

Assessment of the existing Support,
Advanced Learning and Training
Opportunities structures' effectiveness and
relevance to date within the overall
landscape of the Erasmus+ governance and
the existing structures supporting the
implementation of the programme (including
National Erasmus+ Offices).

Annex 4 - Summary of stakeholder consultations

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As part of this assessment, the Research Team carried out a series of targeted consultations with relevant stakeholders with knowledge and experience of working with the SALTO network. This Annex presents a detailed report of the outcomes of the targeted consultations carried out as part of this assessment. These include stakeholder interviews (Task 3.1) and an online survey (3.2).

1.0 Key stakeholder Interviews

This section presents the main findings emerging from the stakeholder interviews on the three evaluation criteria for this study: effectiveness, relevance, and EU added value. Key findings on the impact of the 2018 reorganisation of the SALTO network are also included. The following sub-sections outline the key findings of the overall SALTO network, and then present the findings on each of the eight SALTOs individually. The findings are based on the feedback shared by the European Commission, SALTO staff members, representatives from Erasmus+ National Agencies (NAs), representatives from National Erasmus+ Offices (NEOs), and EU level stakeholders (Lifelong Learning Platform, European Youth Forum, European Youth Forum Pool of Trainers, RAY Network).

1.1 Effectiveness

1.1.1 Effectiveness of the SALTOs Network

According to the preliminary findings from the interviews, **the SALTO network as a whole has positively contributed to improving the quality and impact of the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes.** Interviewed stakeholders across all groups noted that the SALTO network is a very useful knowledge and training hub that has contributed to improving the quality and impact of Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps project implementation, and that it has done so through its activities and outputs, which include: best practices, strategies, training, capacity building, toolkits, platforms, publications, newsletters, and research. Through its work, the SALTO network also creates synergies, networks and trust, which in turn ensure sustainability of outcomes. NA representatives also highlighted SALTOs' work in terms of coordinating NAs and ensuring their cooperation. Regional SALTOs were identified by one EU level stakeholder as particularly effective – across the two programmes – in bridging intercultural differences between EU and non-EU based organisations.

Overall, NEOs' feedback was mixed. According to one NEO representative, the SALTOs bring general information about the youth field and create a general positive atmosphere towards the EU, but they do not necessarily positively contribute to programmes' outcomes and support to NEO work. This NEO representative differentiated between an indirect help received by SALTOs in generally promoting Erasmus+ , and the limited direct help in achieving NEOs' goals. This is because Erasmus+ Youth activities and Erasmus+ Higher Education activities are clearly separated, which entails that there are not many possibilities for closer cooperation. According to another NEO, SALTO Euromed are more open to working with NEOs (for example they participated in a 2021 event to share insights with the NEO and civil society representatives). However, according to the NEO representative interviewed, lengthy and cumbersome accreditation procedures for Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps limit the effectiveness of this SALTO, despite their willingness and efforts to cooperate.

Across stakeholders (European Commission, EU level stakeholders, NAs, SALTOs, NEOs), **there is the perception that the SALTO network is more effective in the context of Erasmus+ compared to the European Solidarity Corps.** However, there is also agreement that differences do not depend on the work of one specific SALTO or the network as a whole. Rather, differences in effectiveness across programmes are perceived to be more about structural factors, including: different level of programme development; lower visibility of their role in the European Solidarity Corps compared to the European Voluntary Service; and barriers to volunteering. The European Commission mentioned that all the areas that the SALTOs work on have seen significant developments, and that any difference between Erasmus+ and ESC, while difficult to assess considering that E+ is a much older EU programme, is due to the level of programme development – as the European Solidarity Corps programme is more recent. Aside from programme development, also the visibility of SALTOs in the European Solidarity Corps is still limited: for instance, one EU level respondent was not aware that SALTOs also support this programme, and stated that their member organisations use resources from the European Commission and the NAs, rather than the SALTO resources. Along these lines, one SALTO interviewee mentioned that when the European Voluntary Service was shut down, SALTOs lost much of the visibility acquired by promoting the programme for 20 years. Overall, according to EU level stakeholders, the support received by SALTOs on the Erasmus + programme is more effective because of structural aspects as *“it is a more diverse programme with different opportunities, [whereas] the European Solidarity Corps is only a volunteering programme, hence if organisations don't want to do volunteer there is little to do.”* This is compounded by the fact that there are barriers to volunteering, for instance in certain regions where volunteering is not widespread and / or well recognised.

Moreover, one SALTO interviewee stated that, while they have a bigger budget for Erasmus+, the differences between programmes are not evident: the interviewee mentioned that their budget is *“60% Erasmus + and 40% European Solidarity Corps, but it's sometimes difficult to divide activities. We support youth work in general, sometimes there are specific activities for volunteering, but both programmes are included equally.”* This view is shared by other SALTOs staff members participating in the interviews who mentioned that they work to support the youth field overall, whether paid or voluntary.

According to the interviewees, in order to ensure the continuity of their effectiveness the SALTOs should continue to create, share and promote resources. According to EU level stakeholders, SALTOs are fundamental because the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes are complex and *“organisations are lost in bureaucracy”*, but SALTOs are helping make bureaucratic requirements and expected actions on their (of EU stakeholders) part clearer through their range of activities, outputs, and resources, as well as by quickly responding to any query. NAs also note that they receive effective support, in terms of logistics and practicalities by SALTOs when co-organising training courses, which helps ease the NAs' workload; and with regards to topic expertise for capacity-building. SALTOs' newsletters are singled out by NAs as useful in having a quick update on current trends. EU level stakeholders, moreover, highlighted that SALTO resources provide improved understanding of how the programmes can be beneficial to work, and represent quality support throughout. One EU level stakeholder mentioned that that *“A few days ago, when facilitating a meeting of the pools of trainers for the European Solidarity Corps, I used a SALTO publication for event management and moderation.”*

According to SALTOs, **their resources are part of a continuum in their offer, as trainings and publications mutually inform and reinforce each other**. For example, a SALTO SEE interviewee mentioned that their Resource Centre produced a publication on quality aspects of youth exchanges, 'Cherry on the cake', which was the result of a training concept they have developed for years. This approach is effective, as it is based on an activity of proven quality. Moreover, according to all interviewed stakeholders, SALTOs are innovative in their approach, and willing to try out different formats - including, for example, podcasts, blogs, apps. Their ability to tap into new trends, including digital ones is important to ensure the effectiveness of their work. Furthermore, interviewed NAs and EU level stakeholders appreciated the diversity of the offer made available to them, which matches the different interest levels and time available to engage (e.g. online courses and in-person ones; short and longer ones etc). Lastly, the resources are generally perceived to be exhaustive, clear and easily accessible by NAs and EU level stakeholders.

SALTOs are valued for their expertise. Resources are produced using the capacity and knowledge of experts in the field and are often peer reviewed before publishing, which ensures high quality. The interviews with NAs and EU-level stakeholders highlighted that SALTOs work extensively with different experts and put significant efforts and resources in terms of developing pools of experts who are competent and knowledgeable in different fields of work. In turn, such expertise is reflected in the innovative methodologies that SALTOs adopt. One example from a regional SALTO is 'adventure education', a way of running contact-making seminars with outdoor activities, where groups go hiking together. Another example from the same regional SALTO is the use of spatial proximity communication platforms. These platforms allow to simulate meeting spaces and provide a range of interactions that mimic what can happen in offline trainings. This allows more room for informal moments and increases interpersonal connections amongst participants. Moreover, according to NAs and EU-level stakeholders, SALTO staff are themselves experts given the time they have invested in the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes with minimal staff turnover.

A key element highlighted by all interviewees is **SALTOs' ability to enhance relations and trust**. SALTOs have a strong relationship with stakeholders operating in the programmes (e.g., youth workers, NAs, trainers, etc). For NAs, there are clear benefits in terms of coordination and cooperation (e.g. through SALTO T&C's offer of trainings in TCA/NET and its platform for NA cooperation). SALTOs also have developed partner findings tools, such as Otlas, which were described by a NEO representative as very helpful for their partners. Further, SALTOs' tools and networking activities allow direct beneficiaries to meet online and offline, which helps build synergies, enhance trust, and motivation. In turn, this increases the long-term sustainability of partnerships and positive outcomes.

The good level of cooperation between different SALTOs is also appreciated by stakeholders. According to interviewed SALTOs, such cooperation is based mostly on formal and non-formal structures within the network. Once a year the SALTO network holds an in-person meeting where common topics, projects, issues are discussed, and decisions are taken. Virtual meetings have also been added since one meeting a year was found not to be not. Additionally, working groups on specific topics have been established and web platforms are used to share documents, messages, assign tasks. **However, some SALTOs and NA representatives mentioned that greater interaction between the SALTOs in general, and more specifically between thematic and regional SALTOs is needed**, as this would result in furthering SALTOs' expertise, increasing the outreach of the network, and therefore ensuring better impact of EU programmes. An interviewee from a thematic SALTO mentioned that differences in organisational culture can act as a barrier to increased cooperation: *“regional SALTOs work quite differently compared to the thematic ones.”* According to interviewees from regional SALTOs, their common work in partner countries inherently entails a greater level of cooperation: *“with our sister SALTOs, we work in the same context, so we meet practically every week or every second week; we use open spaces and allow accreditors and trainers to meet and exchange their experiences.”*

SALTOs are very active in supporting newcomers. Their support includes induction sessions, training opportunities, partner findings tools and activities. As mentioned by an EU level stakeholder, *“SALTOs help newcomers understand the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes: what to do, how to get involved, how to fill in project applications.”* However, according to a NEO representative, SALTOs should do more in terms of capacity building: *“SALTO could help NGOs prepare proposals for projects, to professionalise them, as there are a lot of difficulties with NGOs due to language skills, which impact their capacity to write proposals and understand how to fill in the ESC 50 form for the Quality Label.”* By contrast, the support for large or experienced organisations, revolves more about showcasing their work and providing opportunities for networking.

1.1.2 Challenges and areas for improvement

While the majority of all interviewed stakeholders values the wide range of materials and activities developed by the SALTOs and notes that there is not much room for improvement in their offer, some stakeholders find it **challenging to navigate the vastness of resources**. Interviews seem to indicate that these challenges are particularly relevant for stakeholders with less experience and knowledge of the programmes and the SALTOs. Similarly, resources are sometimes considered too elaborate or unclear or dispersed. Interviewed NEOs were particularly critical, with one stating that: *“I do not really know what SALTO is about, it takes too much time to find information on their website. When we started working on youth, it was very confusing due to the volume of information available on this topic.”* Conversely, fewer interviewees mentioned that **not all topics are equally covered** by the SALTOs. Lastly, several stakeholders across interviewed categories mentioned the need for the SALTO websites to be updated, for activities to be made more accessible for everyone, including people with disabilities (e.g., by providing sign language interpretation), and for resources to be regularly translated in all languages.

Interviewed stakeholders across categories agree that SALTOs face financial and human capacity constraints. Their small teams have to process a disproportionately high workload, partly due to the complexity of the programmes and the fact that all activities and outputs by SALTOs are resource-intensive. SALTOs specifically mentioned that they have to **focus on prioritising work**. Prioritising derives from the awareness that they cannot cover all areas and needs with the budget available, and that, therefore different priorities might need to be combined, or **ideas and projects may have to be postponed**.

In terms of areas for improvements, NAs and EU level stakeholders mentioned that there could **be closer cooperation among SALTOs**, and that this is an aspect to take into account also with a view to ensure the soon to be established new SALTOs are fully integrated in the network.

1.1.3 Effectiveness of individual SALTOs

SALTO Inclusion & Diversity

Interviews with the European Commission, NAs, and EU level stakeholders suggest that the Inclusion and Diversity Strategy¹ was an effective tool developed SALTO Inclusion & Diversity (SALTO I&D) that provided NAs with a *“roadmap to follow”*. Moreover, stakeholders mentioned other resources they found helpful in their work, such as the ID Talks², the Inclusion Training for Trainers³, the Mobility Taster⁴, and resources such as TOY⁵. Interviewees from European Commission and EU level stakeholders, however, noted that the work of this SALTO would become even more effective if it increased its effort to broaden its work on inclusion and diversity. For another EU level stakeholder, the SALTO I&D should also be more inclusive in their offer when organising events: *“They should have sign language interpretation at events and make it standard practice than having participants ask for it. They should provide resources for this.”*

SALTO Participation & Information

NAs highlighted the Youth Participation Strategy⁶ as a particularly helpful tool to implement meaningful participation in practice, and mentioned that SALTO Participation & Information (SALTO P&I) organises very useful training sessions for participation officers. SALTO interviewees also added that SALTO P&I has been useful in terms of support with digital topics and digital tools – not only to stakeholders, but also to other SALTOs. In relation to this latter point, SALTO P&I interviewees underlined that it will be important to the division of tasks between their Resource Centre and the forthcoming Digital SALTO.

SALTO Training & Cooperation

SALTO Training & Cooperation (SALTO T&C) was singled out by NAs as a Resource Centre that is particularly supportive, due to trainings in TCA/NET⁷ and their work with the platform for NA cooperation.⁸ Moreover, SALTO T&C seems to be considered effective in helping newcomers to EU youth programmes. According to EU level stakeholders, the training programme of European seminars helps newcomers to enter EU youth programmes, and it helps more experienced trainers not to lose sight of recent developments. According to SALTO T&C own self-assessment, the Knowledge Management and Staff Training; as well as their work on developing a new competence framework for NA staff were outputs that were particularly appreciated by their stakeholders.

European Solidarity Corps Resource Centre

Data collected from interviews shows that the European Solidarity Corps Resource Centre (ESC RC) has covered a crucial role in deepening and widening the understanding of the concept of solidarity and making it more practical, which is a key element for the implementation

¹ <https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-4177/InclusionAndDiversityStrategy.pdf>

² <https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/inclusion/inclusiontraining/idthatalks/>

³ <https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/inclusion/inclusiontraining/inclusionont4t/>

⁴ <https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/inclusion/inclusiontraining/mobilitytaster/>

⁵ <https://www.salto-youth.net/tools/toy/>

⁶ <https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/participation/ypstrategy/>

⁷ <https://www.salto-youth.net/mysalto/login/?pfad=%2Frc%2Ftraining-and-cooperation%2Fnationalagencies%2Ftameetings%2F>

⁸ <https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/training-and-cooperation/nationalagencies/>

of the ESC programme. NAs highlighted the particularly positive role played by this SALTO in the Quality Label and accreditation processes. EU-level stakeholders mentioned that they considered the ESC RC to be operating at the same level of quality as other SALTOs, and doing useful work, and that its impact was evidenced by the increase in applications for the European Solidarity Corps programme. EU-level stakeholders also mentioned that they were impressed by how fast the ESC RC became operational. For the future, EU level stakeholders noted that the ESC RC should work on strengthening the involvement humanitarian organisations in the roll out of the programme.

Regional SALTOs overall

Interviews indicate that **regional SALTOs** play a substantial role in supporting organisations in countries associated and not associated with the programme. Examples of this support include guidance in terms of getting the Quality label for the European Solidarity Corps and providing them with tools and training for understanding key aspects of the EU programmes such as the concept of solidarity, non-formal education, among others. Regional SALTOs themselves also reported to have good coordination with the thematic SALTOs and regularly use the tools developed by their peers in their regional contexts. However, the core of inter-SALTO cooperation remains among regional SALTOs. Some of the examples provided include the Mobility Taster⁹ and the Tosca modular training for European Solidarity Corps project coordinators¹⁰. Nevertheless, some interviewees also mentioned that the Regional SALTOs face specific challenges in operating in their respective regions, which can affect the overall effectiveness of their support, particularly regarding bringing newcomers to the programme. These challenges include the lower level of development of civil society in some regions, the reduced political interest in certain aspects of the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes, and the predominance of participant organisations from the capitals, which makes it difficult for these SALTOs to attract a diverse set of applicants. NEOs are also critical of the fact that regional SALTOs should engage local stakeholders more, and beyond social media. This is because there are many potential target groups left out – however, they recognise that this would require much more in terms of resources.

Salto EuroMed

According to SALTO EuroMed interviewees, their work on the Quality Label and training of organisations in partner countries, increases the impact, quality, and number of projects run with partners in neighbouring partner countries. In their view, they act as an NA for the region: they send participants, organise activities, and are thus a valuable resource. They cooperate with SALTO T&C for their training activities, as well as with SALTO I&D and the ESC RC, for the implementation of the Inclusion and Diversity Strategy and their work on the European Solidarity Corps, respectively.

SALTO South East Europe

SALTO South East Europe (SALTO SEE) interviewees consider their work on understanding the needs at the local level through participatory consultation processes, and bringing different stakeholders together (e.g., practitioners, programme beneficiaries, broader stakeholders in the Western Balkans, including institutional ones) as their key contribution to both Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps programmes. In terms of cooperation with other SALTOs, SALTO SEE interviewees mentioned that they lead the strategic partnership with regional SALTOs, in which some NAs participate, and also work particularly well with the SALTO T&C and SALTO P&I in different dimensions of their work.

SALTO Eastern Europe and Caucasus

According to SALTO Eastern Europe and Caucasus (SALTO EECA) interviewees, their SALTO is very useful to youth workers from the EU and beyond, as they organise activities in cooperation with different NAs and other SALTOs, particularly regional ones. They have established 'InfoCentres' and organise activities to attract newcomers. An example of this is the 'Europe Goes Local'¹¹ activity to support municipal level youth work, which brought together people from Belarus, Russia, and other countries in the region. SALTO EECA, moreover, mentioned that they developed an online learning platform¹² which host 130 courses and has had interactions with 5,000 users. Each year about 20 new courses are added to ensure the platform is up to date.

SALTO Education & Training TCA

Interviews indicate that SALTO Education & Training TCA (SALTO E&T TCA)'s trainings to TCA officers ('train the trainer') are considered very useful, particularly by NAs. The latter use the website of the SALTO E&T to stay informed about the latest TCA offers and highlighted the TCAs application process as particularly well done. While the induction process for newcomers has also been highlighted useful, NAs mentioned that information for newcomers should be clearer and more easily accessible on the website. The Long-Term Activities (LTAs), particularly the ones on accreditation and digitalisation, were also identified as useful outputs developed by the SALTO E&T. Despite all this, according to an EU level stakeholder, SALTO does not enjoy much visibility, possibly due to the fact that stakeholders in the Higher Education and VET sectors are not used to having a centralised EU structure such as the SALTOs to consult and rely on, and therefore they

⁹ <https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/inclusion/inclusiontraining/mobilitytaster/>

¹⁰ <https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/solidarity/training-support-community/tosca/about/>

¹¹ <https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/eeeca/infocentres/egl/>

¹² <https://hop.salto-youth.net/>

do not take advantage of it. The same stakeholder was also critical of the offer of the SALTO E&T, which they considered very basic, with no new or customised material compared to what is available on the Erasmus+ website.

1.1.4 Benefits, challenges, and impact of the 2018 SALTO reorganisation

While several interviewees mentioned that they were not involved in the SALTO network before the 2018 reorganisation, those who did were **generally positive about the overall benefits of the reorganisation for the network**. The most cited benefits include:

- ▶ A larger budget (compared to pre-2018 levels), allowing the SALTOs to hire more team members and increase their overall capacity;
- ▶ A more defined field of work and mandate compared to the previous generation of SALTOs;
- ▶ An increase in expertise and specialisation in their thematic fields, namely through the relocation of certain SALTOs to NAs with a higher level of knowledge on relevant topics and experience on the ground;
- ▶ Gains in terms of cost-effectiveness, through a better and more effective allocation of EU funds.

Interviewees from the European Commission and NAs held positive views of the reorganisation, as they felt it provided for a better cost/benefit ratio, a better use of available resources and a better division of tasks between the SALTOs. It is to note that also a number of respondents highlighted that, in practical terms, the reorganisation did not result in any major change as the core work of the SALTO remained the same.

The interviews revealed some SALTO-specific benefits stemming out of the reorganisation. For **SALTO P&I**, the largest benefit of the reorganisation was to have more resources to develop a common vision for the youth field and implement it, based on the needs of the different stakeholders operating in the field. For **SALTO I&D**, the reorganisation ended the split between SALTO Cultural Diversity and SALTO Inclusion, which, in the opinion of this SALTO, was artificial, and solved the issues of overlap between the work of the two Resource Centres. For **SALTO T&C**, the move of the SALTO to Estonia allowed their team to benefit from the higher level of knowledge and skill in terms of digitalisation and new technologies that Estonian NA had. This allowed them to fully review some of their internal and external practices and apply this knowledge to the work they did for the network.

Regarding the negative aspects of the reorganisation, a minority of interviewees mentioned that they felt that the process was not handled in a smooth and clear way from a communication perspective. Interviewees stated that the process was not very transparent and that there was little explanation from the Commission, including regarding the expected roles of the new SALTOs and their extended scope. The impact of the changes was felt in the network, with SALTO staff members needing time to establish new ways of working together and understand their new roles.

1.2 Relevance

1.2.1 Relevance of the SALTO network

Interviewed representatives from the European Commission overwhelmingly agree that **the SALTO network and its activities and outputs are very relevant to address the Commission's needs and priorities** in relation to the Erasmus+ and ESC programmes. Consulted representatives from the European Commission considered that **the SALTOs liaise with both the European Commission and the Erasmus+ NAs providing recommendations and resources for the latter**, acting as an intermediary and ensuring that information is pooled and made available to its relevant targets (i.e. mainly NAs and direct beneficiaries of the programmes) through knowledge transfer opportunities and tools. Interviewees from the European Commission and from the SALTOs highlighted that the SALTO network provides relevant support to the European Commission to promote and effectively implement the EU Youth Strategy 2019–2027¹³ and the Youth Goals¹⁴, as well as the European Training Strategy¹⁵.

Overall feedback from the interviews conducted shows **that the work of the SALTO network is relevant to the needs of its broad range of stakeholders**. In particular, representatives from NAs and TC officers pointed out that the **SALTOs have good knowledge of their target groups and show proactiveness in trying to identify, satisfy and adapt to stakeholders' needs**. This needs-based approach also entails

¹³ COUNCIL, Resolution of the Council of the European Union and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on a framework for European cooperation in the youth field: The European Union Youth Strategy 2019–2027 (2018/C 456/01). Available at: [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:42018Y1218\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:42018Y1218(01)&from=EN)

¹⁴ See <https://youth-goals.eu/>

¹⁵ SALTO Training and Cooperation, European training Strategy for youth work. Available at: https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-4307/European_Training_Strategy_2021-2027.pdf

that the SALTOs, both as a network and in their individual capacity, are able **to adapt to changing needs and contexts**, thus ensuring that their activities and outputs remain relevant, according to NAs, EU level stakeholders and SALTOs themselves. Some NA representatives interviewed have pointed to the importance of the SALTOs' role in bringing together NAs in a network, promoting **communication, exchange of practices and plans, and coordination of efforts**. This level of cooperation among NAs would otherwise be difficult to establish and maintain given their individual national agendas. NAs and EU-level stakeholders agreed that the SALTOs play an important role as a liaison between the European Commission and NAs, ensuring that NAs maintain a European perspective in their work and are aware of developments and work conducted by other NAs.

Over the years, and since the 2018 reorganisation, **the SALTO network has witnessed important changes in relation to the EU policy context** related to the Youth and Education and Training sectors (e.g. changes to the priorities under the Erasmus+ programme; the establishment and implementation of the ESC); **as well as additional challenges brought about by a fast-changing global context** (e.g. the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on ways of working, on overall employment levels, and on the youth sector). These new challenges have also brought about new needs, including an increased use of and need for digital tools and spaces. Interviewees from NAs and from the SALTOs themselves recognise that **the SALTOs have made concrete and successful steps to adapt to such needs**.

The interviewees from NAs generally agreed that **SALTO Training and Cooperation Activities (TCAs) are very relevant to create synergies and promote knowledge transfer opportunities**. SALTOs' cooperation with NAs in the setting up and planning of the TCAs, as well as the annual agenda of training is particularly relevant and effective. Additionally, some representatives from NAs and the SALTOs mentioned that TCAs are also an important opportunity for beneficiaries of the programmes to interact with one another and network, generating new ideas and projects. Beneficiaries also benefit from the information, publications and tools shared on SALTOs' websites. Interviewed representatives of EU level stakeholders mentioned that SALTO events are very useful for them to stay up to date with the programmes, discussing with colleagues what their needs are and exchanging practices. Such opportunities would otherwise be very difficult to organise.

Another remark made by respondents across almost all stakeholder groups is that the SALTO network is unique in that its work is sustainable; SALTO experts remain in the network for a long time, and continue the cultural legacy of the network, and **while programmes change and European Commission employees change, the SALTOs and their expertise remains**.

1.2.2 Challenges, good practices and areas for improvement

During the interviews, several **good practice examples** of SALTOs' activities and outputs that are considered particularly relevant were highlighted. These concerned mainly the **SALTOs' ability to capture their target groups' needs and to tailor their work to make it relevant** – especially the needs of NAs. For instance, SALTO E&T ensures that its work is relevant through **regular discussions and consultations with TC officers and NA representatives, and through monitoring and evaluation of activities**. Participants are asked to provide their opinions, suggestions, and recommendations for improvements, and this information is then used to implement concrete changes to meet relevant needs (see section on SALTO E&T below). This further contributes to ensuring that outputs are relevant. Interviewees from NAs, SALTOs and the European Commission pointed out that the SALTO network's activities and outputs generally **respond to the interest and needs of stakeholders**. In particular, staff members of different SALTOs mentioned that their tools and publications are tailored to their target groups and experts are involved when relevant. For example, SALTO P&I has a **participatory approach to identifying needs**: they first map stakeholders' understanding of what youth participation means, and then use this feedback to better shape their activities was cited as a good practice, which has resulted in their activities becoming even more relevant to fostering participation in decision making processes. From the point of view of regional SALTOs, constant dialogue with stakeholders from the regions they work on (e.g. youth organisations and youth workers) is paramount to the development of activities (see more detail in the sections about regional SALTOs below).

Other examples of good practices that were brought up in interviews were related to the **SALTOs' ability to adapt to changing need and contexts, thus ensuring that their activities and outputs remain relevant**. Among these is the work done by SALTO I&D to broaden its area of action, including by reaching out to and working with new sets of stakeholders (e.g., teachers, social workers and employment officers) to further advance their expertise on topics related to inclusion and diversity (e.g. intersectionality). With regards to the impact of the covid-19 pandemic, interviewees from NAs agreed that the SALTOs have been very quick to increase the number and variety of their online activities. For example, as put by a TCA officer who participated in our consultation: "Before the Covid-19 outbreak we had no experience with online events. Therefore, it was appreciated that SALTO E&T launched online course called 'TCA going online', providing TCA officers some information and tips on how to organise online activities."

Despite the overall positive feedback, a series of **challenges and areas for improvement were identified** through the interviews. Several interviewees from the SALTOs mentioned that limited funding and staff can also be a challenge to ensuring that their work is always relevant. For example, one of them mentioned that despite all the current efforts to identify needs and receive feedback from target groups, they wish they had the means to conduct regular evaluations of their work to foster continuous improvement in their practices. Moreover, interviewees identified the need for **increased cooperation as an area for improvement to ensure that their work becomes even more relevant**. An example of how of cooperation could be further strengthened is the need for closer **cooperation between (particularly)**

the regional SALTOs and the NEOs in partner countries. Interviewed representative from NEOs consider this important to ensure that NEO staff can acquire knowledge of and a network of contacts in the youth sector, and to ease the transition towards this area of work which has recently been introduced to their mandate (as opposed to their previous exclusive focus on higher education). From the point of view of Regional SALTOs, some staff members mentioned in their interviews that increased cooperation with EU stakeholders in the regions (NEOs, EU Delegations and DG NEAR were mentioned) would be beneficial to improve the relevance of their action as it would allow an exchange of information and coordination of actions. For example, SALTO Euromed mentioned that they could provide relevant support to local organisations by disseminating opportunities and actions implemented by other relevant stakeholders. Furthermore, strengthened cooperation between regional SALTOs and thematic SALTOs was highlighted as an area that needs improvement. In particular, interviewees from regional SALTOs mentioned that despite the fact that they already make use of tools and resources developed by thematic SALTOs to conduct their activities with their target groups, a closer collaboration to develop joint activities and outputs would further enhance their relevance to their target groups.

Some **areas for improvement** were identified regarding the relevance of the work of the SALTOs in relation specifically to the needs of direct beneficiaries of the programmes. EU level stakeholders pointed out that, while the efforts made by the SALTOs to provide resources and tools for improving the implementation and monitoring of Erasmus+ and ESC are very relevant to direct beneficiaries of the programme, **greater and closer collaboration with grass roots organisations** in the field, and increased efforts to provide them with tailored training and resources would increase the relevance to the SALTO network. This feedback was particularly flagged in the case of thematic SALTOs, as they tend to interact with and cater to the needs of NAs more in comparison with regional SALTOs which are more oriented towards direct beneficiaries in their regions of interest. Additionally, some regional SALTO staff members mentioned that they would benefit from increased central coordination of their activities on behalf of the European Commission and mandates. Some of the interviewees felt that a concerted approach to their activities would be helpful in coordinating their work, avoiding replicating efforts, increasing the relevance and quality of their activities and outputs and in facilitating long term and strategic planning.

Lastly, several NEO interviewees highlighted the need to better evaluate the efficiency of the SALTO network, alongside the need for the SALTOs to better adapt to new priorities (such as sustainability), increase their reach to minority groups, and match to the new realities and needs of young people today.

1.2.3 Relevance of individual SALTOs

SALTO Inclusion & Diversity

SALTO I&D's **activities as very relevant to promote inclusion and diversity**. Some of the activities of this SALTO that were mentioned as particularly relevant include **supporting youth workers and trainers to develop their skills and competences** on the topics of inclusion and diversity; as well as **providing tailored training to NAs**. An example highlighted by interviewed SALTO staff members is the ID Talks. These are online workshops which aim to create a platform for different stakeholders (e.g. youth workers, professionals and volunteers) to engage in discussions and share good practices on relevant topics in the areas of diversity and inclusion. Interviewees from national agencies highlighted SALTO I&D's **close cooperation with inclusion and diversity officers** from NAs as particularly relevant, as it provides helpful support to NAs to develop national inclusion and diversity strategies, and to ensure that they are adequately trained, for example through ad hoc support to inclusion officers within the NAs. They have a set of activities (e.g. trainings) specifically designed for NA staff and SALTOs both at the level of those who organise training and cooperation activities (TC officers) and for NA staff in general. In the words of a SALTO I&D staff member, they *"have very diverse approach in how this support is provided – trainings, podcasts, blogs, publications – and provide specialised support at all levels from specific activities only for Inclusion officers (very specialised – only open for NA staff) to Mobility Taster Courses (only for beginner and newcomers to the programmes)"*. Lastly, EU level stakeholders mentioned that, with inclusion becoming an increasingly important priority within and across programmes, the SALTO I&D has successfully managed to widen its scope of action and work with a greater variety of stakeholders to ensure its activities and outputs remained relevant to the new needs of its target groups (namely NAs).

SALTO Participation & Information

SALTO P&I's **work is very relevant to fostering participation** as the activities and outputs of this Resource Centre are particularly relevant **to promote better knowledge and understanding of youth work, youth participation and media literacy**. It is through this work that this SALTO is said to also help the European Commission with raising awareness and fostering the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy and its Goal 1 on youth participation in society and democracy. Interviewees highlighted that SALTO P&I provides very relevant and valuable support to its target audience. This can come in different ways: for example, **the SALTO P&I supports youth workers and the youth volunteer sector** through communication activities, which are seen as helpful to give the youth field visibility within local decision-making spheres and encourage young people to become active participants. Moreover, this SALTO organises training and events, and

produces tools and resources that are seen as relevant to foster greater outreach of youth work, and to promote a better understanding of digitalisation. To this end, the Participation Pool platform¹⁶ can be considered a good example of a relevant resource.

SALTO Training & Cooperation

SALTO T&C has been **very relevant in ensuring that greater recognition and visibility is given to youth work and youth workers**. More specifically, stakeholders mentioned the efforts of this Resource Centre to **coordinate the implementation of the European Training Strategy¹⁷ and of the Youth Pass¹⁸, and support Erasmus+ NAs with Knowledge, Management and Staff Training (KMST)¹⁹** as good examples of the relevant work done by this SALTO. Among the most relevant activities mentioned by several interviewed NA representatives is also the Knowledge Management and Staff Trainings (KMST)²⁰, a training package provided by SALTO T&C and widely used by NAs to train new staff. The KMST emerged as a widely used tool from interviews with NA representatives, and according to SALTO staff members interviewed it is regularly updated to maintain its relevance.

The efforts made by the SALTO T&C to **foster the professional development of youth workers and TC officers**, including by organising open discussions and providing space for stakeholders to share views, was also cited as very relevant. The latter was said to support youth workers to enhance their position in NAs, and give them more visibility. This is seen as particularly important as the official recognition of youth work is not a reality in all countries, and therefore this Resource Centre's efforts to offer a platform to youth workers can support this process. Stakeholders interviewed highlighted the work that the SALTO T&C has done and continues to do to **develop and manage the YouthPass** tool for recognition and validation of learning outcomes within Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps, as equally relevant. This includes supporting the implementation of the YouthPass by liaising with experts and relevant stakeholders involved in the programmes, also beyond the Erasmus+ and SALTO network. Linked to this, the YouthPass online platform, moreover, is said to provide relevant tools to support the validation and recognition of youth work, as well as the professional development of youth workers.

European Solidarity Corps Resource Centre

The ESC RC has implemented relevant steps, including through the developments of studies and publications, to provide stakeholders with a **deeper understanding of the concept of solidarity, its significance as an EU priority, and its meaning in the context of the European Solidarity Corps**. Moreover, feedback across all interviewed stakeholders is generally positive with regards to the role played by this Resource Centres in “building bridges” between national level stakeholders (NAs) and the European Commission by **organising and coordinating network activities** (e.g. webinars and meetings), where both stakeholder groups can participate, exchange information, share needs, and discuss next steps.

Regional SALTOs overall

Interviewees from the European Commission mentioned the important role played by regional SALTOs to ensure closer contacts between the EU level and the regions they focus on. On the one hand, they make efforts to ensure that the needs and priorities of stakeholders in their region of competence are taken into account at EU level; on the other hand, they carry out very valuable work to promote EU programmes and European values within their respective regions, potentially leading to greater outreach. Regional SALTOs provide relevant support and training to volunteers deployed to the different regions under the European Solidarity Corps programme and to local organisations to obtain the Quality Label. Another point that emerged from the interviews with SALTO staff members as a positive element when it comes to increasing the relevance of the work of the regional SALTOs is their efforts to **work together to develop a common strategy** (through the ‘Beyond Borders’²¹ Long Term Activity), and make up for the lack of a specific mandate for these Resource Centres (which is perceived by some as a challenge).

SALTO Eastern Europe and Caucasus

SALTO EECA's work on providing **coaching programmes for newcomers in the European Solidarity Corps was mentioned as a good example of the relevance of support provided by regional SALTOs to newcomers that may not be very familiar** with EU programmes. As pointed out by the SALTO's staff members in their interview, their target groups are stakeholders from different countries who have different backgrounds and approaches to youth work. For this reason, they are committed to maintaining a constant dialogue with actors in the region to ensure the relevance of their activities, and to establish priorities for action within their set budget. For example, last year they

¹⁶ <https://participationpool.eu/>

¹⁷ SALTO Training and Cooperation, European training Strategy for youth work. Available at: https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-4307/European_Training_Strategy_2021-2027.pdf

¹⁸ <https://www.youthpass.eu/en/>

¹⁹ Information on the KMST is available here: <https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/training-and-cooperation/nationalagencies/>

²⁰ Information on the KMST is available here: <https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/training-and-cooperation/nationalagencies/>

²¹ Beyond Borders is kicking off in June 2022, and sees the involvement of all three regional SALTOs: <https://www.salto-youth.net/tools/european-training-calendar/training/ita-beyond-borders-neighbours-together-kick-off-event.10013/>

started a new activity called **'coaching program for newcomers in the European Solidarity Corps'**, designed to provide additional support for new organizations which are not familiar with European programs, but they have capacity to act in the field of international volunteering. Along the same lines, interviewees from NEOs pointed to training activities organised by SALTO EECA as being very relevant to stakeholders who have limited experience of the programmes. Interviewees also mentioned that conflict (e.g. notably the situation in Ukraine which has been developing since 2014) is a challenge to their work in the region.

SALTO EuroMed

SALTO EuroMed's work to establish Contact Points in partner countries was highlighted as an example of the relevant work carried out by this SALTO to further engage with and provide support to stakeholders in the region. Interviewees from this SALTO mentioned that to keep their work relevant they have had to adapt their work to the changing needs of organisations in the South-Med region, especially in the context of changing programmes and rules. In particular, they mentioned that the work they do to establish contacts between organisations in the region and in the EU is perceived as particularly relevant from their target groups. Interviewees from NEOs underlined that **ensuring that tools and resources are available in languages** other than English or French would increase their relevance and accessibility in the South-Med countries.

SALTO South East Europe

Interviewees from SALTO SEE mentioned that the activities implemented by their SALTO have had a significant impact on the development of youth work in the region, where youth work does not yet exist as a formally recognised professional field. This SALTO, moreover, mentioned being **particularly attentive to the needs of their target audience**, with consultations taking place to assess needs, discuss with experts and organisations, and plan activities according to the feedback gathered. This is seen as bringing added value as it helps this SALTO to provide activities that are of high relevance in a region that is vast and where the concept of youth work itself is perceived in a different way than in the EU (e.g. in the words of an interviewee from SALTO SEE *"in the countries of the Western Balkans there is nothing like professional youth work, there's no education on youth work"*).

SALTO Education & Training TCA

SALTO E&T TCA carries out work that is **relevant to creating new synergies between stakeholders through training and cooperation activities, promoting quality and efficiency in TCAs, and improving the quality of these synergies**. Interviewees highlighted that this SALTO's work was established to respond to the need for focused support in providing quality TCAs in the field of Education and Training, and that this Resource Centre has successfully worked towards achieving this objective. In particular, **the work of the SALTO E&T to support coordinate with TC officers is considered very relevant**. Quarterly meetings are organised between E&T and TC officers, both online and in-person, to collect feedback, share ideas, and identify needs and discuss the strategic approach to respond to these. Furthermore, yearly gatherings are held to collect feedback and offer recommendations to the European Commission and NA directors. Despite the overall positive feedback on the SALTO E&T TCA, one respondent raised **concerns about this Resource Centre potentially lagging behind** compared to the rest of the network, possibly due to the **lower visibility of its work** and activities, as well as a **lower level of cooperation** with other individual SALTOs.

1.3 EU added value

1.3.1 EU Added value of the SALTO Network

Interviewees across all stakeholder types argued that many aspects about SALTOs can be considered unique. The SALTO interviewees perceive themselves as a **unique player** that connects all sectorial stakeholders through tools and activities. According to SALTO, the European Commission and EU level stakeholders interviewees, the SALTOs play a unique role in supporting the quality of Erasmus+ and ESC programmes through the **European scale perspective** they provide, which grants them a wider understanding of how the programmes should be implemented in practice in comparison to NAs and small organisations. Interviewees from the aforementioned stakeholder groups also view the SALTOs to be **well-connected both at EU-level and national level**; these strong connections enable them to both work in strategic developments occurring at the European level, while remaining close to the needs of NAs, beneficiaries, the European Commission, and stakeholders active in the field of youth work, in particular. More specifically, EU level stakeholders, NAs, and NEOs also view the SALTOs **as a recognised EU brand and key promoters of EU values** such as tolerance, open-mindedness, anti-discrimination and anti-xenophobia, youth activism and participation, and civic engagement. Furthermore, one EU level stakeholder mentioned that national governments in non-EU regions greatly value the association of the European Commission with the regional SALTOs, generating respect for the topics addressed by SALTO from national policymakers.

Interviewees across most stakeholder groups highlighted that the presence of such centres of expertise operating across NAs and connecting different stakeholders is greatly useful. In this light, the SALTO network is considered unique because of its **position in the**

middle as an “independent mediator”, as a bridge that not only connects policies and programme structures at all levels, but also brings together the Commission, stakeholders and beneficiaries more effectively. This view is echoed by the European Commission, several EU level stakeholders, and the NEOs. In particular, one interviewee from the European Commission stated that the SALTOs “are in contact both with DG EAC and stakeholders on the ground, which gives them the opportunity to link these two sides and is something that the European Commission cannot do by itself.” One EU level stakeholder mentioned: “the SALTOs are successful because they are embedded in a context, they are connected to the implementing structures of programmes; they are not disconnected satellites.” In this light, **the long-standing, trusting relationships SALTOs develop with different stakeholders** are seen by most stakeholder groups interviewed as a precious resource of the network; EU stakeholders, in particular, highlighted the uniqueness of having a permanent structure specifically designed to build and maintain thematic and regional expertise in the youth sector such as the SALTO Resource Centres.

As mentioned by several EU level stakeholders, NEOs, and the European Commission, by bringing together different stakeholders, the **SALTOs are avoiding duplications in policy work and providing regular assessments of the needs of the different stakeholders**. According to both NAs and EU level stakeholders, SALTOs relieve the burden of NAs and beneficiaries to figure out everything on their own, as it would not be possible for these actors to address all the issues individually at the national level. Additionally, as discussed by several NEO and NA interviewees, one of the key factors that pinpoints the uniqueness of the SALTO’s offer is the information the SALTOs provide on trends and **examples of best practices** in other countries and/or regions, which helps to guide NEOs and NAs into adapting these best practices within their national context, especially in countries lagging behind in the youth sector.

However, a few stakeholders provided more critical views on the added value the SALTOs bring to the EU. In the experience of two interviewees, **the SALTOs have not proven to be indispensable** in relation to specific sectors and stakeholders. In particular, one NEO representative mentioned that the uniqueness of SALTOs in countries not associated with the programmes is limited to their function of assisting NGOs through the Erasmus+ accreditation procedure, while one of the EU level stakeholders stated that their work does not add value to the formal education and VET sectors, which have not benefitted yet from the SALTO network. According to the latter interviewee, many other bodies or agencies – including NAs, EACEA, Europass and the LLP – replicate the same work and tools provided by the SALTOs, such as guidance, information sharing about the programmes, training, resources, tools and handbooks; capacity building is the area where SALTO can generate added value, although the interviewee also considers this area to be overlapping with the other platforms.

There is consensus across almost all stakeholder groups consulted that **SALTO’s funding** affects the value that the SALTO network brings to the EU. Stakeholders from all groups stated that **it would not be advisable for the SALTOs to be primarily funded through means outside the EU budget** because their mandate is to implement two EU programmes. According to one interviewee from the European Commission, “looking at other sources of funding does not make sense since Erasmus is the SALTO’s natural home for the kind of activities they do.” Several EU level stakeholders also highlighted the volatile nature of national funding and sensitivity to changes in government, especially in the youth sector and in some neighbouring regions; for this reason, it makes sense for the SALTOs to be funded through Erasmus+. Several interviewees from the European Commission and EU level stakeholders also stated that, to sustain large programmes such as the Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps, the EU must ensure that support for programme participants – such as the one provided by the SALTOs – is also available and funded. Lastly, some NA and EU level stakeholders also mentioned that, **if SALTO was funded from a non-EU budget, the current external perception of SALTO as a European neutral body would drastically change**.

The European Commission, NAs, and SALTO interviewees stated that the SALTOs offer **good value for money** for the European Commission given their good results despite the limited budget. According to the SALTO interviewees, they often exceed their responsibilities, going beyond project implementation by following up on their work and building sustainable relationships with stakeholders; however, this is frequently achieved through extra voluntary time and despite increasing workloads. When asked whether the same results could be achieved at a better cost, one of the SALTO interviewees specifically expressed that they “would not be able to our work at a better cost, especially since most of the expenses are on human resources, whose expertise and dedication is key for SALTO’s success”.

When asked about the **consequences of discontinuing the SALTO network**, most interviewees across all stakeholders groups expressed that this would cause a lack or a **loss of service provided to organisations across the EU and beyond**; this was stressed as **an inefficient step which would** put further pressure on the capacity and efficiency of stakeholders. There was large consensus among interviewees that the biggest impact of discontinuing SALTO would be felt in three key areas: regional cooperation with organisations in countries not associated with the programme, the access of newer, small organisations to the programme, and the preservation of the European dimension of the programmes. Several EU level, NA and NEO interviewees stated that firstly, without the Regional SALTOs, although regional cooperation would still exist, it would not be as equally accessible to everyone as each organisation would have to rely on their own contacts; in this way, inclusion and equitable participation in the programmes would be expected to suffer significantly. Secondly, EU level stakeholders and NEO interviewees agree that newly established youth organisations would be left with less guidance and struggle to gain partnerships, especially because of the complexity and lack of user friendliness of the EU funding portal and programme applications. Lastly, NA interviewees agreed that they would struggle with capacity to deal with the European dimension of the programmes as they would likely focus most of their resources at the national and local level.

The discontinuation of the **SALTOs would also be viewed as a regression in terms of cooperation and support for the European Commission**, which the youth sector would consider as a large disappointment, leading to the loss of trusting relationships with stakeholders in the field. One interviewee from the European Commission stated that discontinuing SALTO “would be the equivalent of going back years back in terms of cooperation and support;” this sentiment was echoed by NA interviewees, who mentioned that this

prospect would cause a loss in partnerships, cooperation, and communication, alongside a loss in the information exchange among NAs about their plans for TCAs, as interviewees discussed the impossibility of identifying who is responsible for doing what and avoiding overlaps. Additionally, the approach to the implementation of the programmes would in turn become more fragmented, with less coordination and less tailoring of approaches to the different stakeholders. However, some of the EU level stakeholders also mentioned that such losses would be felt more considerably in the youth sector rather than in the Education & Training field, since other networks and platforms (e.g. EPALE, Europass, etc.) support the latter sector, meaning that it does not overly rely on the SALTO network.

There is a general agreement that if the SALTO network would not exist, there would most probably be **a demand and need to re-establish similar EU-wide structures of cooperation**, with a similar mandate and role as the current SALTOs. Most interviewees argued that the presence of a **supranational coordination structure** is required to address the wide variety of aspects which need to be addressed within EU-wide programmes. According to one EU level stakeholder expressed, *“in order for Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps to be prioritised in all countries, we need a coordination structure regardless of what this is called.”* If the SALTOs were to be discontinued, some of these activities would become direct responsibility of the European Commission, which most likely would not have sufficient time or capacity given the many commitments of its staff. Overall, it appears clear from the interviews that the SALTOs are predominantly seen as essential for the programmes and that the entire youth sector is extremely proud to be an ally of the SALTOs; removing this network from the youth field, where SALTO was created and implemented, would be seen as a major loss of expertise and knowledge.

1.3.2 Challenges, good practices and areas for improvement

The large majority of interviewees across all stakeholder groups mentioned that for the SALTOs to continue to bring and increase their added value, it is crucial that they have access to **adequate resources**. It was suggested by one interviewee from the European Commission that, although Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps have evolved over the years, the resources available and budget of the SALTOs have not experienced significant changes since the time of the Youth in Action programme. Specifically in countries not associated with the programme, as suggested by one of the NEO interviewees, **larger resources could allow SALTOs to provide increases support in the field of youth to involve new beneficiaries** (e.g. by reaching out to new beneficiaries and supporting organisations in remote areas, or building trust and enhancing participation in ethnic minority groups), as well as to increase their cooperation efforts, given the hesitance of European organisations to connect with partner organisations from these regions.

Several interviewees from the European Commission also acknowledged that Member States contribute a small percentage to the budget of the SALTOs; these interviewees suggested that to improve funding for the SALTOs, since SALTOs are expanding to work on topics that are very relevant and cross-cutting (e.g., digitalisation and greening), it is possible that Member States will have greater interest in providing additional support.

Lastly, interviewed EU level stakeholders argued that further rationalisation of the SALTOs could **threaten the principle of subsidiarity and the pan- “European” values**. Cutting down the SALTOs would risk sending a negative sign to that the EU does not value the concerned sectors or regions anymore.

1.3.3 EU Added value of individual SALTOs

The existence of distinct Resource Centres focusing on **different thematic areas and regions** is viewed by the SALTOs as a key factor adding value to the EU because it allows them to dedicate themselves to supporting set priorities and developing specific expertise. According to SALTO, the European Commission, and EU level interviewees, having permanent structures designed to build and develop expertise in the Youth and Education and Training areas, especially across a number of themes and regions, is rare and difficult to duplicate; as one EU stakeholder stated, the SALTOs hold “unparalleled expertise.”

While SALTO I&D and SALTO P&I were not specifically mentioned in relation to their added value, the uniqueness and value added by **SALTO E&T** and **SALTO T&C** was pinpointed by two NA respondents for their provision of a platform for NA cooperation. According to an interviewee from the European Commission, the **ESC RC** brings value to the ESC programme because of its clear structure, role and impact in its coordinating role within the programme.

Most interviewees across all stakeholder groups discussed the **added value that the Regional SALTOs bring in terms of regional cooperation**, the broadening of the geographical reach of projects, and **the inclusion of smaller and diverse organisations** in the programmes. Several EU level and NEO stakeholders mentioned that, for countries without a NA, regional SALTOs are a centralised point to access information about the programme. European Commission interviewees mentioned that the regional SALTOs specifically provide a level of expertise that NEOs and NAs may not have, with one NA respondent stating that *“without the support of our SALTO, we would be lost”*. These SALTOs’ contribution to regional cooperation is seen as essential for the European Commission and EU level stakeholders, namely because NAs are mostly focused on providing opportunities in their respective countries and regional cooperation is not a priority, including at budgetary level. Stakeholders across the two groups said that the SALTOs help bridge the administrative, linguistic, and cultural barriers that may be preventing EU organisations and partner country organisations from collaborating. Therefore, as one

interviewee from the European Commission pointed out, the already low participation of countries not associated with Erasmus+ would be negatively impacted while no service would be provided to youth organisations beyond the EU.

According to one EU level stakeholder, **SALTO SEE** unites a region characterised by a difficult cohabiting history and could not be replaced by an alternative organisation or structure; SALTO SEE is considered to greatly contribute to regional cooperation and regional stability – processes NAs are inevitably excluded from due to their national nature – and to provide a mutual understanding of the field. In South East Europe and particularly in the Balkans, without SALTO SEE, no organisations or volunteers would take part in the programmes, and no partnerships would exist between organisations, meaning that the programmes would not be applicable to this region. Moreover, if this SALTO ceased to be funded through Erasmus+, governments in this region would not support the programmes. According to one NEO respondent, **SALTO EuroMed** is greatly useful in managing the Quality Label and accreditation procedures and assisting organisations through these procedures, which no other international organisation or agency is responsible for, in addition to being a valuable partner to co-organise activities with and to be supported by. Moreover, as discussed by another NEO respondent, discontinuing **SALTO EECA** would cause countries in the region to be underrepresented in youth activities and to lack guidance and supporting structures; especially given the changing political context in neighbouring countries, according to this interviewee, discontinuing SALTO would hinder European values in a region where they are already fragile.

2.0 Online survey

This section provides an analysis of the responses to the online survey targeting NAs, SALTO Resource Centre staff members, and direct beneficiaries. The survey was launched on 11 March 2022 and remained open for contributions for a total of 9 weeks. The analysis included in this section mirrors the structure of the online survey.

2.1 Overview of survey respondents

The online survey received 81 responses. These included:

- ▶ 35 (43% of total respondents) responses from representatives of **NAs** from 17 Programme Countries (Austria; Belgium; Portugal; Romania; Spain; France; Germany; Luxembourg; Malta; Norway; Croatia; Estonia; Ireland; Italy; Latvia; Poland; and Slovenia);
- ▶ 16 (20% of total respondents) responses from **SALTO Resource Centre staff members** from all 8 SALTOs;
- ▶ 30 (37% of total respondents) responses from **direct beneficiaries** (12 Education and Training sector organisations, 9 Youth organisation representatives, 8 Youth workers, and 1 Youth leader).

47 respondents (72% of all NAs and beneficiaries) stated that they focus on **youth** in their work (27 NAs, 77% of all NAs; and 20 beneficiaries, 66% of beneficiaries). 17% of these respondents work solely on **Erasmus+** (5 NAs and 3 beneficiaries), 11% solely on the **European Solidarity Corps** (5 NAs), and 72% focus on both programmes (17 NAs and 17 beneficiaries). The focus of the remaining 28% of NA respondents (8) and beneficiaries (10) lies on **education and training** more broadly.

2.2 Perceived effectiveness and relevance of the SALTOs

The SALTO network's contribution to the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes

When asked about the role of the SALTOs in Erasmus+ projects, the vast majority of all respondents indicated that they either strongly agreed or agreed that SALTOs have **positively contributed to improving the quality, relevance, impact and sustainability of Erasmus+ projects**. More specifically, for the 35 NAs respondents, the contribution was greatest in terms of quality and impact (83% strongly agreed or agreed, for both), followed by relevance (77%), and sustainability (73%). For the 30 direct beneficiaries, the contribution was greatest in terms of quality (87% strongly agreed or agreed), relevance (80%), impact (73%), and sustainability (70%). For the 16 SALTO representatives, the contribution was greatest in terms of quality (100% strongly agreed or agreed), relevance (87%), impact (80%), and sustainability (67%). Overall, **quality is systematically considered the greatest contribution across stakeholders** (ranging between 100% and 83%), followed by relevance and impact, while sustainability is the lowest (ranging between 67% and 73%). Moreover, the percentage of all stakeholder groups that strongly agreed that SALTOs have improved the **quality of Erasmus+ projects** was also the highest (63% of beneficiaries, 60% of NAs and 60% SALTOs).

According to the open-ended answers provided by NA respondents, SALTOs contribute to raising awareness on the Erasmus+ programme and making its priorities more understandable and practical for beneficiaries; play a key role in providing resources, tools, and trainings that have a positive impact on the quality of projects and their implementation, with the training courses seen as particularly helpful in establishing networks of NAs and beneficiaries. The open-ended answers provided by SALTO staff members on the network's role in improving Erasmus+ projects generally confirmed the findings above. However, a few respondents mentioned that SALTOs' contribution

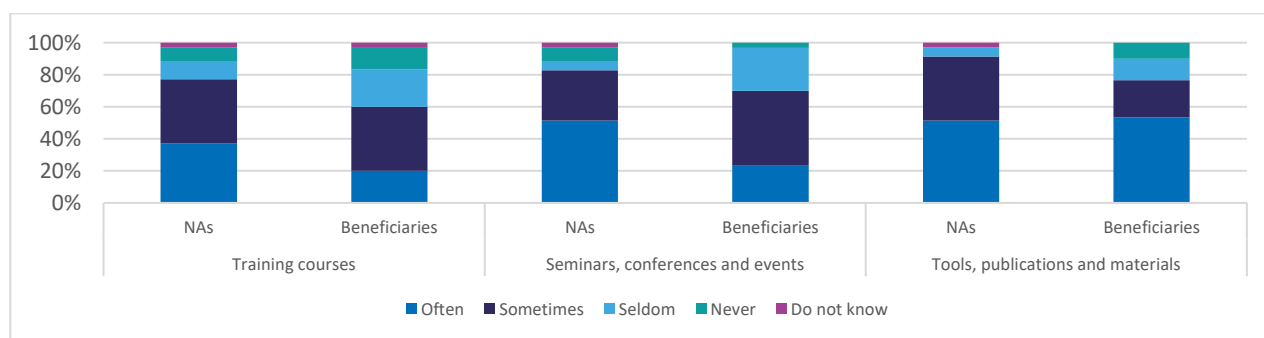
is hard to capture exactly because of the lack of a unified and systematic feedback system. **Beneficiaries elaborated on their generally positive attitude** on the SALTOS' ability to improve the quality of the Erasmus+ programme, however they did point out that improvements are needed to increase the visibility of "good practice projects" and vet the quality of projects showcased on their website.

In terms of the extent to which the **SALTOS contribute to the European Solidarity Corps** projects, the majority of respondents also either strongly agreed or agreed that SALTOS have **positively contributed to improving their quality, relevance, impact and sustainability**. Overall, according to NAs, SALTOS contribute less to the quality, relevance, impact and sustainability of European Solidarity Corps projects than to Erasmus+ ones (with differences as large as 30 percentage points in terms of quality). For direct beneficiaries and SALTOS there are no major differences across the two programmes, although the relevance is 6 percentage points higher for the European Solidarity Corps than it is for Erasmus+ for the latter group. **The majority of beneficiaries and SALTOS were particularly positive about the contribution of the SALTOS in improving the quality of European Solidarity Corps projects** (59% of beneficiaries and 73% strongly agreed of SALTOS), as well as their relevance in the case of beneficiaries (53% strongly agreed), and their impact for SALTOS (53% strongly agreed). Among SALTO staff members who commented further, one highlighted that the distinction between the European Solidarity Corps and Erasmus+ programmes is "somewhat artificial" because their activities are not strictly differentiated between the two programmes, while another one called for increased cooperation between the SALTOS, NAs and the European Commission to establish a concerted monitoring system. Respondents from the NAs highlighted that the SALTOS fill a knowledge gap when it comes to the programme priorities, offering opportunities to learn more about the ESC, and helping interested stakeholders to connect. Moreover, respondents seemed to value the role that the SALTOS play in ensuring a certain standard of quality when it comes to Quality Label applications and in providing useful resources and communication materials.

Activities and outputs by the SALTO network

According to survey responses, **tools, publication and materials** are the type of SALTO outputs that both NA respondents (51%) and beneficiaries (53%) tend to make use of more frequently, followed by **seminars, conferences and events organised by SALTOS** (with 51% of NA respondents and 23% of beneficiaries attending often, 31% of NAs and 47% of beneficiaries sometimes), and **training courses** (37% of NAs and 20% of beneficiaries attend these frequently, 40% of both sometimes). When asked to elaborate, beneficiaries of the programmes mentioned that they make large use of tools and publications in their day-to-day work, from trainings to projects implementation to personal and organisational development.

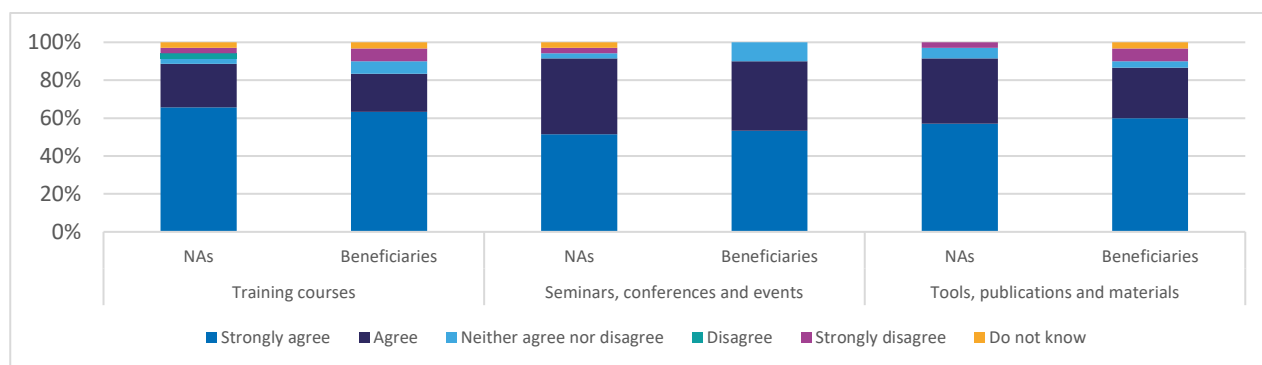
Figure 1 Frequency of participation/use of SALTO activities and outputs by NAs & beneficiaries



Source: Ecorys survey 2022

More than 80% of NA respondents and beneficiaries, moreover, strongly agreed or agreed that **outputs and activities overall are useful for their work**. Training courses, and seminars, conferences and events are identified as the most useful type of output by NA representatives (both 91%), closely followed by tools, publications and materials (89%), but with a higher percentage (66%) of NA respondents strongly agreeing in comparison to the other outputs and activities. For beneficiaries, seminars, conferences and events were identified as the most useful activities overall (90%), closely followed by tools, publications and materials (87%) and training courses (83%), both of which, however, have a higher share of respondents strongly agreeing (respectively, 60% and 63%) in comparison to the seminars and events. When asked to elaborate further, respondents from NAs noted that outputs and activities by the SALTO network are useful to support the planning and improve the content of their work; a few respondents mentioned in particular the support provided by SALTO I&D to develop Inclusion Strategies (e.g. ID Forum, ID Road Map, publications, trainings).

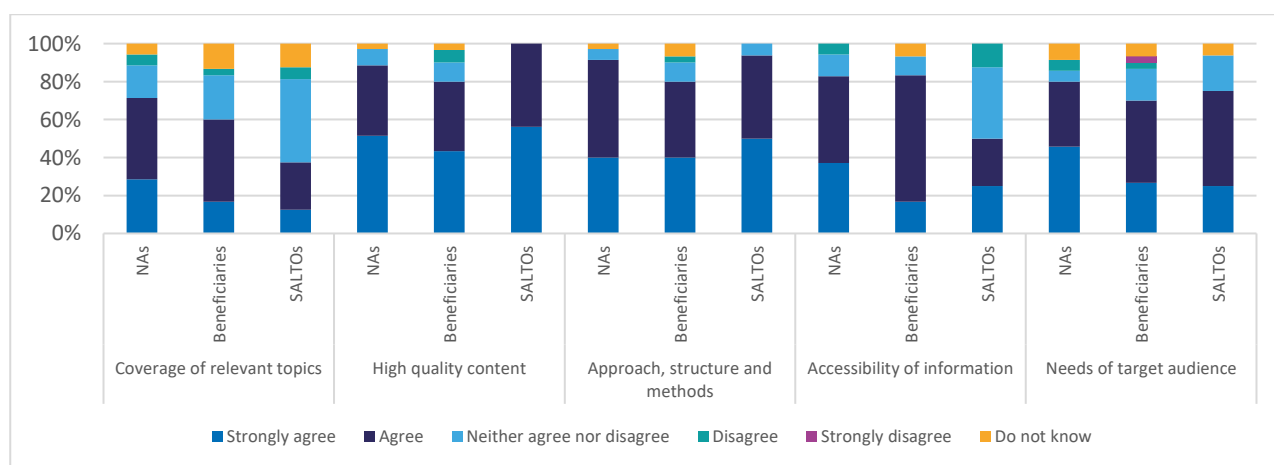
Figure 2 Usefulness of SALTO activities and outputs for the work of NAs and beneficiaries



Source: Ecorys survey 2022

All NAs, beneficiaries and SALTOs were asked to assess the outputs and activities of the SALTO Resource Centres (see Figure 3 below). Respondents across all stakeholder types systematically held very positive views on their approach, structure and methods and their high content quality. Most NA respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that the outputs and activities by the SALTOs are adequate in terms of approach, structure and methods of delivery (91%), are characterised by high quality of content (89%) and clear and accessible information (83%), are adequate to respond to the needs of their target audience (80%), and cover all relevant topics (71%), with high content quality having the highest strong agreement (51%). Although in slightly lower percentages, the majority of beneficiaries also strongly agreed or agreed with the clarity of information about activities and outputs (83%), the high content quality (80%), the adequacy of the approach, structure and methods (80%), the response to the needs of their target audience (70%), and the coverage of all relevant topics (60%); high content quality and the approach, structure and methods are the features that recorded the highest strongest agreement (43% and 40%) at 27 and 23 percentage points higher in comparison to the accessibility of information. SALTO respondents were very also positive regarding the content quality (100% agreed or strongly agreed), the approach, structure and methodology (94%), and the response to the needs of their target audience (75%), **with much more mixed views in the case of the coverage of relevant topics** (38% agree or strongly agreed and 56% were neutral or unsure) **and the accessibility of information** (50% agreed but 37% were neutral and 13% disagreed). Several SALTO respondents highlighted the difficulty in covering all relevant topics within budget and team size limitations, adding that the agenda of the SALTOs narrows their scope and leads to the exclusion of important topics. In terms of information, multiple SALTO respondents pointed out the lack of user friendliness of the current SALTO website and the dispersion of information, which has led to the development of a new website to allow for centralised information about SALTO activities and outputs that is more visible and easily accessible.

Figure 3 Assessment of SALTO activities and outputs per NAs, beneficiaries and SALTOs



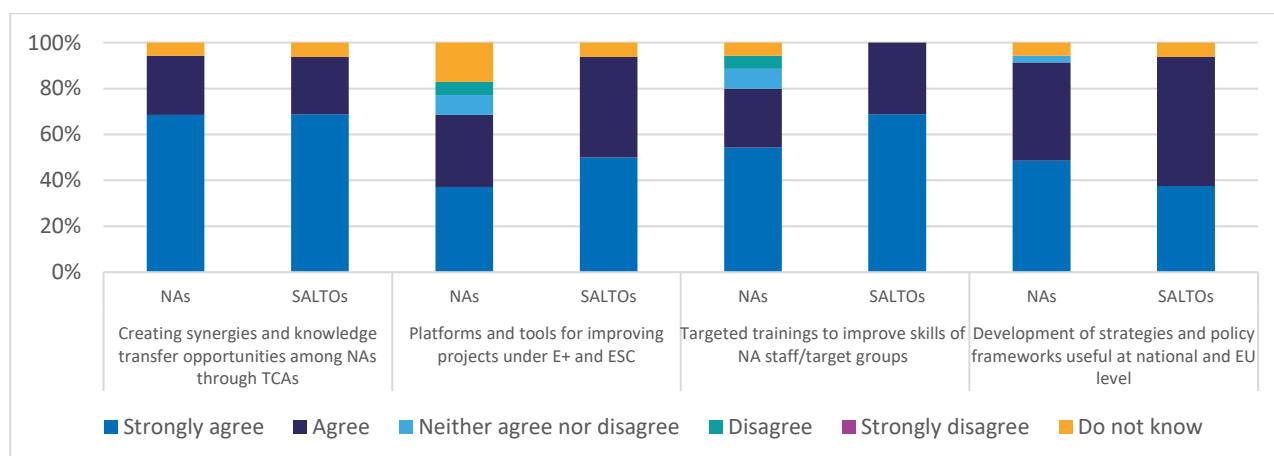
Source: Ecorys survey 2022

Respondents also indicated the extent to which they agreed on certain statements with regards to **how the activities and outputs of the SALTO Resource Centres are used**. The vast majority of NA respondents (80%), beneficiaries (80%) and SALTOs (88%) all agreed or strongly agreed that *resources are used to deliver trainings*, while all groups had slightly lower levels of agreement or strong agreement

with the use of SALTO outputs and activities to *provide evidence and context for policy work* (69% of NAs, 60% of beneficiaries and 81% of SALTOs). There was also agreement concerning the resources used to *design, implement and evaluate Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps projects*, but less so in the case of NAs and SALTOs, with 49% and 44% of respondents, respectively, strongly agreeing or agreeing, and 25% of SALTOs disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the statement, in comparison to beneficiaries (77%). Despite the overall very positive feedback, a small number of NA respondents mentioned the materials produced by the SALTOs can at times be too elaborate and information can be hard to keep up with especially for beneficiaries and target groups given the overall heavy workload and time constraints experienced by the NAs, while the lack of sufficient resources available specifically on youth work and monitoring are viewed as decreasing the overall impact of SALTOs in the field. Feedback from beneficiaries on SALTOs' activities and outputs was generally very positive, with one respondent mentioning that the SALTOs have become somewhat of a quality 'trademark'. A few diverging opinions emerged as well, suggesting that the outputs and events do not always address the specific needs of the target audience, specifically in relation to young people and youth organisations, and recommending the introduction of more innovative approaches such as consultations with beneficiaries to understand their needs and reflect them in their activities.

In terms of the **specific relevance to the work of the NAs**, survey findings (Figure 4 below) seem to indicate that NA respondents consider SALTO outputs and activities to be particularly relevant in relation to *creating synergies and knowledge transfer opportunities among NAs through their training and cooperation activities* (94% agreed or strongly agreed), to *contributing to the development of strategies and policy frameworks useful at EU and national level* (91%), and to *designing targeted trainings to improve skills of National Agencies staff* (80%), followed by the provision of *qualitative platforms and tools for improving planning, implementation and evaluation of projects under the Erasmus+ and/or ESC programmes* (69%). When asked about **the success of SALTO Resource Centres in supporting the needs of different stakeholders**, the large majority of SALTO staff respondents strongly agreed or agreed that SALTOs have been successful in supporting the needs of NAs (94%), direct beneficiaries (88%), and the European Commission (81%), with noticeably lower levels of agreement or strong agreement in relation to the NEOs (38%), with a higher percentage of respondents reporting to not know (31%). In regards to their perceived relevance in assisting their target groups, **SALTO staff members reported that their outputs and activities are relevant across all the objectives mentioned** (ranging from 94% to 100% in levels of agreement or strong agreement), but particularly in relation to **designing targeted trainings** (all respondents), which scored the highest level of strong agreement (69%) together with creating synergies and knowledge transfer opportunities, at 19 or more percentage points higher than the other objectives.

Figure 4 Relevance of the SALTO outputs and activities in relation to the work of NAs and target groups



Source: Ecorys survey 2022

Direct beneficiaries (30) were asked to assess the **success of SALTOs in supporting them**. The overwhelming majority agreed or strongly agreed that the SALTOs succeeded in assisting them with *developing knowledge and skills* (87%), *accessing useful resources* (87%), *receiving adequate information Erasmus+* (83%), and *increasing cooperation with other stakeholders* (80%). Disaggregating by Youth-related and Education & Training beneficiaries, the opinions of the 18 youth-related beneficiaries were more mixed concerning the support provided by the SALTOs in *receiving adequate information on the European Solidarity Corps programme* (50% agreed or strongly agreed, 39% were neutral or unsure), with an agreement score 33 percentage points lower than is the case for Erasmus+, but more positive in relation to *increasing youth participation in EU programmes*, with 72% agreeing or strongly agreeing. **The views of the 12 Education and Training organisations were much more positive on the success of SALTOs in supporting direct beneficiaries** with *participating in quality training and cooperation activities* (all respondents agreed or strongly agreed) and *increasing participation in Education & Training projects* (92%).

Moreover, 87% of direct beneficiaries and 86% of NA respondents reported that the **activities and outputs of the SALTOs are adequate to respond to their current needs**. When asked whether SALTO activities and outputs could be improved, more than half of NA respondents (51%) and beneficiaries (63%) reported they could. As for SALTO staff members, all respondents reported that they have made use of

tools, publications and materials produced by **other Resource Centres**: while 94% have taken part in seminars, conferences and events; a lower percentage of respondents (63%) reported to have partaken in training courses organised by other SALTOs. Among the respondents that participated or made use of such tools and events, 94% strongly agreed or agreed that **activities and outputs by other Resource Centres have both positively impacted their work and have helped their SALTO to achieve its objectives**, with the first statement having 19 percentage points higher of agreement. When asked to elaborate on how SALTOs' activities and outputs could better respond to their needs, beneficiaries mentioned that the overall relevance of the outputs could be improved through increased cooperation and harmonisation among the SALTOs: for example, some mentioned that some SALTOs are adopting innovative knowledge transfer tools such as podcasts and animations, while others are not. Other suggestions included mapping target groups' needs on a local level more systematically and improving outreach to vulnerable groups (e.g. young people with fewer opportunities and with disabilities). This could allow for a more tailored approach to the specific needs of beneficiary organisations.

Communication activities by the SALTO network

In relation to communication activities by the SALTOs, 30 out of 35 (86%) NA respondents and 28 out of 30 (93%) beneficiaries indicated that they had received or come across communication and/or media activities from the SALTOs in the past six months. Respondents shared their views in relation to the **visibility, accessibility, quality and relevance of these communications and media activities** – with quality having most respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing (respectively 91% for NAs, and 80% for beneficiaries) and accessibility the least respondents (63% for and 57%, respectively), with visibility (77% of NAs and 67% of beneficiaries) and relevance to the needs of the target audience (80% and 63%, respectively) lying in the middle.

2.3 Individual SALTOs

The online survey included a section with more in-depth questions on **each individual SALTO**, their work, and their objectives. NA respondents and beneficiaries were asked to assess the activities and outputs the specific SALTO(s) they have engaged with, as well as their progress towards achieving their objectives. The following sections provide an overview of the feedback received.

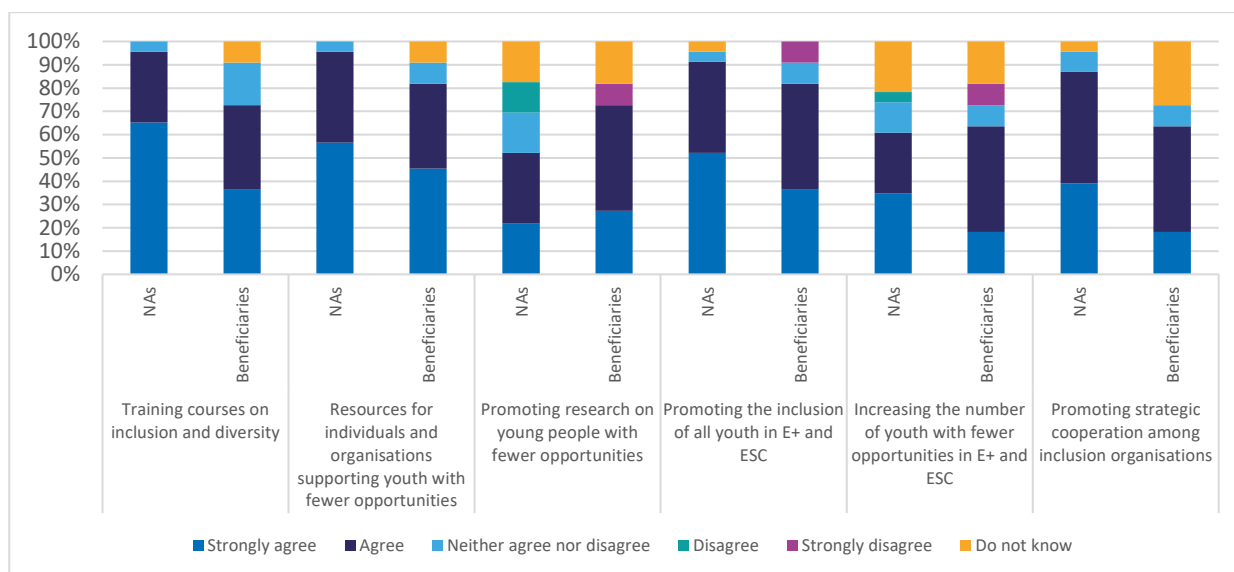
Out of the 35 NA respondents, nearly two thirds (66%) reported having engaged with **SALTO I&D**, more than half (51%) indicated having engaged with **SALTO T&C** and the **ESC RC**, and nearly half (43%) reported having worked with **SALTO P&I**. A smaller number of NAs respondents reported having worked with **SALTO E&T TCA** (31%). A total of 8 respondents among NA representatives (23%) have engaged with one or more regional SALTOs, in particular 20% (7 respondents) with **SALTO SEE**, 17% with **SALTO EECA**, and 11% (4 respondents) with **SALTO EuroMed**. In the case of the 30 beneficiaries, the majority of respondents (70%) have engaged with SALTO T&C, while more than one third (37%) have worked with SALTO I&D and the ESC RC, with a lower number of respondents reporting to have engaged with SALTO E&T TCA (27%) and SALTO P&I (20%). 11 beneficiaries (37%) have engaged with one or more regional SALTOs, including SALTO SEE (23%), SALTO EuroMed (7%) and SALTO EECA (7%). Among the 16 SALTO staff members who responded to the survey, 15 had cooperated with other SALTO Resource Centres. The majority of SALTOs engaged with the ESC RC (80%), SALTO I&D (73%), SALTO T&C (73%) and SALTO P&I (60%), while no other SALTO respondent had collaborated with SALTO E&T. All respondents had engaged with the regional SALTOs, particularly with SALTO EECA (87%), closely followed by SALTO EuroMed (67%) and SALTO SEE (60%).

SALTO Inclusion & Diversity

A total of 23 NA respondents, 11 beneficiaries and 11 SALTO representatives across 6 SALTOs (all excluding SALTO E&T TCA and I&D) indicated they engaged with SALTO I&D. **Responses to the survey show overall very positive feedback on this SALTO**. The majority of NAs and beneficiaries either agreed or strongly agreed that the SALTO I&D is successful in *organising training courses to exchange and reflect on inclusion practice and diversity management* (30% and 36% agreed, while 65% and 36% strongly agreed, respectively) and *providing resources for individuals and organisations supporting young people with fewer opportunities* (39% and 36% agreed, while 57% and 45% strongly agreed, respectively). Therefore, NAs agree or strongly agree more across the two items than beneficiaries do, and this is driven by NAs' strong agreement, particularly in relation to the training courses. Conversely, beneficiaries were more positive than NAs over whether this SALTO is successful in *promoting research on young people with fewer opportunities for evidence-based policy and practice*, with a 21 percentage point difference in agreement. 45% of beneficiaries agreed and 27% strongly agreed with this statement (thus, 73% in agreement), whereas 30% of NA respondents agreed and 22% strongly agree (52% in agreement).

Moreover, this SALTO's success in *promoting the inclusion of all young people, regardless of background and ability, in Erasmus+ and the European Solidary Corps* was scored very highly by both NAs and beneficiaries, with 39% of NAs agreeing and 45% strongly agreeing and 45% of beneficiaries agreeing and 36% strongly agreeing. 48% of NAs agreed and 39% strongly agreed that SALTO I&D is successful in *promoting strategic cooperation among inclusion organisations*; however, these numbers are lower for beneficiaries by 23 percentage points cumulatively (87% for NAs and 74% for beneficiaries), with 45% agreeing and 18% strongly agreeing with the statement, and 27% of respondents reporting to be unsure. Slightly less positive feedback was identified with regards to SALTO I&D's ability to *increase the number of young people with fewer opportunities in Erasmus+ and the European Solidary Corps*, with the majority of NA respondents and beneficiaries agreeing (26% and 45%, respectively) or strongly agreeing (35% and 18%, respectively), and the rest of respondents being either neutral or unsure (35% and 27%, respectively).

Figure 5 Feedback of NAs and beneficiaries on the extent to which the SALTO I&D has been successful in its activities and outputs and has achieved its objectives



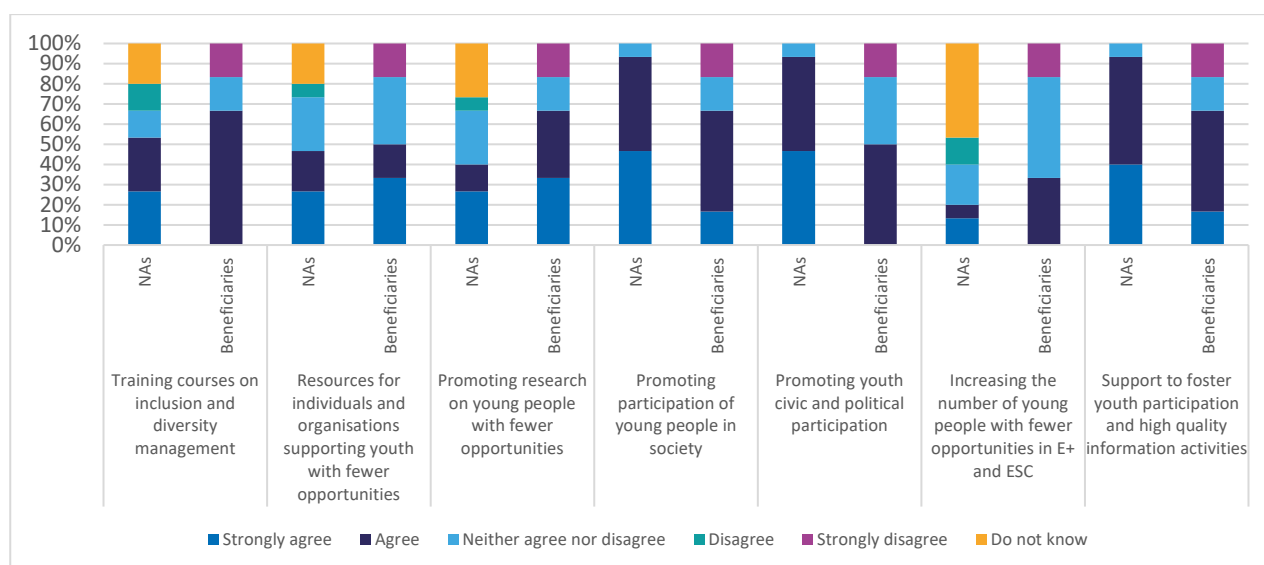
Source: Ecorys survey 2022

The **additional comments submitted by respondents from NAs** provided additional context on SALTOs' ability to directly reach the target group of young people with fewer opportunities. Respondents, while underlining the importance of the SALTO I&D's work, highlighted the lack of data on the participation of young people with fewer opportunities in the programmes as a gap to be addressed, including some calls for more outputs and activities tailored to the needs of the target group. Beneficiaries suggested that SALTO I&D's work could be improved by working more closely with organisations from the field, and by supporting them in their work with young people with fewer opportunities.

SALTO Participation & Information

A total of 15 NA respondents, 6 beneficiaries and 10 SALTO representatives (across all remaining 7 SALTOs) indicated they engaged with SALTO P&I. The findings show **positive but with a significant amount of neutral or unsure opinions of both stakeholder groups** in relation to the success of SALTO P&I in *organising training courses to exchange and reflect on inclusion practice and diversity management*, with 53% of NAs and 67% of beneficiaries strongly agreeing or agreeing, 33% of NAs being neutral or unsure and 17% of beneficiaries being neutral, 13% of NAs disagreeing, and 17% of beneficiaries strongly disagreeing. The respondents similarly rated the success of this SALTO in *providing resources for individuals and organisations supporting young people with fewer opportunities*, with almost half of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing (47% of NAs and 50% of beneficiaries), nearly one third neither agreeing nor disagreeing (27% and 33%, respectively), and only a small percentage of respondent disagreeing (7% of NAs) or strongly disagreeing (17% of beneficiaries). In the case of *promoting research on young people with fewer opportunities for evidence-based policy and practice*, 40% of NAs and 67% of beneficiaries reported to either agree or strongly agree with the statement, 27% and 17% to be neutral, respectively, and 7% and 17% to either disagree or strongly disagree, respectively.

Figure 6 Feedback of NAs and beneficiaries on the extent to which the SALTO P&I has been successful in its activities and outputs and has achieved its objectives



Source: Ecorys survey 2022

As shown in Figure 6, the majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that SALTO P&I is successful in promoting the participation of all young people in society (47% of NAs and 50% of beneficiaries agreed, and 47% and 17% strongly agreed), and in providing support and guidance to foster youth participation and implement high quality information activities (53% and 50% agreed, and 40% and 17% strongly agreed, respectively). While an overwhelming majority of NAs reported to either agree or strongly agree (94%) in relation to promoting youth civic and political participation at all levels, the opinions of beneficiaries were mixed, with half of respondents agreeing with the statement, 33% being neutral, and one respondent (17%) strongly disagreeing. As with the SALTO I&D, opinions diverged more on whether the SALTO P&I is successful in increasing the number of young people with fewer opportunities in Erasmus+ and the European Solidary Corps, with the majority of respondents stating they don't agree nor disagree (20% of NAs and 50% of beneficiaries) or don't know (47% of NAs), 20% of NAs and 33% of beneficiaries who either agree or strongly agree, 13% of NAs disagreeing, and one beneficiary (17%) strongly disagreeing. SALTO staff members' open answers mentioned that additional budget could be used by the SALTO to improve its activities, e.g. by strengthening the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities. Some beneficiaries suggested more visibility and open communication about the SALTO's objectives might improve their ability to benefit from P&I's activities and outputs, and that increased cooperation with young people and youth organisations would be welcome.

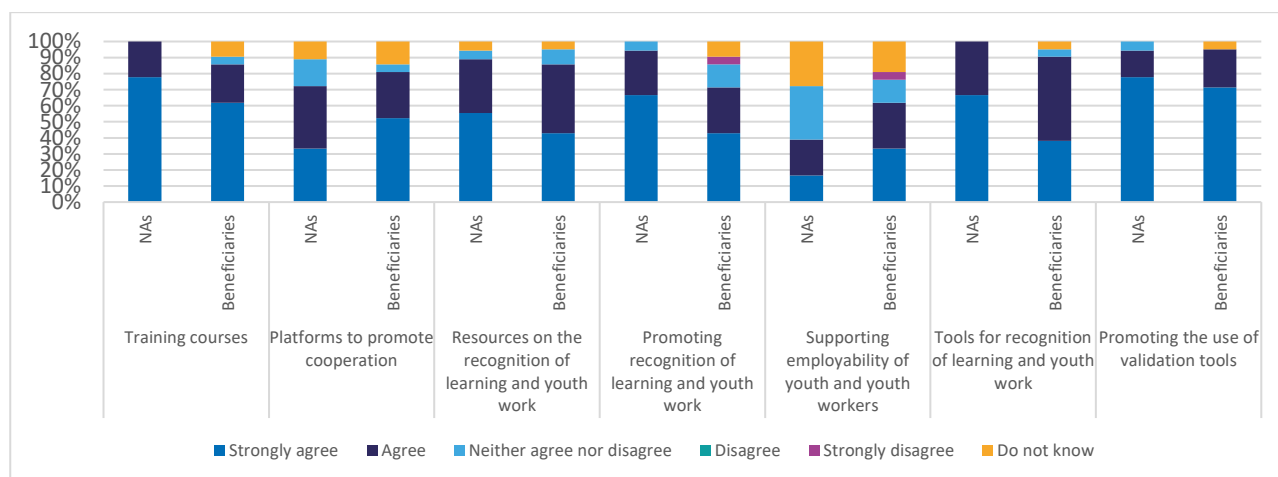
SALTO Training & Cooperation

A total of 18 NA respondents, 21 beneficiaries and 12 SALTO representatives (across all 7 remaining SALTOs) indicated they engaged with the SALTO T&C. All NA respondents either agreed (22%) or strongly agreed (78%) that the SALTO T&C is successful in organising training courses, including training of trainers, with similar high levels of beneficiaries either agreeing (24%) or strongly agreeing (62%). The majority of both NAs and beneficiaries either agreed (33% and 43%, respectively) or strongly agreed (56% and 43%, respectively) that this SALTO is successful in providing resources on the recognition of non-formal and informal learning and of youth work, and agreed (39% and 29%, respectively) or strongly agreed (33% and 52%, respectively) that it is successful in providing online and offline platforms to promote cooperation.

When assessing SALTO T&C's ability to meet its objectives, most respondents either agreed (17% of NAs and 24% of beneficiaries) or strongly agreed (78% and 71%, respectively) that the SALTO is successful in promoting the use of validation tools, in promoting the design and implementation of tools and systems for recognition of non-formal and informal learning and of youth work (with 67% of NAs strongly agreeing and 33% agreeing, and 38% of beneficiaries strongly agreeing and 52% agreeing), and in promoting the recognition of non-formal and informal learning and of youth work (28% of NAs and 29% of beneficiaries) or strongly agreed (67% and 43%, respectively). Although more than half of beneficiaries agreed or strongly agreed (62%) that SALTO T&C is successful in supporting the employability of young people and youth workers, the opinions of NAs were more neutral, with more than one third of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing (39%) with this statement, and almost two thirds being neutral (33%) or unsure (28%). With the exception of the views of NAs on the support provided by SALTOs in supporting youth employability, **the feedback received on SALTO T&C is extremely positive**. The additional comments submitted by respondents from National Agencies provided some suggestions on how to further improve the effectiveness of SALTO T&C's work, namely by increasing synergies with SALTO E&T and between the youth and education and training sectors, as well as possibly increasing the number of materials translated in EU languages. Beneficiaries suggested

that increasing outreach of organisations and stakeholders in the field and widening the pool of trainers and experts to collaborate with might make T&C's activities and outputs more relevant to their needs.

Figure 7 Feedback of NAs and beneficiaries on the extent to which the SALTO T&C has been successful in its activities and outputs and has achieved its objectives



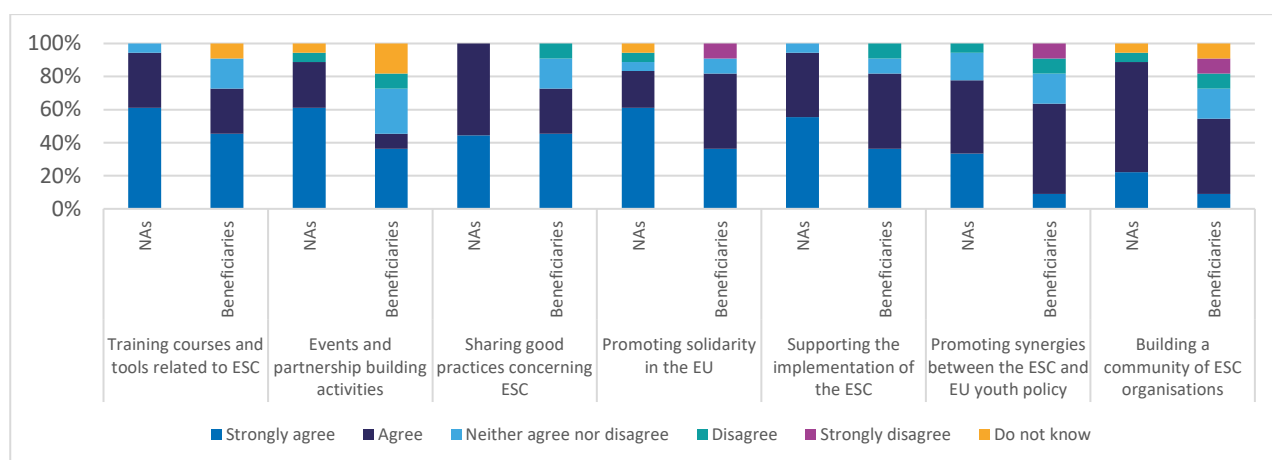
Source: Ecorys survey 2022

European Solidarity Corps Resource Centre

A total of 18 NA representatives, 11 beneficiaries and 12 SALTO representatives (across 6 SALTOs, excluding SALTO E&T TCA) indicated that they have engaged with the ESC RC. **Feedback received from NA respondents on this SALTO is overall very positive and more mixed yet still positive in the case of beneficiaries.** When asked to assess the activities and outputs of this SALTO, all NA respondents and most beneficiaries agreed (100% and 73%, respectively) that the ESC RC is successful in *sharing evidence and good practices concerning the European Solidarity Corps*, and agreed (33% NAs and 27% beneficiaries) or strongly agreed (61% and 45%, respectively) that it is successful in *organising training courses and tools related to the activities supported by the European Solidarity Corps*. Moreover, the majority of NA respondents strongly agreed (61%) or agreed (28%) that this Resource Centre is successful in *organising events and partnership building activities* while only one respondent disagreed (6%); the opinions of beneficiaries were more mixed, with nearly half of respondents agreeing (9%) or strongly agreeing (36%), and nearly half neither agreeing or disagreeing or being unsure (45%), and only one respondent disagreeing (9%). When asked how the activities and outputs of this SALTO could be improved, one respondent suggested a stronger focus on building long-term quality partnerships across Europe to create a lasting impact on communities.

Regarding its objectives, Figure 8 shows that most respondents strongly agreed (61% of NAs and 36% of beneficiaries) or agreed (22% and 45%, respectively) that this SALTO is successful in *promoting solidarity in the EU*, while one respondent from both groups remained neutral (6% and 9%, respectively), and one respondent either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing per group. Almost the entirety of respondents strongly agreed or agreed (94% and 82%, respectively) that the ESC RC is successful in *supporting the implementation of the European Solidarity Corps*. The majority of respondents also agreed or strongly agreed (78% and 64%, respectively) that the ESC RC is *promoting the links and synergies between the European Solidarity Corps and EU youth policy*, while only 6% of NAs and 18% of beneficiaries either disagreed or strongly disagreed. The great majority of NA representatives agreed or strongly agreed (89%) that the centre is successful in *building a community of European Solidarity Corps organisations, ensuring coordination*, with only 6% disagreeing, whereas more than half of beneficiaries agreed or strongly agreed (55%) with this statement, and 18% either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Figure 8 Feedback of NAs and beneficiaries on the extent to which the ESC RC has been successful in its activities and outputs and has achieved its objectives



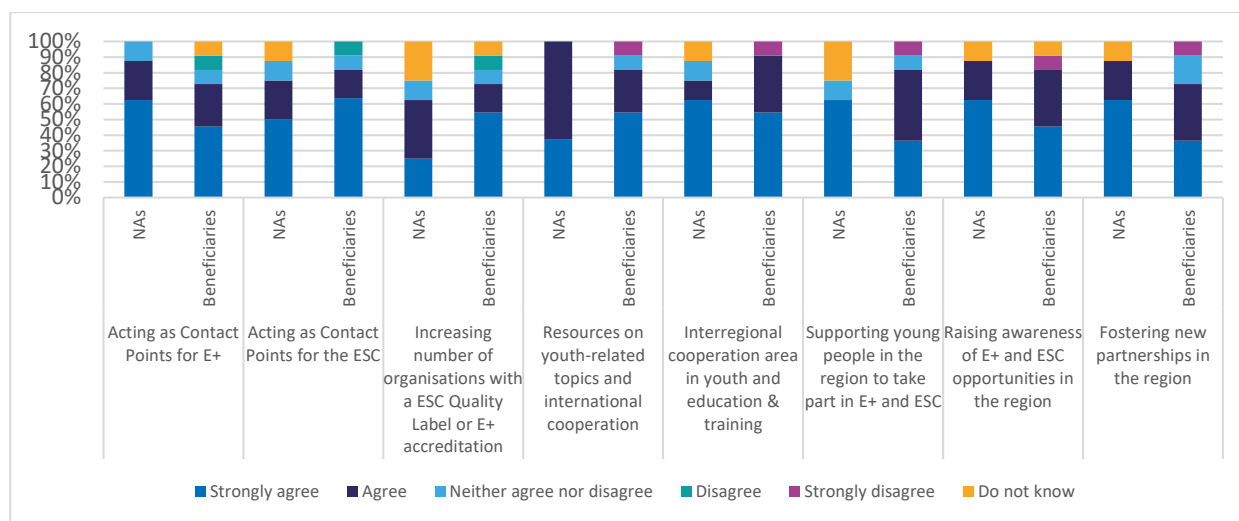
Source: Ecorys survey 2022

Regional SALTOS

8 NA representatives, 11 beneficiaries and 15 SALTO representatives in total indicated that they have engaged with regional SALTOS. When asked to assess the activities and outputs of the regional SALTOS, both NAs and beneficiaries had **particularly positive views of the success of these SALTOS in acting as Contact Points for their projects**; the majority of respondents from both groups either agreed (25% of NAs and 27% of beneficiaries) or strongly agreed (62% and 45%, respectively) that the regional SALTOS are successful in *acting as Contact Points for Erasmus+*, with similar levels of agreement (25% of NAs and 18% of beneficiaries) and strong agreement (50% and 64%, respectively) in relation to *acting as Contact Points for European Solidarity Corps*, with 9% of beneficiaries disagreeing with both statements. The survey findings also show that all NA respondents and almost the entirety of beneficiaries agreed (62% and 27%, respectively) or strongly agreed (38% and 55%, respectively) that regional SALTOS have been successful in *providing resources on topics related to youth work and youth policy in the region as well as international cooperation*. In relation to the success of these SALTOS in *increasing the number of organisations holding a European Solidarity Corps Quality Label or Erasmus+ accreditation in their region*, the views of beneficiaries were largely positive; 55% respondents strongly agreed and 18% agreed that the regional SALTOS have been successful in this aim, whereas 38% of NAs were either neutral or unsure, with the remaining respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing (63%).

The assessment of the ability of the regional SALTOS to achieve their objectives was mostly positive. The majority of NAs agreed or strongly agreed that regional SALTOS have *promoted interregional cooperation in the fields of youth and education & training* (13% and 62%) and *fostered new partnerships among actors in the region* (25% and 62%); in the case of beneficiaries, almost the entirety of respondents agreed (36%) or strongly agreed (55%) that regional SALTOS have promoted interregional cooperation, with one respondent (9%) strongly disagreeing, and nearly three quarters of respondents (73%) either agreeing or disagreeing that regional SALTOS have fostered new partnerships, with 18% neither agreeing or disagreeing, and 9% strongly disagreeing. Although a larger share of NA respondents were either neutral or unsure when asked to assess whether the regional SALTOS had achieved *supporting young people in the region, including those with fewer opportunities, to take part in Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps* and *raising visibility and awareness of the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps opportunities in the region* (38%, with 62% agreeing for both statements), beneficiaries were very positive regarding the objective to support young people in the region (36% of beneficiaries strongly agreed, 45% agreed and 9% disagreed) and to raise awareness of the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps opportunities (45% strongly agreed, 36% agreed, and 9% strongly disagreed). In their open answers, NA respondents highlighted the important role played by the regional SALTOS in administrating Quality Label applications in their regions, but pinpointed lack of funding and visibility as obstacles to their achievements.

Figure 9 Feedback of NAs and beneficiaries on the extent to which the regional SALTOS have been successful in their activities and outputs and have achieved their objectives



Source: Ecorys survey 2022

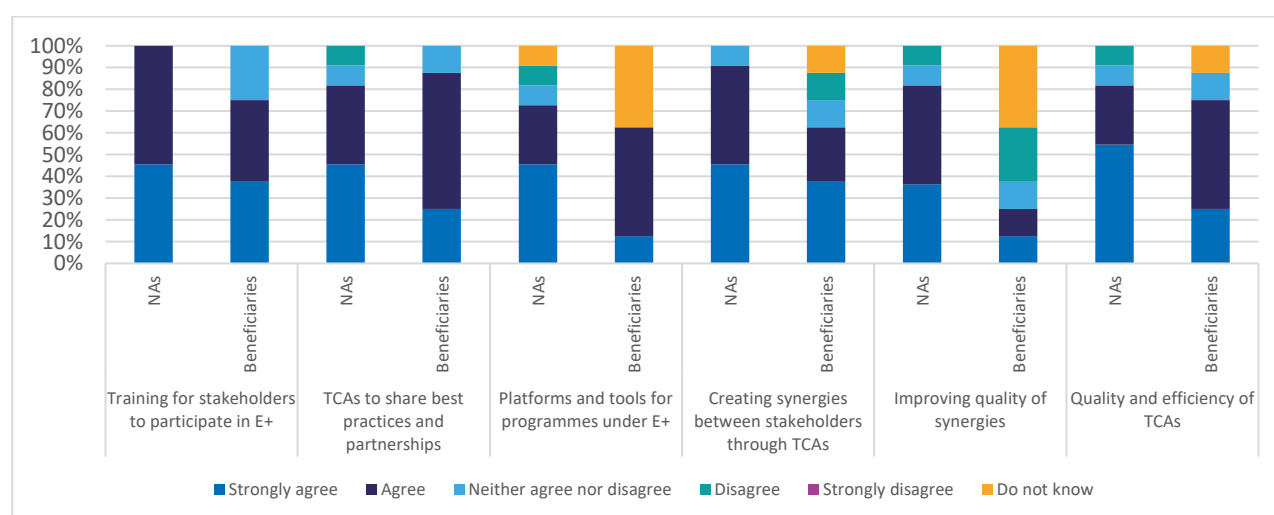
3 NAs and 2 beneficiaries indicated to have engaged with SALTO EuroMed. **NAs held extremely positive views on the success of SALTO EuroMed in their activities and outputs and achieving their objectives.** All NA respondents agreed or strongly agreed with all the aforementioned statements. In particular, all respondents strongly agreed that this SALTO has been successful in *acting as a Contact Point for Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps*, and has met its objectives in terms of *promoting interregional cooperation area in the fields of youth and education & training*, *supporting young people in the region to take part in the two projects*, and *raising visibility of the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps opportunities in the region*; whereas all respondents agreed or strongly agreed that SALTO EuroMed has been successful in *providing resources on youth-related topics in the region and international cooperation* and *increasing the number of organisations holding a European Solidarity Corps Quality Label or Erasmus+ accreditation in the region*, and has *fostered new regional partnerships between actors*. **The feedback from beneficiaries**, on the other hand, **was much less positive**: one of two respondents agreed that regional SALTOS have been successful in providing resources, promoting interregional cooperation, and raising visibility of Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps opportunities, with the other respondent strongly disagreeing with all three statements; while one respondent disagreed or strongly disagreed that regional SALTOS have been successful in acting as Contact points for Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps, supporting young people to partake in the two projects, fostering new regional partnerships, and increasing the number of organisation with a Quality Label or Erasmus+ accreditation. The extremely small number of beneficiaries who had engaged with this particular SALTO, however, means that these views are not to be representative of all beneficiaries.

The feedback received on SALTO EECA and SALTO SEE from both NAs and beneficiaries was overall very positive. 6 NAs and 2 beneficiaries reported their engagement with SALTO EECA. Most or all NA respondents agreed or strongly agreed that SALTO EECA has been successful in acting as a Contact Point for Erasmus+ (100%) and the European Solidarity Corps (83%), and in providing youth-related resources (100%), in addition to having promoted interregional cooperation in the youth and Education & Training fields (83%), raised visibility of the two projects (83%), fostered new partnerships in the region (83%), increased the number of organisations with the Quality Label or accreditation (67%), and supported young people in the region to partake in the projects (67%). Similarly, all beneficiaries agreed or strongly agreed with all statements, with the exception of the success of this SALTO in providing resources on youth and international cooperation, and with regards to its objective to foster new partnerships in the region, which one respondent strongly agreed with, and the other neither agreed or disagreed. Among the 7 NAs and 7 beneficiaries who indicated to have engaged with SALTO SEE, all or most respondents agreed or strongly agreed that activities and outputs by SALTO SEE have been successful in acting as a Contact Point for Erasmus+ (100% of NAs and 86% of beneficiaries) and the European Solidarity Corps (86% and 100%, respectively), providing resources on topics related to youth and international cooperation (100% for both groups), and increasing the number of organisations holding the Quality Label and Erasmus+ accreditation (71% and 86%, respectively), and that this SALTO has promoted interregional cooperation in the youth and Education & Training fields (86% and 100%, respectively), raised visibility of Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps opportunities in the region (86% for both groups), fostered new regional partnerships among actors (86% and 100%, respectively), and supported young people in the region to take part in the two projects (71% and 100%), with no respondent disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with any of these statements.

A total of 11 NA respondents and 8 beneficiaries indicated to have engaged with the SALTO E&T TCA. No SALTO respondent indicated to have engaged with SALTO E&T TCA. These respondents were asked to share their opinion on this SALTO's ability to successfully meet its aims related to the Erasmus+ programme and the organisation of Training and Cooperation Activities (TCA). The totality of NAs and the majority of beneficiaries agreed or strongly agreed (100% and 75%, respectively) that the SALTO E&T TCA is successful in *organising training opportunities to support stakeholders to participate in Erasmus+*. The majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed (73% and 63%, respectively) that the SALTO E&T TCA is successfully *providing qualitative online and offline platforms and tools for improving the planning, implementation and evaluation of their projects under the Erasmus+ programme*, whereas 37% of beneficiaries reported to be unsure. The majority of respondents, moreover, either agreed or strongly agreed (82% and 88%, respectively) that this SALTO is successful in *organising TCAs to share best practices and build partnerships*, while only one NA disagreed (9%).

When it comes to the objectives of this SALTO, as shown in Figure 10 below, almost all NA respondents agreed or strongly agreed (91%) that the SALTO E&T TCA is successfully *creating new synergies between stakeholders through training and cooperation activities*, whereas beneficiaries had overall positive views (63% strongly agreed or agreed) but with 25% of respondents being either neutral or unsure, and 13% disagreeing. The majority of NAs and beneficiaries, moreover, strongly agreed (55% and 25%) or agreed (27% and 50%) that this SALTO is *promoting quality and efficiency in TCAs*, with one NA disagreeing. Lastly, although 82% of the NA respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the SALTO E&T TCA is *improving the quality of these synergies*, only 25% of beneficiaries agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, 25% disagreed, and 40% reported to neither agree or disagree or be unsure.

Figure 10 Feedback of NAs and beneficiaries on the extent to which the SALTO E&T TCA has been successful in their activities and outputs and have achieved their objectives

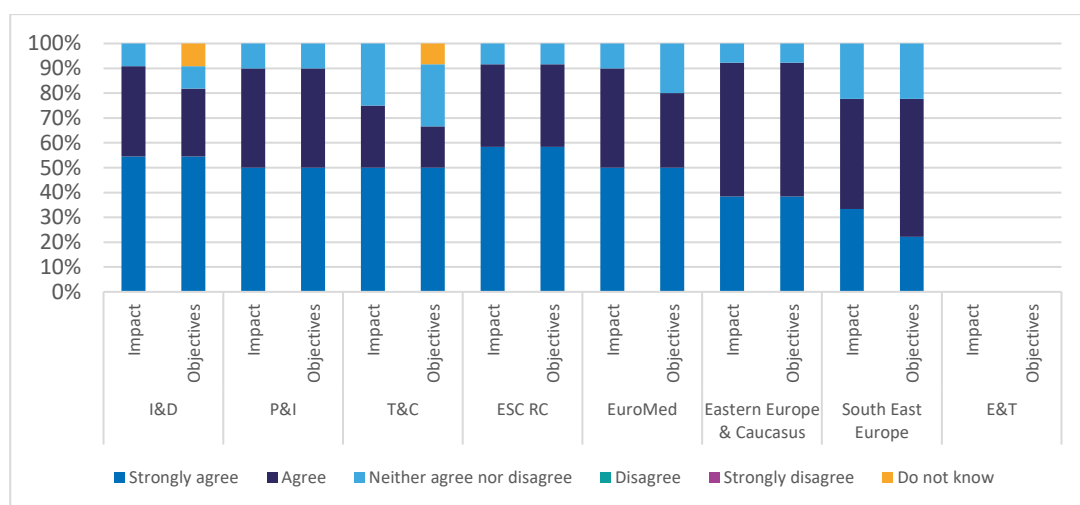


Source: Ecorys survey 2022

Inter-SALTO cooperation

Out of 16 SALTO respondents, 11 had cooperated with **SALTO I&D** (across 6 SALTOS excluding SALTO E&T), 9 with **P&I** (across all remaining 7 SALTOS), 11 with **T&C** (across all SALTOS), 12 with the **ESC RC** (across 6 SALTOS, excluding SALTO E&T), 15 with the **regional SALTOS**, more specifically, 13 with **SALTO EECA** (across all remaining SALTOS), 9 with **SALTO SEE** (across 5 SALTOS, excluding E&T and I&D), and 10 with **SALTO EuroMed** (across 6 SALTOS, excluding SALTO E&T). No respondent among the SALTO staff members indicated to have cooperated with SALTO E&T. Overall, **the ESC RC received the most positive feedback regarding inter-SALTO cooperation**. The vast majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that cooperation with this SALTO had both positively impacted their work and helped their SALTO to achieve its objectives (92% for both), with the majority of respondents strongly agreeing (58%) with both statements. Feedback on the cooperation with SALTO EECA is the most positive among the regional SALTOS; this SALTO received similar levels of agreement or strong agreement (92% for both statements), but with lower levels of strong agreement (38%) at 20 percentage points lower than for the ESC RC. SALTO P&I recorded similar levels of positive feedback with 90% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with both statements, and half of respondents strongly agreeing.

Figure 11 Feedback of SALTOs on the extent cooperation with other SALTOs has positively impacted their work and helped them to achieve their objectives



When asked about the cooperation between their SALTO and SALTO I&D, the majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that cooperation with this SALTO had positively impacted their work (91%) and helped their SALTO to achieve its objectives (82%), with 55% of respondents strongly agreeing with both statements. As for SALTO SEE, 78% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that cooperation with this SALTO had both positively impacted their work and helped their SALTO to achieve its objectives, although the level of strong agreement for the first (33%) and second statement (22%) was the lowest across all SALTOs, despite not having the lowest level of cumulative agreement. SALTO T&C is the SALTO that received the lowest levels of agreement across all SALTOs in relation to impact (75%) and objectives (67%), although its feedback is still positive overall; this could be explained by its higher share of neutral and unsure responses (25% for the first statement, 33% for the second), despite recording higher levels of strong agreement (only 8 percentage points lower than the ESC RC) and 17 percentage points higher than SALTO South East Europe for the first statement, and 28 for the second one.

SALTO staff members highlighted some examples of effective cooperation with SALTO I&D in their open answers, such as the ID Steering Group, various TCAs and an LTA on inclusion coordinated by I&D. Additional information provided by respondents in their open answers showed that other SALTOs cooperate with SALTO P&I through TCAs and LTAs, through ad hoc support (e.g. on outreach strategies, and by exchanging practices and lessons learned). Respondents also explained that they regularly cooperate with SALTO T&C on matters related to the implementation of the Youthpass and the European Training Strategy. Moreover, when asked about the cooperation between their SALTO and the ESC RC, respondents highlighted several specific cooperation opportunities with the ESC RC in their open answers, such as training activities, the management of the HOP platform and Mobility Taster activities. Regional SALTOs regularly cooperate among themselves on a wide array of activities, both on a strategic level (Beyond Borders strategic cooperation) and in specific activities, in addition to cooperation opportunities such as the “Spotlight on SALTO” webinar series and various Strategic National Agency Co-operation projects.

2.4 Feedback on the 2018 reorganisation

16 NAs, 11 beneficiaries and 5 SALTOs reported that they had engaged with the SALTO network before the 2018 restructuring. Among these, only 4 NAs (25% of the 16 NA respondents), 6 beneficiaries (55%) and 2 SALTO representatives (40%) reported that the restructuring has had a positive impact on their work, while 2 NAs (13%), one beneficiary (9%) and one SALTO (20%) declared that it did not have a positive impact, and 10 NAs (62%), 4 beneficiaries (36%) and 2 SALTOs (40%) reported to not know. NA respondents who reported that the 2018 reorganisation had a positive impact provided some examples of the benefits incurred by the SALTO network, including the rebranding of the SALTOs that led to increased visibility and volume of activities, a more intuitive web design, and the establishment of the SALTO T&C.

2.5 Complementarity to Transnational Cooperation Activities

Survey results seem to indicate that the vast majority of respondents were very positive on the complementarity of transnational cooperation activities (TCAs). More specifically, 86% of NAs and 81% of SALTOs either strongly agreed or agreed that the activities of the

SALTOS contributed to a higher number of TCAs, with a high share of respondents from both groups strongly agreeing (60% and 63%); 86% of NAs and 94% of SALTOS either strongly agreed or agreed that activities implemented by the **SALTOS increased the quality of TCAs**, with a high share of respondents from both groups strongly agreeing (63% for both stakeholder group); and 86% of NAs and 94% of SALTOS respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that SALTO activities **increased synergies**, with a high share of respondents from both groups strongly agreeing (54% and 50%). Similarly, when asked about the complementarity of networking activities and trainings organised by the SALTOS to other TCAs, the views of respondents reflected a **high degree of complementarity**. Almost the entirety of NAs strongly agreed (60%) or agreed (31%) with the complementarity of these activities to other TCAs organised by NAs, and the majority strongly agreed (51%) or agreed (23%) in relation to TCAs funded under Erasmus+. The majority of SALTO representatives also agreed or strongly agreed with the complementarity of SALTO activities and trainings with other TCAs organised by NAs (75%) and funded under Erasmus+ (69%).

2.6 Responding to challenges and added value of the SALTOS

The majority of respondents across the three types of stakeholders appear to have positive views on the added value of the SALTO Resource Centres. The majority of NA respondents strongly agreed that the work of the SALTO network managed to adequately support the following **priorities for EU policy and funding**: *promoting inclusion and diversity* (69%), *promoting democracy and participation* (37%), and *increasing cooperation between stakeholders* (51%). Respondents also largely agreed or strongly agreed that adequate support was provided by the SALTOS in relation to these remaining priorities: *promoting common European values* (86%), *promoting digital skills* (66%), *increasing the transferability of project results* (66%), *promoting sustainable and green practices* (60%), and *increasing the sustainability of project results* (57%). In the case of beneficiaries, the majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the work of the SALTOS has adequately supported the following priorities: *promoting inclusion and diversity* (80% agreed or strongly agreed), *promoting democracy and participation* (77%), *promoting common European values* (77%), *increasing cooperation between stakeholders* (76%), *promoting digital skills* (73%), *increasing the transferability of project results* (60%), and *increasing the sustainability of project results* (53%).

As for SALTO staff members, all respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the activities and outputs of SALTOS have supported the *promotion of inclusion and diversity*, the *promotion of democracy and participation*, and the *promotion of common European values*. The majority of SALTO respondents also agreed or strongly agreed that their work supported the following priorities: increasing cooperation between stakeholders (94%), promoting digital skills (75%), increasing the transferability of project results (63%), and increasing the sustainability of project results (57%). Lower levels of cumulative agreement are displayed by beneficiaries and SALTOS in relation to the priority of *promoting sustainable and green practices*, with less than half of beneficiaries (46%) and SALTOS (44%) agreeing or strongly agreeing, with more than a third of respondents from both groups neither agreeing or disagreeing or not knowing (40% and 38%).

When it comes to **youth-specific priorities at EU level**, the majority of NA respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the activities and outputs of SALTOS have adequately responded to five out of six key priorities: *promoting the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities* (93%), *promoting the recognition of non-formal and informal learning* (86%), *promoting youth participation in democratic life* (85%), and *broadening the reach of EU programmes* (67%), and *promoting structural changes in youth policy and youth frameworks at EU level* (52%). However, several respondents expressed a neutral view with regards to the sixth priority – *promoting structural changes in youth policy and youth frameworks at national level* – with more than half of respondents neither agreeing or disagreeing or being unsure (56%), more than a third agreeing or strongly agreeing (37%), and two respondents strongly disagreeing (7%). For the SALTOS, all or almost all respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the work of SALTOS promoted the recognition of learning (100%), youth participation in democracy (100%), the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities (93%), and broadening the reach of EU programmes (87%), with the majority of these respondents strongly agreeing with these statements (73% for the first priority, 66% for the fourth, and 60% for the second and third). The majority of SALTO respondents also either agreed or strongly agreed that the SALTOS have positively supported the promotion of structural changes in youth policy and youth frameworks at EU level (87%) and national level (67%).

The majority of beneficiaries agreed or strongly agreed with the following priorities: *broadening the reach of EU programmes* (85%), *promoting the recognition of non-formal and informal learning* (75%), *promoting the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities* (70%), *promoting youth participation in democratic life* (70%), and *promoting structural changes in youth policy and youth frameworks at EU level* (55%), whereas half of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that SALTOS have *promoted structural changes in youth policy and youth frameworks at national level* (50%), with 40% of beneficiaries remaining neutral or unsure. Beneficiaries suggested that the SALTOS should play a role in connecting “*practice, policy, research and needs of young people more closely*” and be more involved in youth policy making both at EU and national level beyond the ESC and Erasmus+ programmes through, for example, a stronger mandate and decision-making power in the design of EU youth programmes. Other suggestions included giving more visibility to organisations and results produced through the programmes, increasing funding to allow for more activities and staff, and increasing their presence on the ground (e.g. through national contact points).

Lastly, the large majority respondents indicated that they believe that the presence of a European level network of Resource Centres such as the SALTOS has brought added value. The entirety of NAs, 94% of SALTOS and 87% of beneficiaries agree with this statement.

However, respondents also shared several ideas to increase the added value of the SALTOS. Themes emerging from the responses included the need for more efficient coordination between NAs and SALTOS, including by improving the structure/clarifying the role of the Resource Centres, and by improving the web-presence of the network. Among the suggestions from NA respondents, some called for a more unified approach to Youth and Education & Training to facilitate understanding and fruition from beneficiaries and other stakeholders, and increased joint planning and activities.



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Ecorys Europe EEIG
Rue Belliard 12
1040 Brussels
Belgium

T: +32 2 743 89 49

E: europe@ecorys.com

ecorys.com