



L'Observatoire Erasmus +

{notes}

Impact evaluation of Erasmus + mobility

{ Editorial }

The Heads of State and Government discussed Education and Training at the Social Summit in Gothenburg in November 2017, based on the communication from the European Commission entitled 'Strengthening the European identity through Education and Culture'. The document stresses *«that it is in the interest of all Member States to exploit the potential of education and culture to the full, as the means of driving employment, social justice and active citizenship, as well as the means to live out the European identity in all its diversity»*. To achieve these objectives, the Commission intends to develop mobility through the Erasmus + programme, a tool used for the objectives of employability and strengthening citizens' values. To go beyond this, and to provide evidence of the programme's relevance in the face of these challenges, the Commission wishes to rely on a device for data collection and follow-up assessment, in order to produce evidence on a European scale.

In France, in early 2018, the Government committed itself to a Great Investment Plan, which particularly aims to build a skill-based society. The investments will be evaluated; the impacts observed.

At the beginning of 2016, Erasmus+ France / Education & Training Agency launched its project of a national Observatoire of Erasmus + impact. This is a system of follow-up assessment which aims at responding to the growing requirement of the mobility

financiers, in the first rank of which is the European Union: checking the relevance and the added value of their financing, in relation to their objectives of enhancing working population qualifications and developing employment. This requirement is reflected in an evaluative injunction, to which the practices, methods and tools for the evaluation of public policies must respond.

This seventh edition of "Les notes de l'Observatoire" is the result of the dynamic of collective production supported by Erasmus+ France / Education & Training Agency. It forms an important pointer to the next step for the collection of data relating to the effects of the programme. In addition, this Note is particularly directed to the 2,500 participating organisations: higher education institutions, schools, vocational training centres, regional councils, regional education authorities, chambers of commerce and industry, chambers of trade and craft, vocational branches, etc, involved in mobility projects and whose valuable contribution in 2018, will be the key to the first comprehensive impact assessment.

I hope you will enjoy the reading!

Laure Coudret-Laut

Director, Erasmus+ France / Education & Training Agency

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Key Points

The impact of Erasmus +

There are several definitions of 'impact'. In order to measure the impact of mobility, the flagship activity within the Erasmus + programme, the collective leans on the definition of the Erasmus + guide: 'Impact is the effect which the implemented activity and its results have on people, practices, organisations and systems'.

A response to the evaluative issues of the Erasmus + programme

The Erasmus + France / Education & Training Agency initiative to create a **national Observatoire of Erasmus + impact** is at the heart of a concern shared by Erasmus + users and prescribers. The Observatoire aims to satisfy expectations better, in terms of the evaluation and development of Erasmus +. These expectations are shared by the National Agency, its partners and the participating organisations. The evaluation of the impact is a **necessity** shared with all participants in the policies of mobility. The Observatoire therefore presents a **common purpose**, that of contributing to their respective work of study and evaluation.

A collaborative approach, undertaken in partnership

To meet this challenge, the Observatoire brings the main stakeholders of mobility together within a working collective: in addition to the National Agencies, the Ministries of National Education, Higher Education, Research and Innovation, regional councils, higher education

institutions, regional education authorities, chambers of commerce and industry, and chambers of trade and crafts are all represented. The added value of this collective lies in its diversity of expertise and points of view: evaluation specialists, research institutes, practitioners and Erasmus + participating organisations.

20 defined impact indicators

The Observatoire's work has led to the definition of a stable typology of expected results and impacts of Erasmus + mobility. Impacts of mobility on learners, staff, organisations and educational systems have been specified and classified. Measurable impact indicators have been defined jointly. These indicators fall either under post-mobility follow-up enquiries yet to be carried out; or data already available within the participant's reports. These two methods constitute a single national system to observe the impact.

An impact dashboard for participating organisations

Participating organisations constitute an essential link in the production and circulation of data from the Observatoire. Contributors of data to the Observatoire, they will equally become recipients. The Observatoire intends to put **in place a post-Erasmus + mobility tracker** and will propose **an impact dashboard** to Erasmus + participating organisations. In this way, they should be able to control incoming information, and to view the results and impacts of supported actions in real time.

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The impact of the Erasmus + programme

Définition

Launched in 2014 with a budget increase of 40% as compared to its predecessor, that is 16.4 billion euros, the Erasmus + programme 2014-2020 is accompanied by heightened requirements concerning the assessment of its impact.

This requirement is set out in the European Commission's 'Better Regulation' initiative, which states that an assessment must consider whether a policy is effective, efficient, relevant, coherent and adds value. In the context of this initiative, impact is defined as:

«the change brought about by the policy in question at a systemic level on society and the economy as a whole. This definition takes into account the complexity of a society and the number of external factors which may affect the process. In the context of mobility, for example, the impact of a course abroad on a young person's degree course also depends on many other factors, such as the degree he is awarded, the network he has developed, etc.»

However, there is no single definition of the impact. According to the Erasmus + guide aimed at participating organisations:

'Impact is the effect which the implemented activity and its results have on people, practices, organisations and systems. The publication and exploitation of the results can help to maximise the effect of these activities, so that they have an immediate impact on the participants and on its partners in the course of the coming years. The benefits for other stakeholders must also be taken into account in order to make a greater difference, and to make the most of the project ... The evaluation of the impact is an essential element of this process. It assesses the achievements and generates recommendations with a view to bringing about future improvements. Indicators can be used to measure progress on the road to the achievement of the objectives. These indicators help to measure performance and can be quantitative (using numbers and percentages) or qualitative (assessing the quality of the participation and the experience). It is also possible to measure the impact by using questionnaires, interviews, observations and assessments. The definition of indicators in relation with the different activities of the project must be considered at the beginning of the project and should form part of the general publication plan.'

The impact of Erasmus + mobility

The Erasmus + programme (2014-2020) operates in six educational sectors:

- school education
- higher education
- vocational education and training
- adult education
- youth (informal education)
- sport

Erasmus + is organised in a framework based on three Key Actions:

- Key Action 1: mobility of learners and staff,
- Key Action 2: cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices
- Key Action 3: support for policy reforms.

Key Action 1 is the programme's main action. Since its creation in 1987, more than 9 million people have benefited from mobilities for studies, job-shadowings, work placements, training courses or teaching positions in Europe. Mobility projects represent 63% of Erasmus + budget. European and international mobility, especially for the most disadvantaged publics, has had a beneficial effect

on professional integration, as measured by several studies. However, French National Agency has regularly observed the lack of resources/skills/means for participating organisations to ensure the monitoring of the effects of mobilities. Post-mobility surveys systems are often lengthy, expensive and ad-hoc, and the results are often inaccurate (insufficient number of respondents, unreliable methodology, etc.)

The sustainability and deepening of these studies is a collective, growing desire which the Agency has been able to observe on the ground. The idea of improving the publication of results is also important for the users of the Erasmus + programme who have come together in the *Observatoire*.

The group has concentrated its work on the following publics:

- learners from higher education (HE) and from vocational education and training (VET): students, apprentices, etc.
- staff from higher education, vocational education and training, school education and adult education: teachers, trainers, administrative staff, etc.

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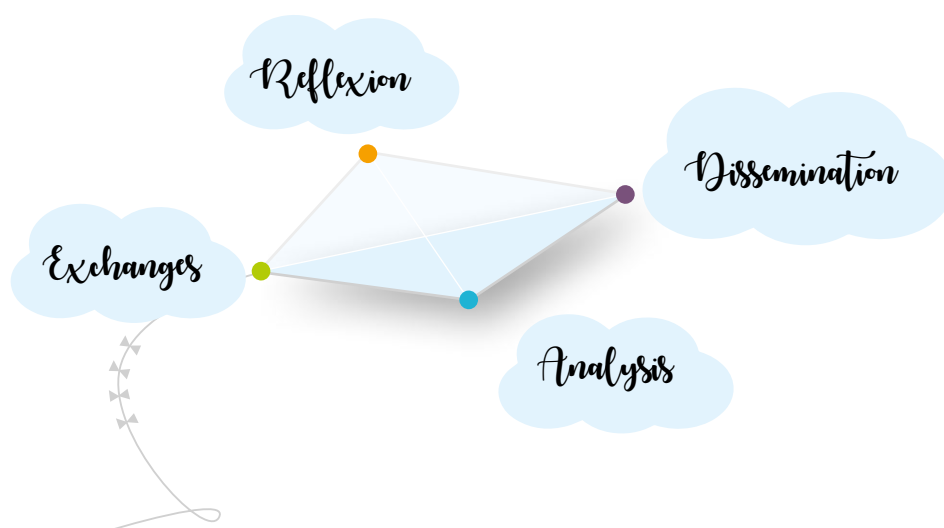
National *Observatoire* on the impact of Erasmus +

Partnership-based approach

As reported by several steering committees on impact studies led by the French National Agency, the need to work collectively and at a national level to measure the effects of Erasmus + programme was identified at the launch of the programme in 2014. In the first place, Erasmus+ France / Education & Training Agency led an opportunity study in 2015, in conjunction with the Agency's key partners, including the network of European Erasmus + National Agencies. The *Observatoire* on impact was then launched, based on the preceding steering committees, with the intention of perpetuating the space for dialogue and discussion, which had become essential at national level.

This collective aimed to produce and publicise information on the impact of Erasmus + and to meet the different members' needs for its assessment.

Observatoire members have a common need to support or benefit from European policies on education and training, including that of Erasmus +. It is an innovative approach because of its collaborative nature, which strengthens the analysis of observed trends as well as the publication of results. The *Observatoire* intends to be a device for impulsion and shared analysis; but also for appropriation and valorisation.



Composition

The composition of the National *Observatoire* on the Impact of Erasmus + to date is stabilised, and consists of 20 stakeholders who form four groups.

- **Financers:** the General Directorate of Education, Youth, Sport and Culture at the European Commission, the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, Regional Councils, Erasmus+ France / Youth & Sport Agency.

These stakeholders are looking for information on the effects of the supported programme.

- **Researchers and evaluation specialists:** ECs, *Pluricité*, the Fund for the Promotion of Prior Studies, Transverse Studies and Evaluations (F3E), the French Institute of Education (IFÉ), the *Observatoire* of Student Life (OVE), the National Institute of Youth and Community Education (INJEP), the International Centre for Pedagogical Studies (CIEP), etc.

These stakeholders are all aware of the methodologies and practices of assessment and studies.

- **Erasmus + participating organisations:** Institutions of higher education, Academic Delegates for European and International Relations and Cooperation (DAREIC) from regional education authorities, the *Association Ouvrière des Compagnons du Devoir et du Tour de France (AOCDTF)*, the *Union Nationale des Maisons Familiales Rurales (UNMFR)*, Chamber of Commerce and Industry in France (CCI France), etc.

These stakeholders are the closest to participants and wish to monitor their actions. The financiers and participating organisations have the data, but struggle to take advantage of it. All recognize the value of working together and are motivated to share their expertise.

Achievements

Early work enabled members to participate in the publicising the culture of evaluation among themselves, and to gain information on the evaluation of the current programme, and the evaluation methodologies and techniques. It was designed to allow stakeholders, who were perhaps still untrained, to express themselves about the expectations, and to appropriate the methods.

A common methodological framework relating to the anticipated results and impacts of Erasmus + mobility on students, staff and organisations was defined on the basis of the expectations of the programme. The objective was to establish a system for the evaluation of the results and impacts of projects.

The collective then carried out a classification of the impacts on students and staff on the one hand, and on the organisations on the other. For students and staff, this classification covered the following three categories:

- **individual potential** - development of the individual abilities of participants in mobility
- **knowledge development** - beneficiaries' development of skills and professional knowledge

- **professional development** - beneficiaries' career development and the internationalisation of institutions.

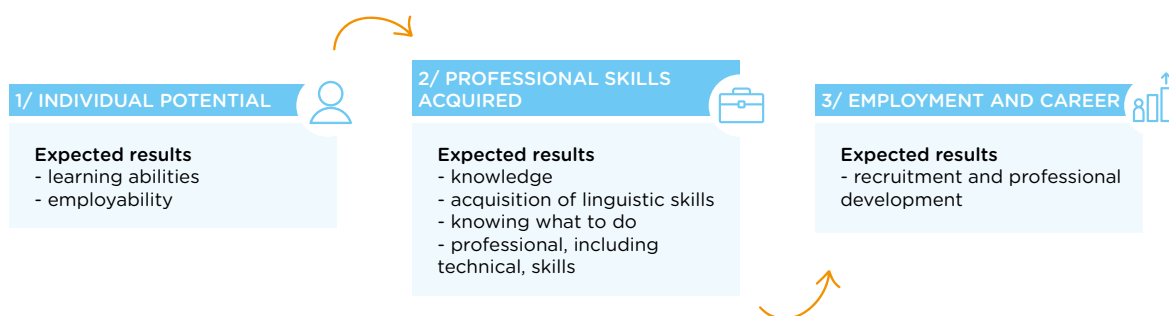
For organisations, the classification also covered three categories:

- **modernisation of the organisation**, reflected by an improvement in the quality of education or main activity, and better organisation,
- **professional and social integration**, through the appropriation of good practices which allow the institution to position itself better in the dynamics of the professional integration of its publics, and to register its educational work better in its societal context.
- **internationalisation of organisations**, which translates into a greater openness towards Europe and the world and improved cross-border cooperation, as well as a better approach to the European and international aspects in the education curriculum.

The following diagrams express the dynamic of drive between the categories of impact, and according to the targets: students/staff/organisations.

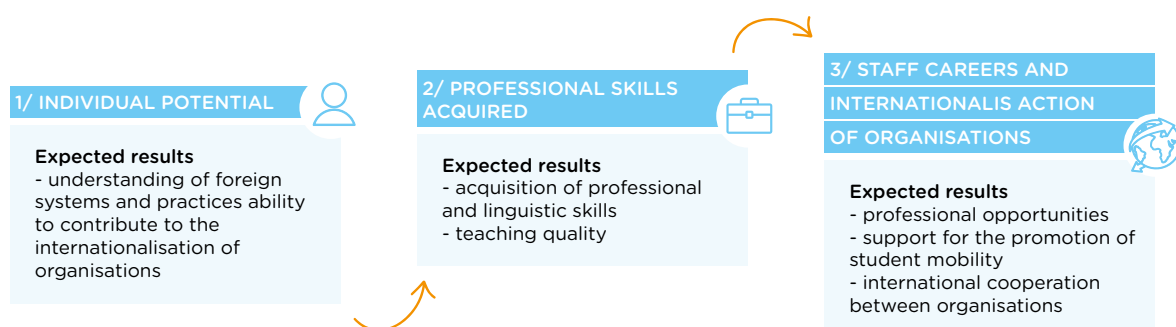
• Impact of mobility on students

Access to employment and professional development are the combined effects of physical mobility and cultural openness.



• Impact of mobility on staff

Mobility acts on staff in three successive ways. The third plan 'Staff Careers and the Internationalisation of Institutions' reveals the interaction between staff and students on the one hand, and between staff and structures on the other.



• Impact of mobility on organisations



Members then sought to **measure the defined impacts**. A consensus was reached on the need to resort to the use of indicators.

From the expected results for Key Action 1: mobility of individuals for the purposes of education and training, as described in the Erasmus + guide for participating organisations, the collective's first stage was to identify **96 indicators**. These indicators were then examined from the perspective of four criteria: their relevance to the objectives and results expected from the programme; the target public; the objective or subjective nature of the data; and the *a priori* feasibility. This process led to the

retention of 20 fundamental indicators, collectively considered **the most relevant** and with **the best feasibility rating**:

- seven indicators for learners
- eight indicators for staff
- five indicators for organisations.

In the third stage, the Observatoire collectively defined the operating modes for data collection to ensure the monitoring of these indicators. The table of the 20 indicators selected by the collective, as well as the operating modes, are described in more detail in the next section.

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Measuring the impact of Erasmus + mobility

20 indicators

PARTICIPANT'S REPORT - MOBILITY TOOL	SURVEY DEVICE
<p>Students</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rate of students declaring an improvement in transversal skills 2. Rate of students expressing the intention to participate more actively in political and social life 3. Rate of students declaring that they felt themselves to be citizens of Europe 	<p>Students</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rate of students declaring an improvement in transversal skills 4. Rate of students using one or more foreign languages in their professional environment 5. Rate of students declaring that they acquired new knowledge and professional skills in mobility 6. Rate of students having improved their linguistic skills after mobility 7. Delay in accessing a first job or a return to employment

PARTICIPANT'S REPORT - MOBILITY TOOL	SURVEY DEVICE
<p>Staff</p> <p>8. Rate of staff declaring that they developed cooperation with economic stakeholders, including businesses</p> <p>9. Rate of staff declaring that they strengthened or expanded their personal network or developed new contacts</p> <p>10. Rate of staff having acquired the experience of working in a team</p> <p>11. Rate of staff declaring they had improved their use of English and /or the language of the host country</p> <p>14. Rate of staff declaring they had received at least one type of recognition by their organisation following their mobility</p> <p>15. Rate of staff declaring that their mobility will lead to the internationalisation of their organisation</p>	<p>Staff</p> <p>10. Rate of staff having acquired the experience of working in a team</p> <p>12. Rate of personnel having changed their methods of teaching or their professional practices after their mobility</p> <p>13. Rate of spread of new professional practices within the institution</p>
<p>Organisations</p> <p>19. Rate of organisations reporting having strongly improved their ability to cooperate at European/international level</p>	<p>Organisations</p> <p>16. Rate of new contacts/networks created by staff in mobility</p> <p>17. Rate of organisations (economic stakeholders) hosting mobility</p> <p>18. Rate of organisations developing a formal approach to internationalisation</p> <p>20. Part played by Erasmus + in the financing of the international mobility of structures</p>

The selection of the 20 indicators above represents the basis of an impact assessment of Erasmus + mobility. The concept of 'rate' refers to the frequency of the phenomenon observed, relative to the total population studied. The indicators are presented according to the two operating methods for data collection selected by the collective.

Data collection

The indicators will be produced by the data obtained according to two operating modes:

- Operating Mode 1 - existing data in the Erasmus + programme

For a certain number of indicators concerning students and staff, the data is located in the participant's report, document completed by those returning from work experience/training/study mobilities within Europe. These reports are to be found in a database managed by the European Commission: *Mobility Tool*. In France, approximately 60,000 people per year benefit from mobility, so far as participants' reports show. For indicators related to organisations, the data are located in the final reports, forms filled in at the end of the mobility projects, which are also found in *Mobility Tool*. Approximately 2,500 participating organisations Erasmus + projects per year are listed for France.

- Operating Mode 2 - complementary surveys

For indicators for which there are no databases, a system of common enquiries consisting of three

specific questionnaires addressed to students, staff and organisations should be devised.

Erasmus+ France / Training & Education National Agency offers to implement and administer this system. To address the three types of targets identified, it may be necessary to rely on the data at national level: of the 60,000 students and staff completing the participant's report, about half have agreed to be contacted subsequently; they are searchable directly via their individual contact details. The 2,500 Erasmus + participating organisations can also be easily interrogated by the National Agency.

It should be noted that the 20 indicators identified are at the heart of an expanding evaluation process. According to programme developments, it will therefore be possible to integrate new indicators:

- either by inserting new questions or new items into the questionnaires,
- or by mobilising new data within the participant's report in *Mobility Tool*.

Impact Dashboard

So as to ensure monitoring of the impact indicators according to the two operating modes described above, a new digital tool must be created to:

- administer the enquiry system,
- collect data,
- correlate data coming from different sources,
- visualise the results.

The objective is to construct a simple information system feeding the 20 selected indicators.

Erasmus + participating organisations will be able to have data on the impact of mobility in real time,

viewed through interactive dashboards. Immediate access to the data for respondents is also to be considered, to ensure a satisfactory rate of response.

The surveillance system integrated into the tool will be implemented according to a timescale yet to be defined, so will allow for the longitudinal monitoring of the impact indicators. The tool will interrogate individuals on their return from mobility, at different stages. For example: three months; one year; three years afterwards.

The initial representation of the tool would take the form of a dashboard following the model below:



(Image source: 'dashboard' from the European Commission)

This tool should be accessible to French Erasmus + participating organisations from 2019 onwards in order to have feedback and adequate results by the end of 2020, at the time of the final evaluation of Erasmus +.

In conclusion:

Erasmus + (2014-2020) increases the requirement for an effective impact of funded projects. This commitment is reflected within both the French National Agency many studies and by the impact related supporting activities of participating organisations and prescribers. The *Observatoire* of Impact is one of its operating methods of support. It follows the triple objective of equipping stakeholders, capitalising on the knowledge of Erasmus + impacts, and creating a network for the

sharing of practices and synergies.

The *Observatoire* of Impact is a European first in terms of its methodology for both impact assessment and its partnership-based approach.

In 2018 its members will work towards the establishment of a national measurement tool, and the visualisation of the impact of Erasmus + funded mobilities.

Currently participating in the national Observatoire of Erasmus + impact:

Erasmus+ France / Education & Training Agency (Steering committee leader)

European Commission, DG EAC

Ministry of National Education,

Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation

Erasmus+ France / Youth & Sport Agency

AOCDTF

Chambres de Métiers et de l'Artisanat

CCI France

CIEP

ECs

INJEP

IFé

OVE

Pluricité

Rectorat de Montpellier, DAREIC

Rectorat de Grenoble, DAREIC

Rectorat de Nancy-Metz, DAREIC

Conseil Régional Hauts-de-France

Conseil Régional Bretagne

Fund for the promotion of Prior Studies, Transverse Studies and Evaluations

National Union of Maisons Familiales Rurales

University of Rennes 2

Université Paris Diderot

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WHO ARE WE ?

The Erasmus + France/Education & Training Agency promotes and manages the Erasmus + programme for France and its schemes in the “education and training” sections.

The Agency plays an active part in reflecting on the development of the Erasmus + programme as well as industrial, national and international issues in the fields of education, higher education and vocational training.

A public body (Groupement d'Intérêt Public) under the authority of three ministries (National Education; Higher

Education, Research and Innovation; Labour), the Agency is based in Bordeaux.

Erasmus+ is the European programme for education, training, youth and sport launched in 2014. It has three main areas of action: individual mobility, cooperation between stakeholders and support for political reform.

The Erasmus + (2014-2020) programme is the foremost financial instrument designed to democratise mobility, with special attention paid to the groups facing the most difficulties.



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