	≥ 80%	0	No results reported yet	
		Share of pupils and students who self-reported increased interest in STEM	N/A	≥ 80%	0	No results reported yet	
	Output 3.1: Education and training programmes implemented in Innovation Centres	Number of teachers involved in educational and training programmes and workshops	0	200	0	No results reported yet	
		Number of education and training programmes implemented in innovation centres	0	12	0	No results reported yet	
	PL-EDUCATION	Outcome 1: Improved skills and competences of students and staff in all fields of education	Share of participating students assessed by their education institution as having improved their level of competence (excluding VET)	N/A	80%	-	No results reported yet
			Number of ECTS credits received by the higher education students in mobility projects	N/A	6,000	54	In progress
Share of participating staff assessed by their employer as having improved skills/competences in their field of work (excluding VET)			N/A	80%	-	No results reported yet	
Share of participating VET staff assessed by their employer as having improved skills/competences in their field of work			N/A	80%	-	No results reported yet	
Share of participating VET students assessed by their education institution as having improved their level of competence			N/A	80%	-	No results reported yet	
Share of staff participating in institutional cooperation who express satisfaction with the mobility/ exchange			N/A	80%	-	No results reported yet	
Share of students who declare satisfaction with the mobility			N/A	80%	-	No results reported yet	
Number of joint intellectual outputs created in cooperation projects (studies, curricula, teaching materials, papers, etc.)			N/A	200	12	In progress	
Output 1.1: Professional development of staff (mobility of staff for capacity building at all		Number of Polish managerial staff taking part in professional development activities	N/A	300	226	In progress	
		Number of Polish staff taking part in job shadowing	N/A	250	0	No results reported yet	
	Number of Polish staff taking part in conferences on education	N/A	250	0	No results reported yet		

	levels and for all types of education)	Number of action plans launched by educational establishment in all sectors	N/A	40	0	No results reported yet
	Output 1.2: Mobility of staff and students in higher education (HE)	Number of staff from beneficiary states taking part in HE mobility projects	0	265	0	No results reported yet
		Number of staff from donor states taking part in HE mobility projects	0	35	0	No results reported yet
		Number of students from beneficiary states taking part in HE mobility projects	0	315	0	No results reported yet
		Number of students from donor states taking part in HE mobility projects	0	25	0	No results reported yet
		Number of schools offering enhanced VET/ continuing education	0	30	0	No results reported yet
	Output 1.3: Enhanced quality and relevance of vocational education and training (VET) and continuing education	Number of VET apprentices supported	0	600	21	In progress
		Number of staff benefitting from exchanges within the VET/continuing education projects	0	450	0	No results reported yet
		Number of schools offering enhanced VET training modules/ methods	0	390	0	No results reported yet
		Number of education institutions offering new/redesigned education offers/ programmes/courses	0	30	0	No results reported yet
		Number of school curricula redesigned (excluding VET/continuing education)	0	30	0	No results reported yet
	Output 1.4: Enhanced quality and relevance of education at all levels and forms	Number of local/regional/national educational authorities involved in the projects	0	15	0	No results reported yet
		Number of projects involving institutions from more than one sector of education	0	15	2	In progress
		Number of schools cooperating with Donor State education institutions	0	50	15	In progress
		Number of education institutions offering new/redesigned education offers/ programmes/courses	0	30	0	No results reported yet
		Number of participants who self-declare improved skills and competencies after the courses	0	120	0	No results reported yet
PT-INNOVATION	Outcome 4: Education, training and cooperation in marine and maritime issues enhanced	Number of joint intellectual outputs created in cooperation projects (studies, curricula, teaching materials, conference papers, etc.)	0	12	0	No results reported yet
		Number of ECTS credits received by the students in the Mobility projects	0	50	0	No results reported yet
		Number of people with improved ocean literacy skills	0	350	0	No results reported yet
		Number of schools, including professional schools/training centres (VETs), supported to provide education and training on marine and maritime subjects	0	8	0	No results reported yet
	Output 4.1: Education and training on marine and maritime subjects provided in schools	Number of apprentices supported	0	23	0	No results reported yet
		Number of students from beneficiary states in exchanges	0	6	0	No results reported yet
		Number of students from donor states in exchanges	0	2	0	No results reported yet
		Number of teachers/ professors/ administrative/ technical staff from beneficiary states in exchanges	0	6	0	No results reported yet
		Number of teachers/ professors/ administrative/ technical staff from donor states in exchanges	0	2	0	No results reported yet

	Output 4.2: Cooperation activities on marine and maritime topics implemented	Number of joint events organized (Summer schools, Intensive programmes, seminars, workshops, conferences, training courses, etc.)	0	20	0	No results reported yet
		Number of participants (students and staff) at joint events	0	500	0	No results reported yet
	Output 4.3: Awareness-raising activities on ocean literacy carried out (SGS) – non-formal education	Number of ocean literacy awareness raising campaigns carried out	0	28	0	No results reported yet
	Output 4.4: Provision of nautical sports activities to young people (SGS)	Number of students included in nautical school sports activities	0	175	0	No results reported yet
	Output 4.5: Training on maritime issues in Escola Superior Náutica Infante Dom Henrique ENIDH (PDP 1)	Number of simulators updated in the ENIDH facilities	0	7	0	No results reported yet
		Number of trainees receiving training on board the vessel	0	18	0	No results reported yet
		Number of students from beneficiary states in exchanges	0	8	0	No results reported yet
		Number of teachers/ professors/ administrative/ technical staff from beneficiary states in exchanges	0	2	0	No results reported yet
RO-EDUCATION	Outcome 1: Improved skills and competences of students and staff in Higher Education (HE)	Number of ECTS credits received by the students in the Mobility projects	0	6,000	1,763	In progress
		Share of staff who declare improved skills /competencies in their field	90%	95.00 %	96.80 %	Exceeded
	Output 1.1: Facilitated learning mobility in HE (students and staff) between Beneficiary State and Donor States	Number of staff from Beneficiary States in exchanges	0	300	93	In progress
		Number of staff from Donor States in exchanges	0	100	32	In progress
		Number of students from Beneficiary States in exchanges	0	400	79	In progress
		Number of students from Donor States in exchanges	0	35	7	In progress
	Outcome 2: Strengthened institutional cooperation in the HE area, based on common needs	Number of joint articles submitted to peer review publications	0	7	2	In progress
		Number of joint intellectual outputs created in cooperation projects	0	26	6	In progress
	Output 2.1: Cooperation projects in HE area implemented	Number of joint events organised (Summer schools, Intensive programmes, seminars, workshops, conferences, training courses, etc.)	0	26	2	In progress
		Number of participants (students and staff) at joint events	0	550	46	In progress
	Outcome 3: Improved skills and competences of educational experts (school inspectors, teacher trainers, counsellors)	Share of education professionals who declare improved skills/competencies in the areas of democracy, human rights, social inclusion	N/A	15 %	54.10 %	Exceeded
		Share of education professionals who declare improved skills/competencies in their field of service provision	N/A	90%	93.44 %	Exceeded
		Share of participants at mobility activities who receive Europass Mobility certificates	85%	90%	100 %	Exceeded

Output 3.1: Facilitated learning mobility between Beneficiary State and Donor States for educational experts supporting the schools (inspectors, teacher trainers, counsellors)	Number of educational experts benefitting from mobility for learning purposes (structured courses, job shadowing, study visits, conferences, etc.)	0	350	122	In progress
Outcome 4: Improved quality of work-based learning	Share of participating students in work based learning who declare acquiring improved learning outcomes	N/A	85%	47.20 %	In progress
	Share of staff in VET schools who declare better skills/competencies	N/A	90%	98.25 %	Exceeded
	Share of tutors in companies who declare better skills/competencies	N/A	90%	100%	Exceeded
Output 4.1: Enhanced cooperation between the Vocational Education and Training (VET) schools and the partner companies participating in the projects supported	Number of local school curricula re-designed by the schools and the companies to match the needs of the local labour market	0	40	32	In progress
	Number of partnerships concluded, conformed with ECVET requirements	0	50	37	In progress
Output 4.2: Facilitated learning mobility between BS and DS for people responsible for training in VETs (traineeships tutors in companies and VET teachers in schools)	Number of people responsible for training in VETs and tutors in companies benefitting from study visits	0	150	72	In progress
	Number of supported schools enrolling at least 10% Roma students	0	5	1	In progress
Outcome 5: Increased institutional capacity of schools to ensure an effective inclusion of Roma children	Share of staff who declare better skills/competencies regarding Roma inclusion	N/A	90%	99.75 %	Exceeded
	Percentage of Roma pupils experiencing discrimination in the schools participating in projects (from the part of the teachers and Romanian colleagues)	N/A	(-15%)	2.28 %	In progress
Output 5.1: Trained teachers working with Roma children on topics concerning teaching approaches centred on the pupil, inclusive school and teaching in a multicultural environment	Number of schools involved in the projects addressing Roma children inclusion (at school level)	0	60	47	In progress
	Number of teachers trained on inclusiveness and multicultural environment	0	550	399	In progress

	Output 5.2: Developed curriculum on inclusiveness and multicultural environment	Number of new optional curricula and teaching materials developed	0	55	47	In progress
	Output 5.3: Awareness raising activities on discrimination issues organised for parents	Number of Roma and Romanian parents participating in joint activities	0	1,300	806	In progress
	Output 5.4: Awareness raising activities on inclusion issues organised for pupils	Number of Roma and Romanian pupils involved in joint activities	0	2,200	1,382	In progress
		Rate of satisfaction of the participants at these activities	0	90%	98.55 %	Exceeded
SK-INNOVATION	Outcome 2: Education and Employment potential enhanced in Slovakia in Green Industry Innovation and Welfare and Ambient Assisted Living technologies	Number of businesses who self-rate the programme as having added value, regarding employment of apprenticeships (on a scale of 1-5)	0	10	-	No results reported yet
		Number of education institutions offering new courses / modules in environmental technologies	0	4	0	No results reported yet
		Number of people who remain employed in the chosen sector after apprenticeships	0	25	0	No results reported yet
		Number of people who remain working in the chosen sector after mobility	0	15	0	No results reported yet
		Percentage of participants who declare improved skills and competencies	0	70%	-	No results reported yet
	Output 2.1: International mobility supported	Number of apprenticeships supported between Donor States and Slovakia in SMEs or other businesses	0	20	-	No results reported yet
		Number of staff from beneficiary states in exchanges	0	15	-	No results reported yet
		Number of staff from donor states in exchanges	0	10	-	No results reported yet
		Number of students from beneficiary states in exchanges	0	25	-	No results reported yet
		Number of students from donor states in exchanges	0	15	-	No results reported yet
	Output 2.2: Institutional Cooperation Supported	Number of apprentices supported in Slovakia within SMEs or other organisations/institutions	0	20	-	No results reported yet
		Number of institutions developing curricula related to Green Industry Innovation, or Welfare and Ambient Assisted living	0	3	-	No results reported yet
		Number of institutions engaged in cooperation at higher education and upper secondary level	0	10	-	No results reported yet
		Number of participants in workshops organized to share experiences regarding youth apprenticeships and new methods of education and engaging youth	0	50	-	No results reported yet
		Number of SMEs and other enterprises engaged in institutional cooperation at higher education and upper secondary level	0	10	-	No results reported yet
SI-EDUCATION	Outcome1: Improved institutional cooperation at all levels of education	Number of intellectual outputs generated by institutional cooperation	0	30	-	No results reported yet
		Share of cooperating education and training institutions applying new teaching and learning practices	-	85%	-	No results reported yet

(formal and informal)	Level of satisfaction with the institutional cooperation	-	3.5	-	No results reported yet
	Number of institutions which are using the new teaching models, methods and strategies	0	10	-	No results reported yet
Output 1.1: New teaching and learning practices for work and life developed	Number of staff participating in developing and testing teaching models	0	200	-	No results reported yet
	Number of staff trained (providing training for educators on the use of teaching models and methods)	0	15	-	No results reported yet
Output 1.2: Knowledge and good practices shared on advancing skills and competencies in education	Number of peer learning activities carried out	0	16	-	No results reported yet
	Number of participants in peer learning (educators, staff, other education stakeholders)	0	300	-	No results reported yet
	Number of professional staff trained	0	60	-	No results reported yet
Outcome 2: Improved skills and competences of students and staff involved in mobility and institutional cooperation between Slovenia and Donor States	Level of satisfaction with the institutional cooperation	-	3.50	-	No results reported yet
	Share of students, recent graduates/future teachers who declare improved skills and competencies through mobility	-	90%	-	No results reported yet
	Share of teachers and administrative staff who declare improved skills and competencies through mobility	-	90%	-	No results reported yet
Output 2.1: Mobility of students, recent graduates/future teachers and staff (individual, group study visit) supported	Number of students from beneficiary state in exchanges	0	50	-	No results reported yet
	Number of students from donor states in exchanges	0	10	-	No results reported yet
	Number of staff from beneficiary state in exchanges	0	250	-	No results reported yet
	Number of staff from donor states in exchanges	0	30	-	No results reported yet
Output 2.2: Knowledge and best practices shared within small scale projects	Number of joint intellectual outputs created (educational resources and tools)	0	12	-	No results reported yet
	Number of joint events (courses, summer/winter schools, workshops, seminars, etc.) (HE sector)	0	5	-	No results reported yet
	Number of staff from beneficiary state in exchanges	0	40	-	No results reported yet
	Number of staff from donor states in exchanges	0	20	-	No results reported yet
Outcome 3: Education and social environment to support disadvantaged groups improved	Share of involved service providers who declare improved skills	-	95%	-	No results reported yet
	Number of beneficiaries of services provided or improved	0	350	-	No results reported yet
Output 3.1: Support services for the NEET (not in employment,	Number of new or upgraded services developed and tested in local environment	0	2	-	No results reported yet
	Number of staff trained to work with NEET	0	20	-	No results reported yet

	education or training) established	Number of inclusive activities (events, workshops, trainings)	0	20	-	No results reported yet
Output 3.2: Support to youth provided		Number of new or upgraded services	0	3	-	No results reported yet
		Number of staff trained	0	15	-	No results reported yet
		Number of networking, trainings or advisory activities for the young	0	15	-	No results reported yet
Output 3.3: Support environment for precarious workers provided		Number of support services developed (advisory, information, training, etc.)	0	3	-	No results reported yet
		Number of intellectual outputs produced (analyses, information materials, learning materials, etc.)	0	5	-	No results reported yet
		Number of support activities (information events, workshops, etc.)	0	10	-	No results reported yet
		Number of participants reached by awareness raising events (round tables, public debates, conferences, etc.)	0	200	-	No results reported yet
Outcome 4: Improved work-life balance (WLB)		Number of beneficiaries of services provided or improved	0	150	-	No results reported yet
		Number of institutions applying gender equality instruments (or WLB instruments)	0	3	-	No results reported yet
		Share of participants with improved understanding of WLB and gender policies	-	90%	-	No results reported yet
Output 4.1: Local systems established supporting WLB		Number of measures improved or introduced at local level (new or upgraded services, products, tools)	0	3	-	No results reported yet
		Number of professional staff trained (coordinators, mentors, informal carers, animators, etc.)	0	20	-	No results reported yet
Output 4.2: Organisational culture of work-life balance and gender equality generated		Number of participants reached by awareness raising and capacity building activities in organisations (disaggregated by gender)	0	100	-	No results reported yet
		Number of measures adopted in organisations (tools, guidelines etc.)	0	4	-	No results reported yet
Outcome 5: Improved skills for good governance and cooperation in the provision of child victim services		Number of beneficiaries of services provided or improved	0	80	-	No results reported yet
		Share of professional staff who declared improved skills and competences	-	90%	-	No results reported yet
		Number of institutions using the "Barnahus/Children's House" model	0	1	-	No results reported yet
Output 5.1: New or improved cooperation models piloted for child victim services		Number of improved/new services supported	0	1	-	No results reported yet
		Number of pilot projects implemented for child victim services	0	1	-	No results reported yet
		Number of professional staff trained	0	120	-	No results reported yet
		Number of training courses organised	0	14	-	No results reported yet
		Evaluation report on the pilot implementation	No	Yes	-	No results reported yet
		Plan for evaluation and expansion	No	Yes	-	No results reported yet

	Output 5.2: Awareness raising activities carried out	Number of awareness raising campaigns	0	3	-	No results reported yet
		Number of people reached by awareness raising campaigns	0	100	-	No results reported yet
		Number of schools included in awareness raising workshops	0	20	-	No results reported yet