



**iMOVE AND THE
MULTI-STAKEHOLDER MOBILITY PLATFORM MODEL
FEASIBILITY STUDY**

VERSION 1.

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1. ORIGINS AND CONCEPT OF IMOVE

1.1 State of art of VET Mobility in Europe

On 29 November 2011, the European Council adopted conclusions which stipulate two benchmarks and an indicator on respectively higher education, initial vocational training and general youth mobility, in order to set concrete targets to be achieved by 2020.

The benchmark for learning mobility in initial vocational training (IVET), defined as the vocational orientation within upper secondary education, apprenticeships included, stipulates that by 2020 an EU average of at least 6 % of 18-34 year olds with an initial vocational education and training qualification should have had an initial VET-related study or training period (including work placements) abroad, lasting a minimum of two weeks.

However very little evidence exists concerning the actual magnitude of IVET mobility within the European Union and its Member States.

The Leonardo da Vinci programme covering IVET mobility provided some indication of the level and development of IVET mobility flows, which gives an EU level of IVET mobility of only 0.7% in 2010, up from 0.5% in 2005p. 43p. 43¹. However, the benchmark concerns graduates from IVET and it is likely that the level would be higher given that IVET studies last more years.

1.2 Need for a process innovation

With the Erasmus+ Programme the volume of IVET mobility is expected to grow thanks to a 40% budget increase and a specific focus on the target group. Indeed, on the contrary of the Lifelong Learning Programme, which 21%² of VET mobility budget was dedicated to people on the labour market, Erasmus+ concentrates the whole budget on IVET learners, including VET graduates within 12 months, and staff.

However, given an average mobility rate around 0,7%, even if the favorable budget conditions which will increase the overall volume of IVET mobility in the incoming years, the benchmark threshold of 6% is still far.

To reach the goal on the one hand it will be essential to complement the Erasmus+ resources with those of other private, national, regional or bilateral programmes. On the other hand, the process to manage those resources must become more efficient, in order to increase not only the amount of budget but its capacity to impact on VET systems. It is therefore required the development of

1 p. 43 http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/publications/monitor12_en.pdf

2 p. 7 http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/publications/2012/ldv-figures_en.pdf

strategies and models able to:

- increase the number of VET providers that can access to the programmes and offer mobility opportunities to their learners and staff.
- reduce the costs of mobility through economies of scale.
- matching quality and efficiency thanks to the adoption of common standards between European partners, in term of procedures to manage mobility activities.

This paper is going to investigate and outline the MMP model, a larger scale approach to mobility management, which aims at shifting from a project-based to a system-based mobility.

A system-based approach takes in account not only the need for mobility of a single or a group of organisations but those of a community, shall it be regional, local or sectorial. As a result, iMove is meant to provide the model for an infrastructure able to achieve the 6% 2020 benchmark within its target community of VET providers.

2. MULTI-STAKEHOLDER MOBILITY PLATFORMS: INFRASTRUCTURES FOR SYSTEM-BASED MOBILITY

As a matter of fact, it is not realistic to expect all VET providers in a given regional, local or sectoral context to apply for a mobility project and get it approved. Many of them would not have the know-how to face the application process, nor to manage the implementation of a mobility project according to the required quality standards.

It is not realistic either to foresee that most of companies in a regional, local or sectorial context would accept to host European trainees without the support of an intermediary organisation. That can be the case of structured SMEs or big companies, but it is definitely less likely for small and micro companies, which often see to much of a burden in such commitment.

The management of an incoming or outgoing mobility process requires specific professional skills and competencies which cannot be improvised and which are the main obstacle for organisations to get involved.

In order to facilitate efficient and qualitative mobility management, the Erasmus+ Programme introduces the scheme of “National VET Mobility Consortia”, recognizing the need for a structured cooperation between stakeholders from the same country.

The iMove model is based on the idea of a “VET mobility consortium” as a formalized infrastructure in charge of managing incoming and outgoing mobility in a given regional, local or sectoral community. An infrastructure which should be multi-stakeholders because:

- it is likely to be a public-private partnership

- it requires actors with the capacity to reach and involve both companies and VET providers.

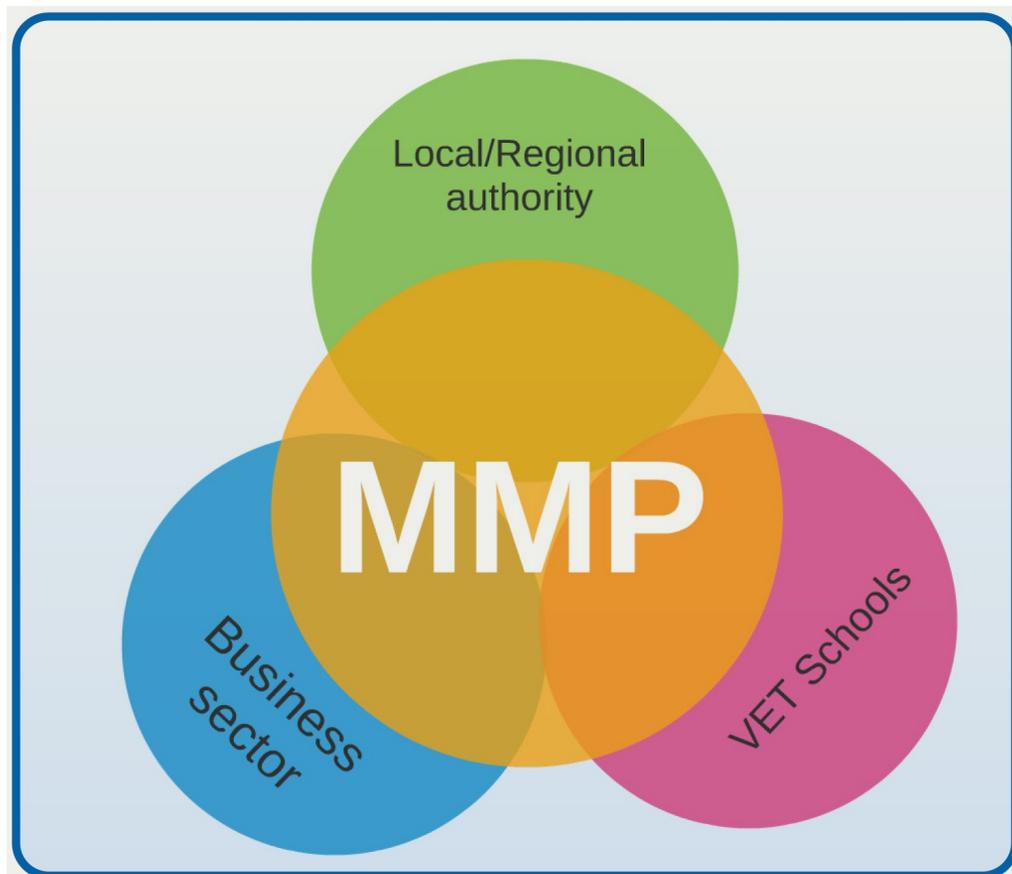
This paper will define such infrastructure as a “Multi-stakeholder Mobility Platform” (MMP).

2.1 MMP Definition

A Multi-stakeholder mobility platform is a partnership regulated through a formal agreement , between public and/or private stakeholders collaborating together in order to:

1. provide VET providers in a given local/regional community or sector with mobility opportunity for their students and staff, by supporting its preparation, organisation and management.
2. Co-operate with other MMPs to organise for each other's students and staff in-company hosting placements and VET learning opportunities in its own country.
3. Involve and provide companies in its own local/regional community or sector with support to host European students and staff for internships and study visits.

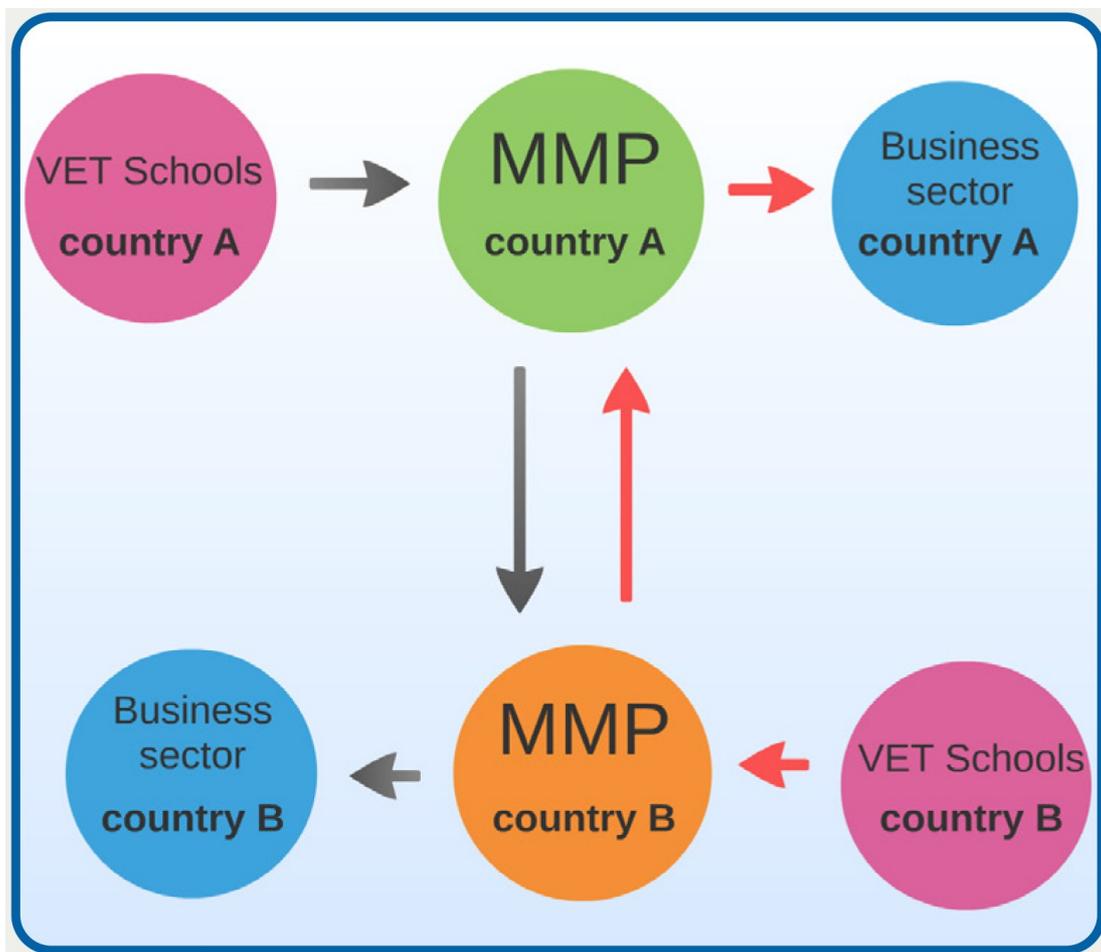
Image 1.



Strategies and activities of a MMP should be inclusive towards all VET providers in that local, regional or sectoral community, driven by the purpose to reach the 2020 benchmark of 6%.

At the same time, a MMP acts as an intermediary organisation to provide other MMPs or European partners with the opportunity to send their trainees for work placements to its own local, regional or sectoral network of companies. Image 2 shows an example of cooperation between MMPs and their role coordination role towards local companies and VET providers.

Image 2.



2.2 MMP Criteria

To be defined as such, an MMP must working towards to following criteria:

- Have formalized the co-operation between stakeholders involved as “*coordinators*” and/or “*beneficiaries*” though an “*MMP Framework Agreement*” (MMPFA), or other type of formal agreement (e.g. consortium, association, management of a tender, etc.).

- To identify at least three stakeholders acting as “coordinators” to implement the 3 services mentioned in the above “Definition”, according to the common standards set by the MMPFA and the *iMove Cooperation Scheme*.
- To define in the MMPFA the scope of the MMP: local, regional or sectoral, and to promote an inclusive approach and strategy towards beneficiaries within that scope.
- In case local or regional scope, the MMP should involve at least a public institution accordingly (e.g. at least the Municipality for the local or the Region for the regional).

3. THE MMP FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT (MMPFA)

The MMPFA is a set of documents which formalizes roles and conditions of all MMP members and activities. As a deliverable of the iMove project, a general model of MMPFA is available and has to be adapted by each MMP to its own local, regional or sectoral context, as well as its own national regulation.

Stakeholders signing a MMPFA can join either or both as “*coordinator*” or “*beneficiary*”, or “*supporter*” of the MMP activities. The set of documents provided as model includes :

1. iMove Memorandum – Manifesto of iMove network values and objectives, including the specific aim and objectives of the single MMP.
2. iMove Glossary – list of words from the iMove specific vocabulary.
3. The MMP Activity Structure (MMPAS) – a scheme to assign roles and tasks to all MMP coordinators and beneficiaries.
4. Coordinators agreement – Multilateral agreement between at least three coordinators cooperating to carry out the MMP services and activities. Coordinators are not necessarily linked to the operative side, some of them can also play an institutional role, as long as the operative side is not concentrated on a single organisation.
5. VET providers agreement – bilateral, or multilateral, agreement between at least one coordinator and one VET provider, as beneficiary of the MMP activities.
6. Companies agreement – bilateral agreement between at least one coordinator and one company, as beneficiary of the MMP activities.

4. IMOVE – A NETWORK OF MULTISTAKEHOLDER MOBILITY PLATFORMS

The system-based approach of a MMP is meant to be more effective than the traditional project-based mobility because:

- it allows economies of scale to reduce workload and costs of mobility.
- it makes easier the attraction of funds further than Erasmus+
- it gives access to mobility to VET providers and companies that would not have the chance otherwise

The idea of iMove as a network of MMPs, represents the step forward for increasing further the effectiveness of the above mentioned aspects, as well as a way to promote and spread the “MMP model”. In the following part we are going to define how the iMove network works in terms of common standards for its members and the cooperation frameworks between them.

4.1 The iMove co-operation scheme (iCS)

The iCS is a set of procedures adopted by the iMove network's members in order to regulate with common standards the operative structure of each MMP and the co-operation between them. The iCS has therefore the two following sides:

4.1.2 Within the MMP

Each MMP works according to a formalized “MMP Activity Structure” (MMPAS), identifying a responsible coordinator for each of the following tasks, relating to outgoing and incoming mobility management:

OUTGOING MOBILITIES

- Contact with other MMP for incoming activities
- EU projects applications and procedures (e.g. ECVET, Europass, etc.)
- Coordination and mentoring of VET providers
- Participants recruitment process
- Preparation of participants and accompanying persons
- Mentoring of participants
- Evaluation and quality control
- Dissemination

INCOMING MOBILITIES

- Contact with other MMP for outgoing activities
- Eu projects applications and procedures (e.g. ECVET, Europass, etc.)
- Recruitment and coordination of hosting companies
- Welcome and mentoring of participants
- Arrangements for accommodation, food and local transports
- Organisation of language courses and cultural visits (if needed)
- Evaluation and quality control
- Dissemination

Although all tasks requires a responsible coordinator, each one can be performed within the MMP by more than one coordinator, according to internal agreements regulated by the MMPAS within its own MMPFA.

Image 3 (p. 10) provides a graphic representation of the activity structure of an MMP and the relationships between the tasks.

The “yellow tasks” are those related to incoming activities, while the “blue tasks” are those concerning outgoing ones. As we can see there are several common tasks between incoming and outgoing activities, which makes the whole system more convenient and efficient when both of them are performed. Traditionally mobility is managed by separating incoming and outgoing activity management, many organisations just perform one of them for example.

The MMP model adopts a task-oriented approach which is transversal between incoming and outgoing activities: for instance, the staff taking care of participant's mentoring, it does it for both incoming and outgoing participants. Same pattern also for the person which keeps the contact with the network and the European partners. A deeper focus and specialization of the staff increase both quantity and quality of the activity performed: more competence on managing a specific task and less time to perform it.

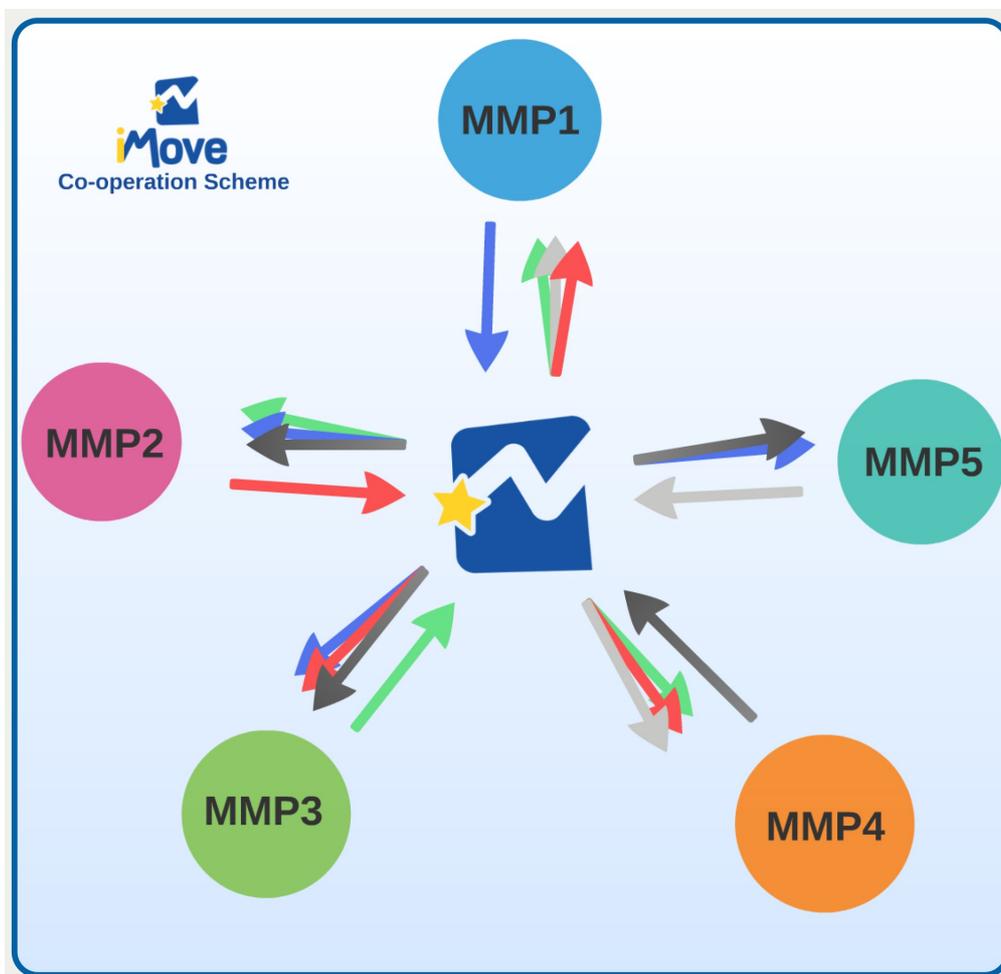


4.1.2 Between MMPs

Cooperation between MMPs happens through a co-operative based approach, providing iMove network's members with better economic and working conditions than those which they will have as single mobility providers on the market. The result is a cooperation system that brings members several concrete benefits:

- less time spent in negotiating
- lower costs of mobilities
- Better capacity and less risks in planning revenues and dedicated staff

Image 4.



In this sense, the IMOVE Network provides members with services that is more convenient to centralize on a common-owned structure rather than to perform on its own with higher costs, like it is currently the case. Services such as:

- the organisation of a yearly mobility plan for the network, matching the partners outgoing and incoming activities according to two criteria (*Image 4*):
 1. European added value – every partner sends students to as many countries as possible, cooperating with available sectors from the hosting partner.
 2. Reciprocity – each partner receives as many people as it sends, in order to ensure a balance of the activity and a responsible contribution to the network efficiency.
- Ensure transparency of management costs and negotiating prices to lower the costs of services that are needed by all partners (flights, insurance, accommodations, food, etc.).
- Lobby at European level for improving mobility programmes and the conditions of intermediary organisations.
- Promoting the mainstream of the MMP model and certifying that members comply with common standards and procedures required to ensure the quality and efficiency of the activities within the network.

5. IMPACT AND EXPECTED RESULTS OF THE MMP MODEL

One of the award criteria for mobility projects under the Erasmus+ Programme is the “quality of project design and implementation”, which involves also “The consistency between project objectives and proposed activities”, by evaluating inter-alia if “The project provides good value for money”³. However, it not given a clear definition of “project's value for money” nor a way to measure it.

This chapter analyses data from some member states' National Agencies in order to investigate the issue of VET mobility impact within Erasmus+, as well as some first examples of MMPs into practice, which can give an idea of the model's potentials and performances.

5.1 Erasmus+ data on VET mobility

In chapter 1, page 3, it was underlined the lack of detailed figures about volume and impact of IVET learning mobility. A situation which also reflects the absence of common standards adopted by National Agencies to collect and monitor projects' data and results.

In table 1. below it is possible to observe some quantitative data published by National Agencies in Germany, Italy, Belgium, Spain, Sweden, Poland and the UK about Erasmus+ K1 VET mobility projects approved in 2014.

³ p. 18 http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/documents/expert-guide_en.pdf

Table 1 – Quantitative data

K1 VET 2014 selected projects	National Agencies							
	Belgium (FL)	Belgium (WA)	Germany	Italy	Poland	Spain	Sweden	UK
Overall number of learners	n.a	179	n.a	7836	n.a	3888	2158	n.a
Overall number of staff	n.a	793	n.a	541	n.a	852		n.a
Total projects financed	30	25	494	98	231	204	48	76
Total budget	€ 4.627.508	€ 2.584.341	€ 31.455.119	€ 24.569.048	€ 20.170.565	€ 20.837.532	€ 5.912.975	€ 9.638.608
Average budget per mobility	n.a	€ 2.659	n.a	€ 2.933	n.a	€ 4.396	€ 2.740	n.a
Average budget per project	€ 154.250	€ 103.374	€ 63.674	€ 250.705	€ 87.318	€ 102.145	€ 123.187	€ 126.824
Average participants per project	n.a	39	n.a	85	n.a	23	45	n.a

The first four rows of table 1 are based on official data provided by NA. Number of learners and staff are not always reported and in some case they are provided together.

When the data are provided, indicators in the last three rows help to give a general idea of mobility impact from an economic perspective.

According to the need to increase the amount of mobilities in order to reach the benchmark, it has been considered as quantitative performance indicators the average budget per mobility and the average number of participants per project. Projects under 100 participants are overall more expensive than bigger projects because the higher organisational costs. On this respect bigger projects have a higher impact in terms of cost-opportunity: less costs for more participants. A project with 500 participants will have a lower budget than five projects with 100 participants each. A concrete example can be observed in table 1: Italy has founded almost the double of learners mobilities than Spain, with only the 20% budget more. At the same time Spain financed double of the projects than Italy, which contributes to make the budget per participants more than 30% higher and the average number of participants per project four times lower.

When looking at Belgium we might think that the pattern does not reproduce, unless we take a closer look noticing that almost 800 participants out of 1.000 are staff mobilities, which means less expensive since they usually last just few days.

However a simple quantitative analysis is not accurate enough, qualitative data are required too in order to measure the impact and project value for money.

Data such as:

- duration of the mobilities
- number of VET providers involved
- number of countries as destinations and sectors involved

At present there is no qualitative data in the yearly report published by NA, nor any activity to monitor the volume of mobility related to the 2020 benchmark.

Finally, we can say that beside the few data available, the main issue when it comes to impact of mobility, it is the lack of performance indicators which are able to measure the concept of “value for money”. Despite the few data, the issue stands: does any euro spent on a project for 500 participants with 100 VET providers involved have the same value of 10 projects from 10 different VET providers sending 50 participants each?

However, the MMP model is not just about big projects. A system-based projects involving a significant amount of VET providers is likely to have a specific scope and adequate structure to ensure the quality of the implementation to whole national consortium and the European partner. The following case studies based on the iMove approach can provide some concrete examples.

5.2 Case study 1 – the MMP Emilia-Romagna

In the frame of the iMove project, four stakeholders in Emilia-Romagna region (IT) are working together to develop a system for the coordination of VET mobility activities at regional level, targeting VET providers on EQF 3, 4 and 5.

Three of those stakeholders act as activity coordinators:

- AECA – a regional association of training centers
- Ifoa – a training center representing chambers of commerce
- Uniser – a cooperative providing service for learning mobility

The fourth stakeholder is the Emilia-Romagna Regional Government, which has a supportive role. Although a first partnership was implemented with the management of some ESF projects in 2013-14, producing nearly 500 mobilities for nearly 50 VET providers, the analysis will concentrate only on Erasmus+ funds at this stage, in order to set a common ground for benchmarking.

In the first two rounds of Erasmus+ K1 VET call the partnership adopted a strategy to apply for fundings, in order to provide mobilities to a wide network of VET providers in Emilia-Romagna region. Table 2. below reports some data about performances of the MMP with the Erasmus+ Programme in 2014 and 2015.

Table 2. MMP Emilia-Romagna

MMP Emilia-Romagna	Annual call Erasmus+ K1 VET	
	2014	2015
Number of projects	2	3
Total learners mobilities	316	720
Total staff mobilities	0	240
Total VET providers involved	59	93
Total budget	€ 792.031	€ 2.105.262
Duration of mobilities	2 to 6 weeks	3 to 13 weeks learners, 2 days staff
Number of countries involved	9	11
Average costs of mobility per participant	€ 2.506	€ 2.193

5.3 Case study 2 – MMP Hamburg, the “Mobility Agency”

For many years, Arbeit und Leben Hamburg has been cooperating with the Hamburg Institute for Vocational Education and Training (HIBB), which is the supervising body for all 44 vocational schools in Hamburg. Other important stakeholders Arbeit und Leben is closely cooperating with are the Hamburg Ministry for Health (supervising the vocational health and nursing schools), the Chamber of Commerce and the Chamber of Crafts.

Over the years, a stable regional network has developed, resulting in outgoing mobilities at most of the 44 VET schools and the 8 nursing schools. This has also been fostered by several ESF project which had the aim to further improve the network for mobilities in Hamburg. Arbeit und Leben Hamburg applies for Erasmus+ funding for most of the vocational schools in Hamburg (learners and staff) and also coordinates these activities.

Through the dual system of vocational education, there are also close links to companies in Hamburg, many of which are willing to not only send their employed VET students abroad, but also to host incoming VET students from other European countries.

Table 3. MMP Hamburg

MMP Hamburg	Annual call Erasmus+ K1 VET	
	2014	2015
Number of projects	1	1
Total learners mobilities	350	400
Total staff mobilities	200	150
Total VET providers involved	44	44
Total budget	€ 805.910	€ 895.424
Duration of mobilities	26 days learners 5 days staff	26 days learners 5 days staff
Number of countries involved	10	11
Average costs of mobility per participant	€ 1.465	€ 1.628

5.4 Conclusions

One of the most impressive data about the impact of VET mobility fundings is the absence of data itself. Nevertheless in table 4 below we can observe an interesting benchmark between “project-based mobility”, the traditional approach to mobility management in the frame of ET programmes, and the “system-based mobility” adopted by MMPs in Emilia-Romagna and Hamburg.

Table 4.

	Project based mobility – results K1 VET 2014				System based mobility – results 2014 and 2015			
	Belgium (WA)	Italy	Spain	Sweden	MMP-ER '14	MMP-ER '15	MMP-HA '14	MMP-HA '15
Overall number of learners	179	7836	3888	2158	316	240	350	400
Overall number of staff	793	541	852		0	720	200	150
Total projects financed	25	98	204	48	2	3	1	1
Total budget	€ 2.584.341	€ 24.569.048	€ 20.837.532	€ 5.912.975	€ 792.031	€ 2.100.000	€ 805.910	€ 895.424
Average budget per mobility	€ 2.659	€ 2.933	€ 4.396	€ 2.740	€ 2.506	€ 2.188	€ 1.465	€ 1.628
Average budget per project	€ 103.374	€ 250.705	€ 102.145	€ 123.187	€ 396.016	€ 700.000	€ 805.910	€ 895.424
Average participants per project	39	85	23	45	158	320	550	550

Given that each NA has its own flat rate for scale of unit costs, which can be significantly different from country to country, and considering that we compare a national context with a regional one, still the difference between the two approaches is remarkable.

System-based mobility is more effective under all quantitative point of view. The pattern would

probably be confirmed for qualitative aspects as well, if any of them were available from NAs' reports.

The conclusion of this paper appears therefore to be the beginning of a deeper investigation, driven by the need to retrieve further and more accurate data, and the aim to research specific indicators to measure the added value of a system-based approach for a local, regional or sectorial community.

All next steps that will come along with the iMove network's development and the MMP model's mainstream.