

# **APPLIED METHODS OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

National report Iceland

TCA Showing and Identifying Impact  
of Erasmus+ on EU and National Level

# I. Introduction

The Austrian Institute for Vocational Education and Research, on behalf of the OeAD as the Austrian National Agency for the Erasmus + programme, has scientifically supported the first project phase of the development of a method for measuring the effects of the programme (using the example of the key action KA1 in the field of vocational training) (TCA Showing and Identifying Impact of Erasmus + on EU and National Level).<sup>1</sup> This was done within the scope of the Transnational Cooperation Activity -TCA - Showing and Identifying Impact of Erasmus+ on EU and National Level<sup>2</sup> with nine participating countries; Austria, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Iceland, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia and Sweden. This report shows the model results for Iceland for the years 2014 to 2016. The model results are presented for the overall indicator and the sub-indicators. Furthermore the report also contains a comparative analysis in regard to selected socio-economic criteria.

## II. The Icelandic Education System with a View to Vocational Education and Training

The text and image below come from the CEDEFOP publication Spotlight on VET Iceland<sup>3</sup>.

The Icelandic vocational education and training (VET) system originates from the time when Iceland was still part of the Danish kingdom. At that time, apprentices learned from their masters by working alongside them. Gradually, schools took over parts of the training and more theoretical subjects were added. Workplace training is still of great importance and the journeyman's exam is centered on demonstrating skills learners have acquired at a workplace.

Almost all VET is offered at upper secondary level, where studies at school and workplace training form an integral part. Study programmes vary in length from one school year to four years of combined school and workplace training. Workplaces responsible for training need official certification and training agreements with both the student and the school, stipulating the objectives, time period and evaluation of the training. Most students in workplace training receive salaries, which are a (growing)

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<sup>1</sup> For a description of model (concept, methodology, indicators, statistical testing) see: Löffler, Roland et al. (2018). Scientific Monitoring „Applied Methods of Impact Assessment Final report TCA Showing and Identifying Impact of Erasmus+ on EU and National Level, Part I. Wien: öibf.

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<sup>3</sup> When this text was written the publication „Spotlight on VET Iceland“ had still not been published. When it is available it can be found here: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications>

percentage of fully-qualified workers' salaries. Companies training students can apply to the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture for a subsidy to fund training.

At upper secondary level (ISCED 3) several qualifications are offered, some of which are preconditions for holding relevant jobs. The most common are journeyman's exams but there are also exams for healthcare professionals and captains and engineers of ships and planes. In other professions, a VET degree is not a precondition for employment but graduates enjoy preferential treatment for the jobs they are trained for.

A few VET programmes are available at post- secondary non-tertiary level (ISCED 4), for example tourist guides and captains at the highest level, plus degrees for all masters of trade. These programmes last one to two years and lead to qualifications giving professional rights.

Students with severe learning difficulties are offered special programmes at mainstream upper secondary schools. Several VET pathways leading to a diploma give students a possibility to continue their education.

The overall emphasis of the educational system is to keep its structure simple and understandable so students can move relatively easily between study programmes. Thus, students can finish upper secondary school with both a vocational and a general degree (matriculation exam), the prerequisite for higher education. VET students who do not have acquired the matriculation exam can attend further general education to qualify.

Courses which give study points at upper secondary schools must be approved by an official validation body, according to standards approved by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture.

Upper secondary schools need to submit descriptions of new study programmes to the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. Upon approval, these programmes become part of the national curriculum guide. When formulating ideas for new study programmes, schools cooperate closely with occupational councils, which form the link between the Ministry and the labour market.

Adult learning is available in upper secondary schools (day classes or special adult evening classes), eleven lifelong learning centers, training centers owned and operated by social partners for skilled workers in certain trades, and in numerous private training institutions. For example, two institutions owned by employers' and employees' organisations offer courses for journeymen and masters of trades in the latest technology. For the healthcare sector, retraining courses are offered by universities and there are specific training institutions for several professions. In connection with labour agreements, from 2000, specific training funds for employees were established, into which both employees and employers pay a certain percentage of all salaries. Both parties can apply for funding towards training.

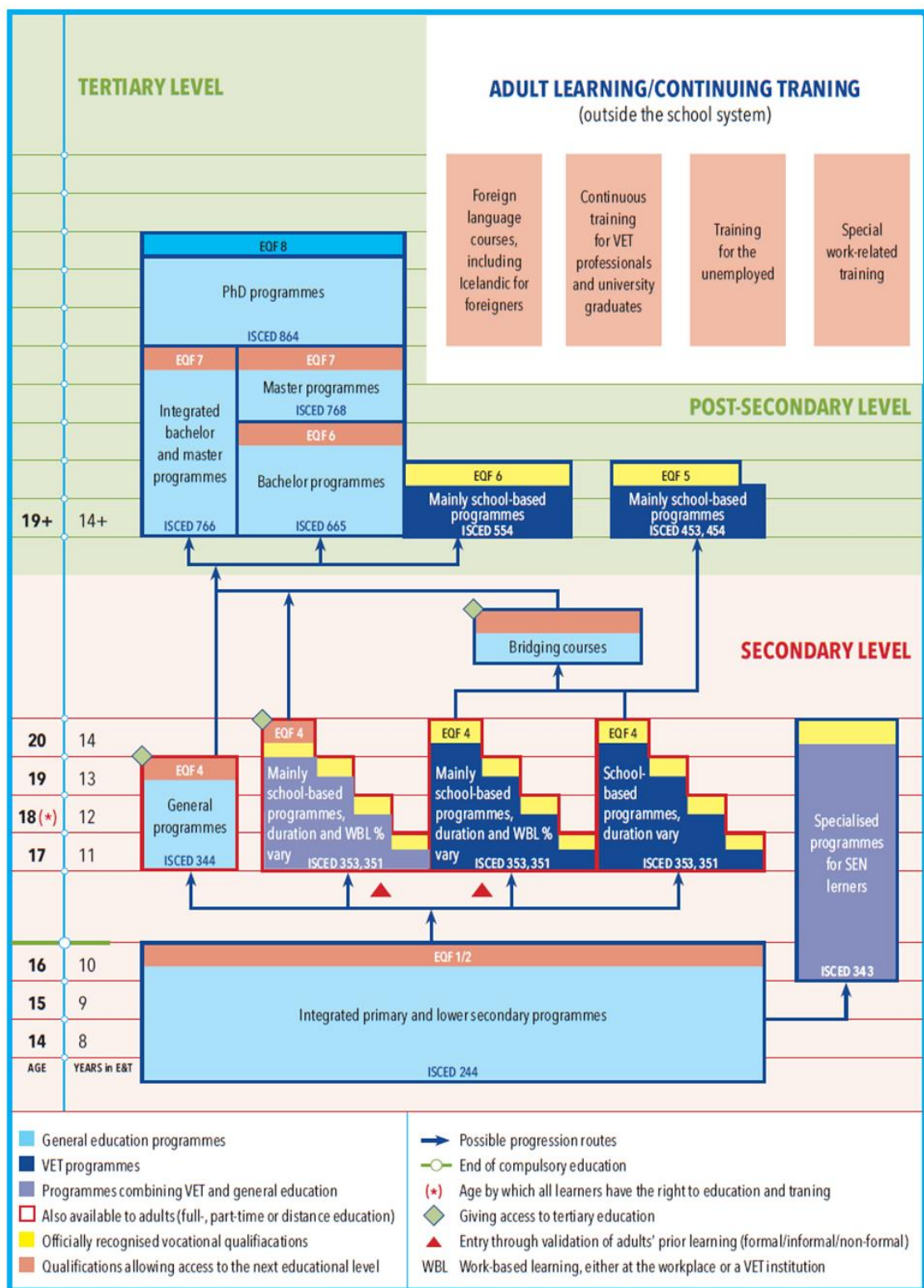


Figure1: Icelandic Educational System

### III. Erasmus+ Mobility in Vocational Education and Training in Iceland

Mobility within the Erasmus+ programme for vocational education and training is of high importance in Iceland. For such a small country, good cooperation with other countries is very important and the mobility action of Erasmus+ provides opportunities for cooperation and mobilities that would not happen without this support.

In Iceland the Erasmus+ funding is the most important source of financial support for VET mobility. Support is also available through the Nordplus programme, funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers.

The table below shows an overview of VET mobility projects in Erasmus+ in Iceland. Since the start of the Erasmus+ programme contracted funds have increased year by year and in total 3,6 million Euros have been contracted in VET mobility projects 2014-2018. The number of contracted mobilities has also increased and in 2018 in total more than 1.300 mobilities have been contracted in projects.

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
Contracted funds	€ 451.025	€ 638.480	€ 687.395	€ 876.634	€ 950.458	€ <b>3.603.992</b>
Contracted projects incl. charter holders	10	8	10	14	11	<b>53</b>
New VET charter	0	0	4	1	0	<b>5</b>
Staff*	78	42	72	130	87	<b>409</b>
Students*	104	182	193	216	219	<b>914</b>

\*Numbers of staff and students include accompanying persons, a total of 29 people.

For more information on contracted Erasmus+ projects in Iceland including VET mobility projects the national agency in Iceland has published a dashboard on contracted projects<sup>4</sup> as well as a dashboard of incoming and outgoing mobilities in all sectors<sup>5</sup>. Unfortunately at the moment these are only available in Icelandic.

The majority (70%) of VET schools in Iceland have participated in the programme and have been able to offer placements to their students and staff in recent years. VET schools around the country have participated but there is a big difference between schools when it comes to European cooperation. Limited financial resources and time for international work within the schools has been the main obstacle for further increase in number of staff and learner mobilities, and there is room for increased number of placements in many schools.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.erasmusplus.is/um/tolfraedi/uthlutun/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.erasmusplus.is/um/tolfraedi/ferdir/>

The duration of learner placements has been rather short but increasing. In November 2018 it was 28 days on average in all finalised mobilities. In recent years emphasis has however, been on placements in companies and longer duration and this has been supported through ErasmusPro. With longer duration of placements the demand for funding is expected to increase.

In Iceland, only a limited number of organisations meet the minimum requirements for a VET charter. In total five organisations have been awarded a VET charter, which may be considered quite good. However, it is unlikely that this number will rise further by the end of the Erasmus+ programme.

The Icelandic Erasmus+ National Agency is coordinating the ECVET expert group in Iceland. ECVET and the ECVET mobility documents have therefore, been introduced to all Erasmus+ Mobility project beneficiaries and the use of the ECVET tools emphasized as a quality indicator for mobility projects. Most beneficiaries use the ECVET documents partly in their projects and the Europass mobility document is used to recognize and validate almost all learner mobilities.

## IV. Results of the Impact Assessment Model<sup>6</sup>

### I. How to use the results of the model

The objective of the TCA (and this report) is to identify and to show the impact of Erasmus+ on EU and national levels based on existing data. Of course, it is not possible to capture all the effects of the Erasmus + mobility programs at the level of individuals, participating educational institutions and at national and transnational level in a single model. Such activities can hardly be considered detached from other economic, systemic and cultural factors (such as the economic and labour market situation, the structure and governance of education systems, demographic and skills development at national and European level).

The model measures the impact based on participants' experience and feedback. The model results presented in this report are - although they are numerical values - not to be interpreted in their absolute values, but in their relative relations to each other. The overall indicator and the sub-indicators indicate the level of effects (at the personal level of the participants or the participating institutions) for the years of participation in the program examined. These indicators reflect participants' self-assessment of the issues raised and can be considered (due to high response rates) as a reliable measure of the individually perceived or expected effects of mobilities.

### II. Main results

The results reflect the experience of about 600 respondents (400 learners, 200 staff). From the point of view of the participants the program has a positive impact (average score: 4.0 out of 5). The impact of mobilities on their own development and (in terms of participating staff) the development of the sending institutions is highly appreciated.

The effect is particularly high in the area of their own competences, and above all in the field of personal and social skills (Competence: 4.2; Employability: 4.1; Professional development: 4.1). The results for Iceland are slightly above the average of the participating countries.

For a better understanding of the distribution of participants on socio-economic characteristics and the interpretation of the model results, the following points should be noted:

- The number of mobilities in Iceland are low (because of the small number of inhabitants in relation to other participating countries). Therefore the variance of results may be higher.
- In Iceland young people usually start VET not before the age of 17. Iceland is in fourth place among 33 European countries in Lifelong learning participation among 25 to 64 year-olds<sup>7</sup>. Those are the reasons why the share of “older” learners in mobility programs in Iceland is significantly above the average of the participating countries.

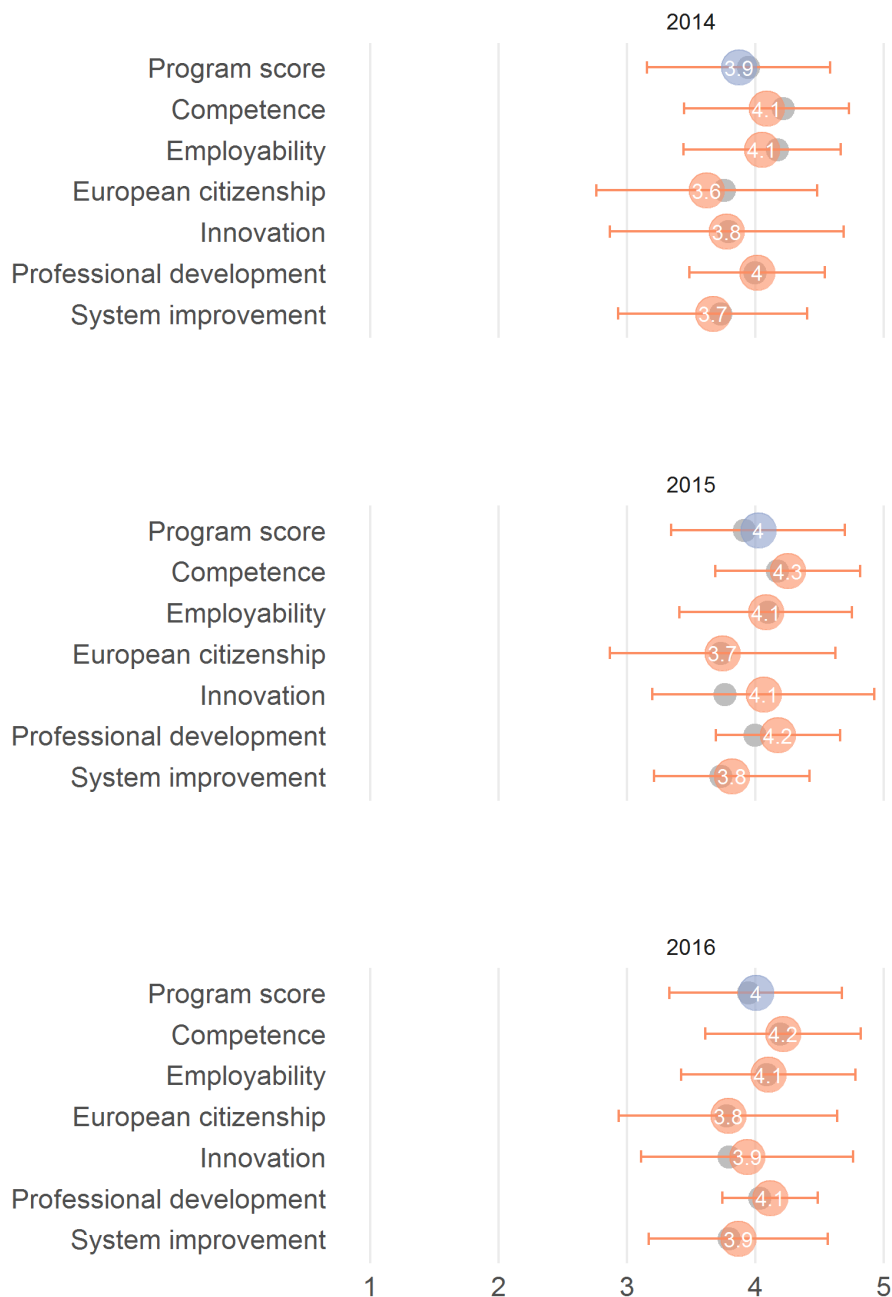
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<sup>6</sup> For the methodology and the calculation of the scores see Annex.

<sup>7</sup> Eurostat database (trng\_lfse\_01), last update November 2019,  
[https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Adult\\_learning\\_statistics](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Adult_learning_statistics)

- While with learners in KA1 in VET male learners have a bigger share than female, teaching staff is predominantly female.
- In Iceland, nearly 60% of mobilities are in the category of “short duration” which is significantly above the average of the participating countries. This is both due to learners and staff.

### Iceland - VET indicator scores Compared to European average



### III. Socio-economic and Mobility Variables

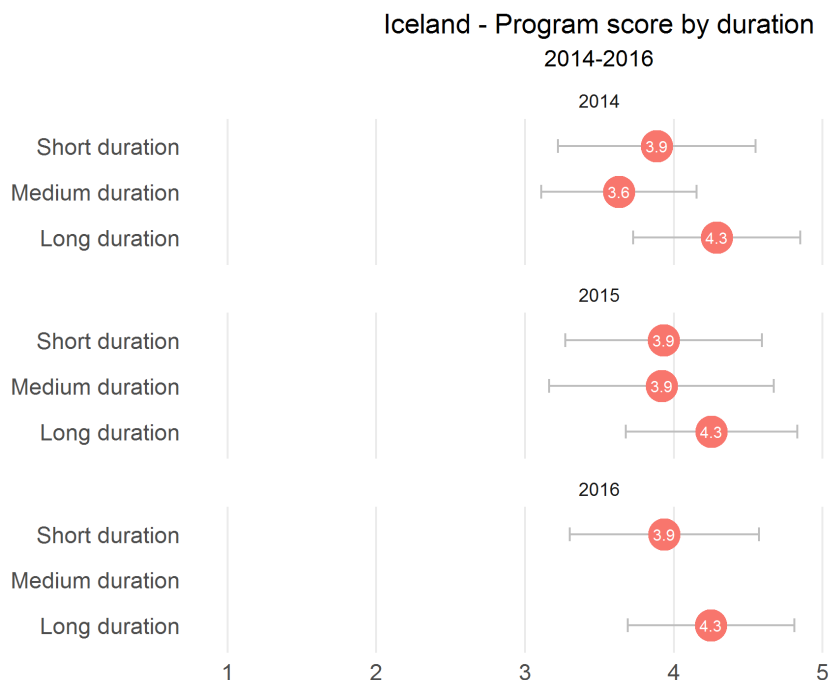
Both female and male participants are very positive about the impact of mobility programs on their further development with males being a little more positive about the assessment of the impact in 2016. This applies to both learners and staff.



Both younger and older learners and staff alike benefit from participation in mobilities. For both groups the score is about the average of the participating countries.



Duration has an impact. In 2016, The positive assessment of the effects of mobilities is stronger with long duration of mobilities.



## IV. Results for major thematic issues

### I. Competence

Thanks to the mobility experience learners are more open-minded and curious about new challenges, more able to adapt to and act in new situations, learned better how to cooperate in teams.



Male participants rate the effects of mobility on their competence development higher than women.

Especially younger learners see a very positive impact on their professional as well as social, personal and linguistic skills. This may be due to the fact that this mobility is the first stay in a foreign country where they have to manage every-day situations as well as the requirements of the working environment without the backing of parents, teachers or trainers.



## II. Employability

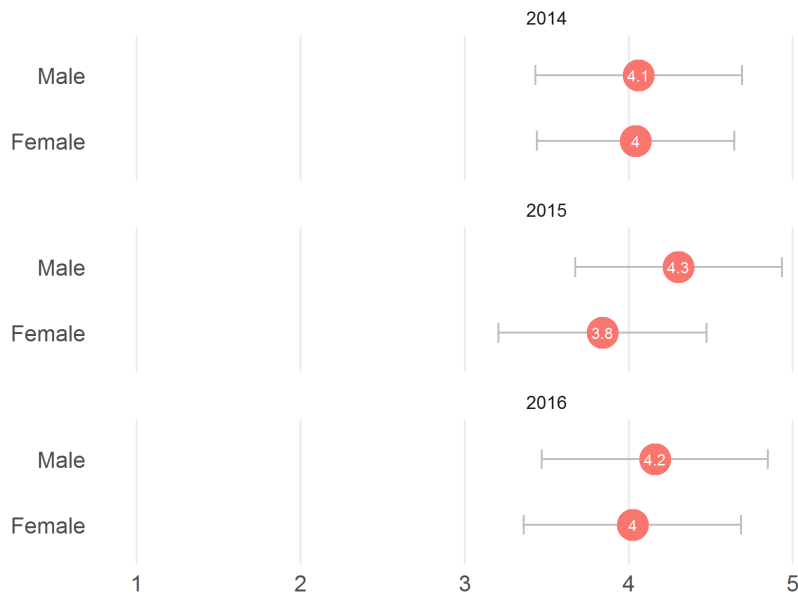
Thanks to the mobility experience learners believe that their chances to get a new or better job have increased and are better capable of taking over work tasks with high responsibility after their stay abroad.

In 2016, especially younger learners see a very positive impact on their employability. This is due to the fact that for these participants the transition from education to employment system is much more in the focus and they can more clearly allocate the improvement of employment opportunities through the additionally acquired occupational, linguistic and social competences.

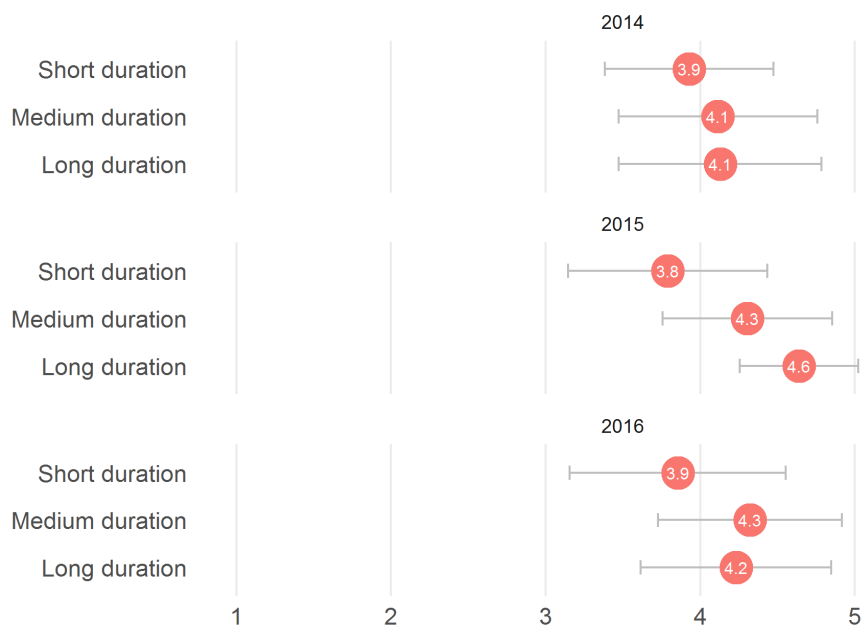
Male participants rate the effects of mobility on their employability slightly higher than women.

On average, longer mobility leads to a more positive assessment of the impact on employability.

### Iceland - Employability by gender 2014-2016



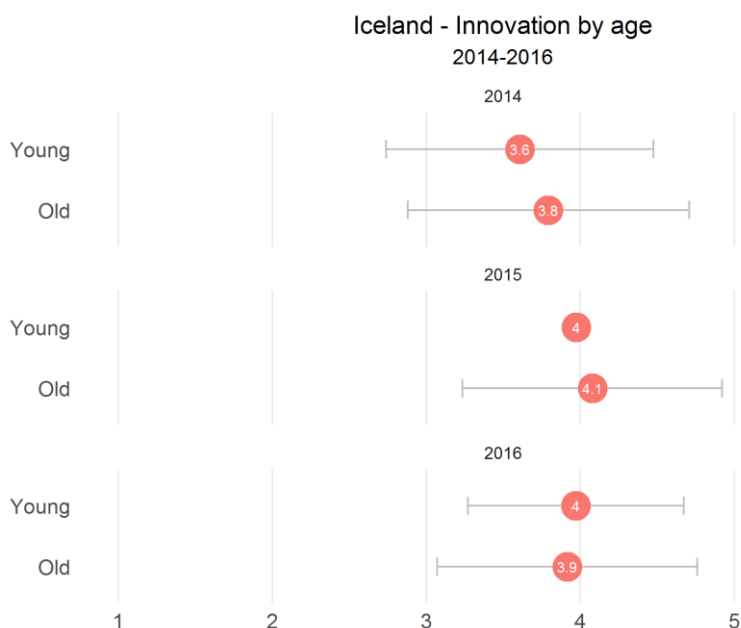
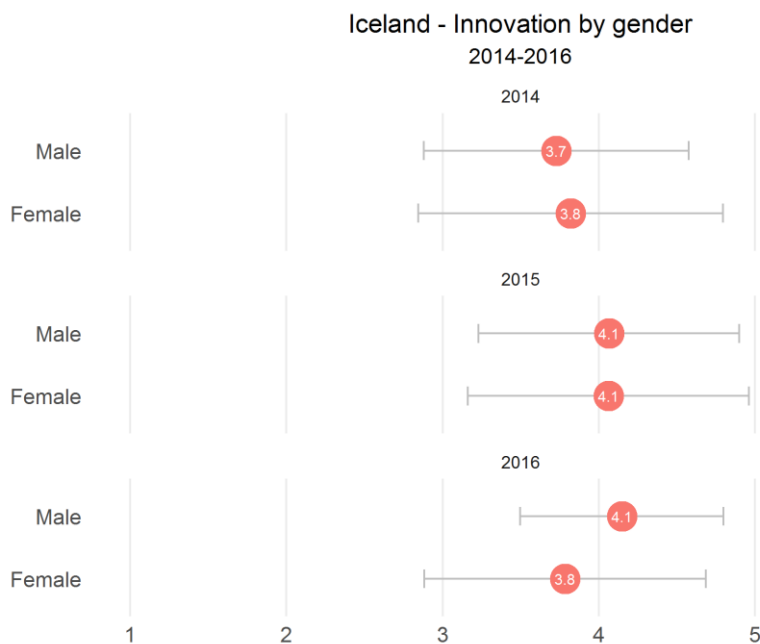
### Iceland - Employability by duration 2014-2016



### III. Innovation

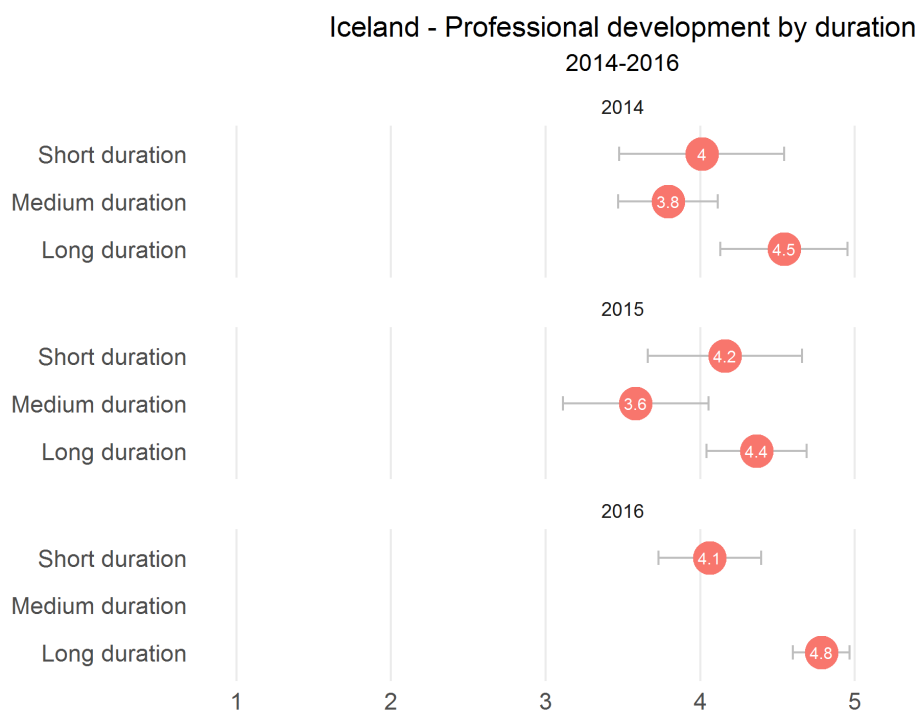
Through the participation learners learned better how to develop an idea and put it into practice.

For staff the participation in the program will lead to the use of new teaching/ training methods/approaches/good practices at their sending institution. This, however, is strongly connected both to the sending and the receiving institution. It depends – on the one hand – how open the sending institution is for introducing new methods or approaches and – on the other hand – how strong the position of the participant is within the sending organisation. Very often the position is strongly connected to gender and age.



#### IV. Professional Development

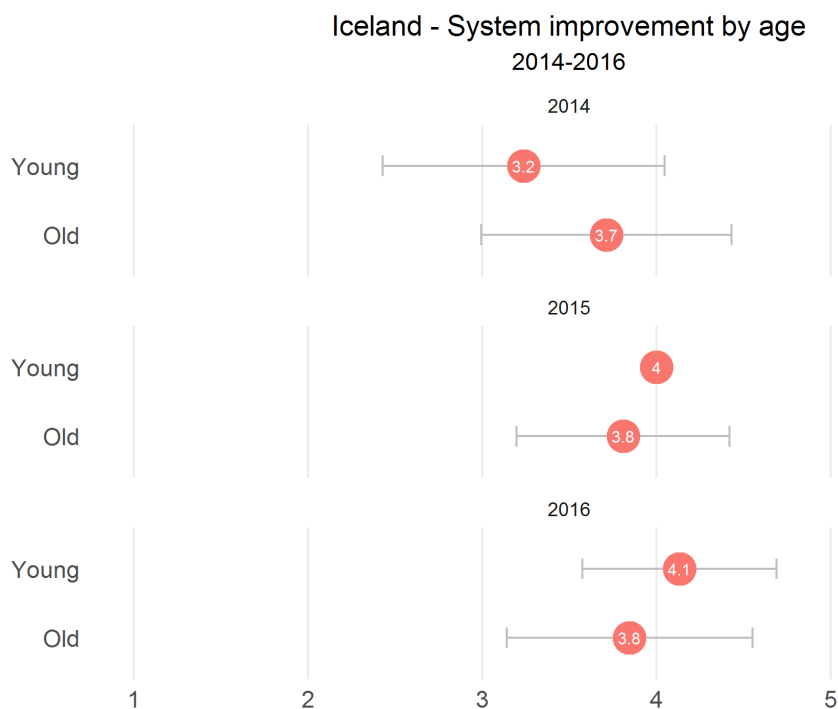
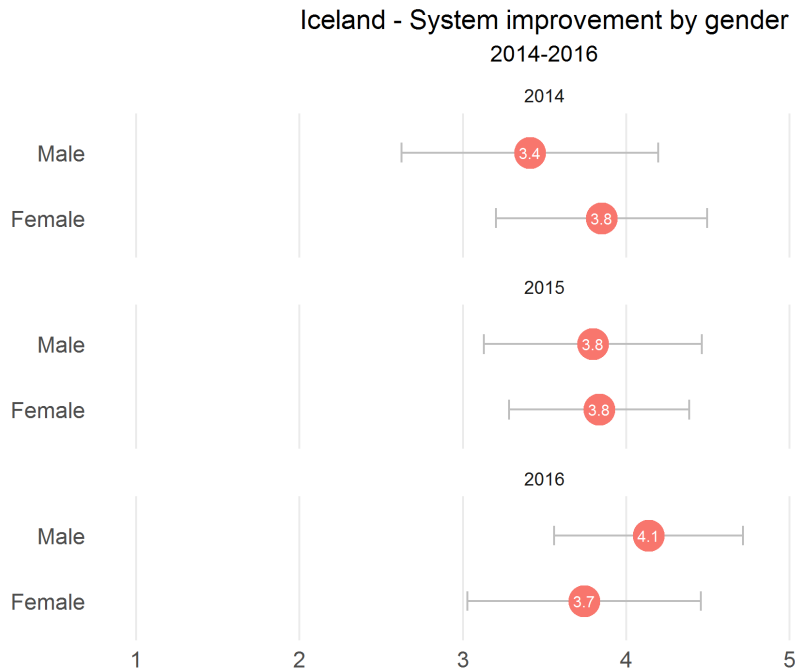
By participating in this Erasmus+ activity staff members have developed their cultural awareness and expression, their interpersonal and social competences, increased their social, linguistic and/or cultural competences and reinforced or extended their professional network or built up new contacts. Both male and female participants appreciate the mobilities in regard to their professional development. On average, for women the impact of the mobility is even stronger.



The impact on the professional development esp. of teachers is a double one, both in regard to their personal competences and their career pathway in schools. This adds to the very positive assessment of the impact of the mobility with female and older participants. The longer the mobility takes the higher participants estimate the impact on innovative developments in their sending organisation.

## V. System Improvement

Thanks to the mobility experience staff members have reinforced the cooperation with partner institutions/organisations and with players at the labour market.



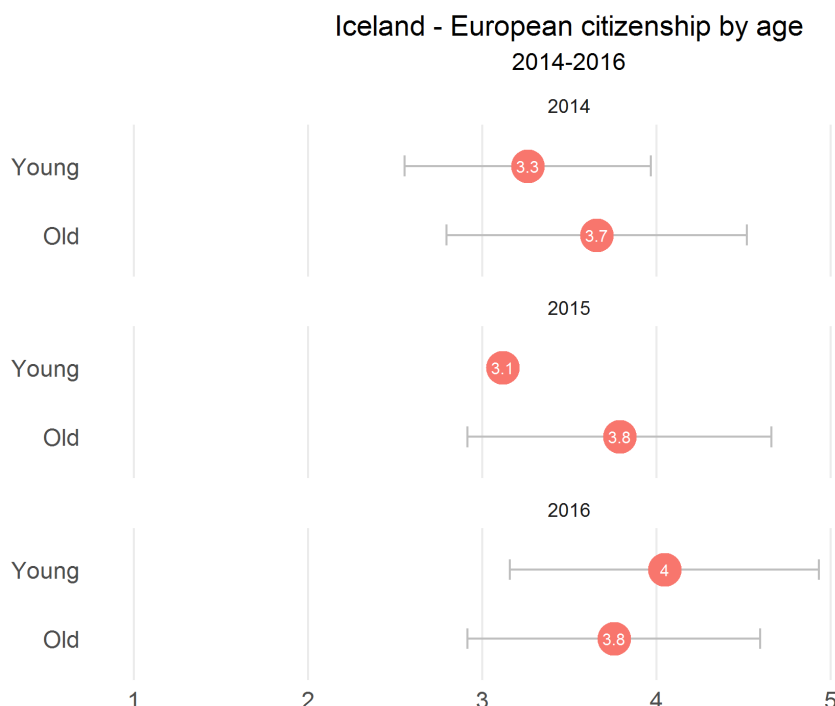
The impact on system improvement (like with innovation) is strongly connected to the sending institutions. Within the formal school system, systemic changes are hard to be introduced on a local level, because a great deal of framework conditions are set at national level or at the level of regional school administration and supervision. In institutions outside the formal education system (companies, training institutions) these effects can be more immediate.

In assessing the impact of mobility on system development, generally older participants give more positive assessments. This is because these people tend to be in positions in the sending institutions in which they can more easily trigger systemic changes. In Iceland, however, younger participants even more think that their mobility has a positive impact on the sending institutions.

## VI. European Citizenship and Internationalisation

After having taken part in the mobility activity learners are more interested in European topics, feel more European and are more aware of social and political concepts.

In regard to European citizenship – as with the other issues as well – one has to keep in mind, that participants assess the impact of the mobility program on specific areas. So it's all about changing existing skills, facilities and attitudes. For this reason, it is important to remember that the attitude of the participants prior to mobility is the starting point for the assessment. People with an initially very positive attitude towards Europe may rate the effects of mobility less than those who were more Eurosceptic.



Taking this into account, one has to point out, that especially with older participants (both learners and staff) the impact of the mobility on the issue of European citizenship is regarded even higher than with younger ones.

## **VII. Conclusions**

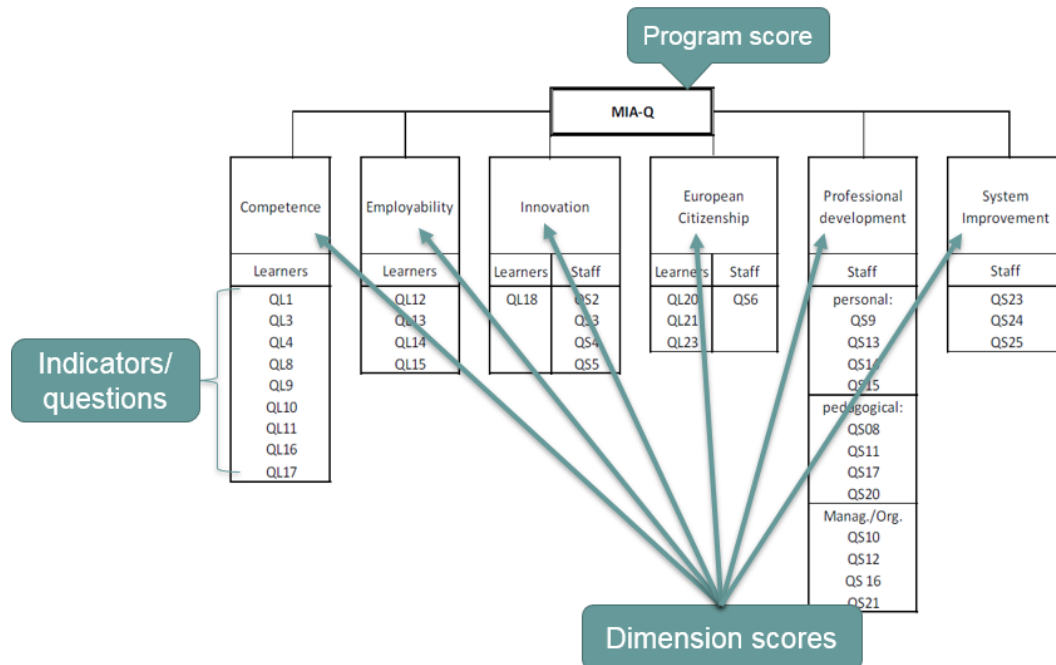
From the point of view of the participants the program has a very positive impact.

The results reflect the experience of about 600 respondents (400 learners, 200 staff). From the point of view of the participants the program has a positive impact (average score: 4.0 out of 5). The impact of mobilities on their own development and (in terms of participating staff) the development of the sending institutions is highly appreciated.

The effect is particularly high in the area of their own competences, and above all in the field of personal and social skills (Competence: 4.2; Employability: 4.1; Professional development: 4.1). The results for Iceland are slightly above the average of the participating countries.

## V. Annex: Methodological explanations

### I. The structure of the impact model



The impact model consists of six *dimensions*, each measured by a set of questions from the learners and/or staff datasets. For each dimension a *dimension score* is calculated. In addition, a composite *program score* is calculated from the six dimension scores.

### II. Calculation of the scores

All survey questions used in the model has an identical 5-point response scale with values from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree):

		Scores
Strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
Rather disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
Neither agree, nor disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	3
Rather agree	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4
Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	5

Figure 2: The 5-point response scale

All scores are based on the calculation of *unweighted means* across these scales. All scores will consequently have a value between 1 and 5 with 3 as a balancing point between positive and negative responses. The higher the score, the more positive are the respondents.

For all dimension scores based on data from only one of the two datasets (learners or staff), the scores are calculated in the following way:

- ◆ **Step 1:** For each respondent, the mean score across all relevant questions is calculated
- ◆ **Step 2:** The dimension score is calculated as the mean of all the respondents mean scores from step 1

For dimensions composed of data from both datasets (Innovation and European Citizenship), the mean score for each population (learners or staff) is calculated first following the two steps above. Then the dimension score is calculated as the unweighted mean of these two means. As a consequence, learners and staff have the same weight in the calculation of these dimension scores.

- ◆ **Step 3:** The program score is calculated as the unweighted mean of all the dimensions scores from the steps above.

This means that all six dimensions carry the same weight in the calculation of the program score.

- ◆ **Step 4:** All scores are firstly calculated per country and year as described above. The corresponding transnational scores are calculated as the unweighted mean of the national scores.

This means that all countries carry the same weight in the calculation of the transnational scores.

### III. Breakdowns by background variables

All scores are broken down by a set of background variables. These are:

- ◆ Age
- ◆ Gender
- ◆ Duration of exchange

Please note that the cut-off-point between young and old is different for learners and staff

	Learners	Staff
Young	< 19	< 35
Old	>= 19	>= 35

The same is true for the cut-off-points for the background variable duration:

	Learners	Staff
Short	< 2 weeks	< 6 days
Medium	2 - 4 weeks	6 – 10 days
Long	> 4 weeks	> 10 days

## IV. Data Base

Table 1: Respondents to Participants' Survey KA1 VET 2014-2016

Learners	2014	2015	2016	Total	Learners	2014	2015	2016	Total
<b>Total</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>393</b>
Female	47	69	65	<b>181</b>	Female	48,5%	48,3%	42,5%	<b>46,1%</b>
Male	50	74	88	<b>212</b>	Male	51,5%	51,7%	57,5%	<b>53,9%</b>
younger (< 19)	7	20	28	<b>55</b>	younger (< 19)	7,2%	14,0%	18,3%	<b>14,0%</b>
older (>= 19)	90	123	125	<b>338</b>	older (>= 19)	92,8%	86,0%	81,7%	<b>86,0%</b>
short duration (< 2 weeks)	35	80	67	<b>182</b>	short duration (< 2 weeks)	36,1%	55,9%	43,8%	<b>46,3%</b>
middle duration (2 - 4 weeks)	35	36	59	<b>130</b>	middle duration (2 - 4 weeks)	36,1%	25,2%	38,6%	<b>33,1%</b>
long duration (> 4 weeks)	27	27	27	<b>81</b>	long duration (> 4 weeks)	27,8%	18,9%	17,6%	<b>20,6%</b>
Staff	2014	2015	2016	Total	Staff	2014	2015	2016	Total
<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>178</b>
Female	42	18	48	<b>108</b>	Female	58,3%	50,0%	68,6%	<b>60,7%</b>
Male	30	18	22	<b>70</b>	Male	41,7%	50,0%	31,4%	<b>39,3%</b>
younger (<35)	7	1	5	<b>13</b>	younger (<35)	9,7%	2,8%	7,1%	<b>7,3%</b>
older (>= 35)	65	35	65	<b>165</b>	older (>= 35)	90,3%	97,2%	92,9%	<b>92,7%</b>
short duration (< 6 days)	66	26	65	<b>157</b>	short duration (< 6 days)	91,7%	72,2%	92,9%	<b>88,2%</b>
middle duration (6 - 10 days)	4	2	5	<b>11</b>	middle duration (6 - 10 days)	5,6%	5,6%	7,1%	<b>6,2%</b>
long duration (> 10 days)	2	8	0	<b>10</b>	long duration (> 10 days)	2,8%	22,2%	0,0%	<b>5,6%</b>
<b>All participants</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>All participants</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>571</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>571</b>
Female	89	87	113	289	Female	52,7%	48,6%	50,7%	<b>50,6%</b>
Male	80	92	110	282	Male	47,3%	51,4%	49,3%	<b>49,4%</b>
younger	14	21	33	68	younger	8,3%	11,7%	14,8%	<b>11,9%</b>
older	155	158	190	503	older	91,7%	88,3%	85,2%	<b>88,1%</b>
short duration	101	106	132	339	short duration	59,8%	59,2%	59,2%	<b>59,4%</b>
middle duration	39	38	64	141	middle duration	23,1%	21,2%	28,7%	<b>24,7%</b>
long duration	29	35	27	91	long duration	17,2%	19,6%	12,1%	<b>15,9%</b>
<b>All participants</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>All participants</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>19 332</b>	<b>19 504</b>	<b>21 621</b>	<b>60 457</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>19 332</b>	<b>19 504</b>	<b>21 621</b>	<b>60 457</b>
Female	11 679	11 734	13 175	36 588	Female	60,4%	60,2%	60,9%	<b>60,5%</b>
Male	7 653	7 770	8 446	23 869	Male	39,6%	39,8%	39,1%	<b>39,5%</b>
younger	9 311	10 046	11 054	30 411	younger	48,2%	51,5%	51,1%	<b>50,3%</b>
older	10 021	9 391	10 567	29 979	older	51,8%	48,1%	48,9%	<b>49,6%</b>
short duration	3 717	4 475	5 197	13 389	short duration	19,2%	22,9%	24,0%	<b>22,1%</b>
middle duration	6 589	6 817	7 415	20 821	middle duration	34,1%	35,0%	34,3%	<b>34,4%</b>
long duration	9 388	8 145	9 096	26 629	long duration	48,6%	41,8%	42,1%	<b>44,0%</b>