

**Ministry of Education, Culture and Science**

**Icelandic national report on the  
implementation of the Socrates  
and Leonardo programmes**

15/09/2007

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# 1 Context and methodology

Article 13.4 of Decision No. 382/1999/EC, establishing the second phase of the Leonardo DA VINCI programme and article 14 of Decision No. 253/2000/EC, establishing the second phase of the Socrates programme, lay down that member states shall submit to the Commission a report on the implementation of this programme. Following is the report on the implementation of the Socrates and Leonardo programmes in Iceland (IS).

The major objectives of the report are to contribute to the implementation of the upcoming Lifelong Learning Programme by identifying lessons learnt as well as good practices, and to provide data for the purpose of the final evaluation of the current programmes. This report may be useful in:

- Contributing to the updating of the analyses made at the planning and intermediary stages
- Assessing the mechanisms for implementing the programme and the technical administrative and financial monitoring of activities as currently carried out at centralised and decentralised levels
- Ascertaining the clarity and comprehension of objectives and assessing their achievement
- Assessing the impact of the programmes on the beneficiaries and the education and training systems in Europe

The Icelandic Ministry of Education, Science and Culture entrusted an outside evaluator with the project of collating, analysing and interpreting data as well as drafting this report.

The evaluator independently selected the methodology and conducted the research required for this project. In addition to statistical data from various sources, the decision was made at the outset to rely on interviews with all relevant actors in the implementation of the project in Iceland. Interviews were regarded superior to questionnaires in this instance, as they generally give better opportunity for respondents to put forward their views on the issues in question. Thus a deeper understanding of the programme implementation, its strengths and weaknesses, was possible through the use of interviews in contrast to the more general nature of responses often obtained via questionnaires. This approach is to a large extent made feasible by the small but geographically compact population of Iceland, centered in the Reykjavík metropolitan area. A total of 32 interviews were conducted with political authorities of the programme within the Icelandic Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, with Icelandic NA managers and staff, with project co-ordinators as well as participants (teachers, students, project co-ordinators and participants) in individual Socrates actions and sub-actions. Emphasis is laid on the analytical and possible administrative value of this report, usually better obtained via direct but brief text supported by visual presentations where appropriate.

This report is drafted in adherence with the structure defined in document SOC/COM/32/2006-en “*Guide to drawing up the 2007 national reports on the implementation of the SOCRATES and Leonardo programmes*”. The evaluator bears sole responsibility for the analysis and views presented in this report.

## 2 Activities implemented

### 2.1 Nature of funded activities

This section is divided into two sections, Socrates and Leonardo. Both of these sections contain analysis of: Individual mobility; Projects; Partnerships/networks and mobility related to projects/partnerships, as appropriate.

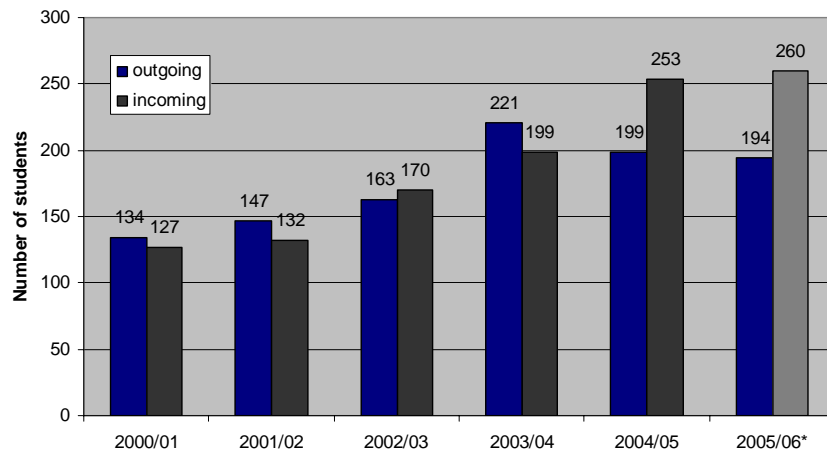
#### 2.1.1 Socrates

##### Erasmus Individual mobility: Student mobility

There has been a very distinct trend during the period of Icelandic participation in Erasmus student mobility (SM). An initial phase, during the Erasmus Programme 1992-1995, of rapid growth of outgoing students while the number of incoming students remained quite moderate. A second phase, during the Socrates I programme 1995-2000, of continued growth of outgoing students but better characterised by a large increase in the number of incoming students. Thirdly the current phase of the SOCRATES II 2000-2006, where the number of outgoing students seems to have stabilized while the number of incoming students keeps growing. The status of Iceland has therefore changed from being primarily a "sending" participant to a "receiving" one. The most active Icelandic higher education institutions (HEIs) are currently in the position of having to be selective of partner institutions to try to maintain a balance in SM flows.

Three distinct developments can be noticed in these student flow trends. The participation of Iceland in Erasmus individual mobility has been active and vibrant, with impressive growth in both outgoing and incoming student flows. Secondly,

**IS incoming/outgoing Erasmus students 2000-2006**



Iceland has managed to reach a good balance in student flows, a balance obtained by dramatically increasing the number of incoming students, beyond the continued growth of outgoing students, during Socrates I. Thirdly, the end of outgoing student flow growth is

noticeable during Socrates II while the interest from incoming students shows continued strength. No single explanation seems to stand out to explain this stagnation in growth. The solution possibly lies in the correlation of a number of factors such as funding (i.e. less EU funding, late payments of grants from the EC) and increased opportunities in recent years for Icelandic exchange students to visit destinations outside Europe.<sup>1</sup> Lack of complementary national funding could hardly be regarded as a contributing factor as in Iceland the Student Loan Fund (LÍN) provides complementary funding to Erasmus students.<sup>2</sup>

### IS Erasmus student mobility 2000-2006

	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06*	Average
<b>Incoming students</b>							
Average age	22,81	23,27	22,97	23,15	23,03		<b>23,04</b>
% male	35%	45%	37%	42%	45%		<b>41%</b>
% female	65%	55%	63%	58%	55%		<b>59%</b>
Average length of study (mths)	5,79	5,97	5,78	5,88	6,07		<b>5,90</b>
Average grant (€)	1006	913	893	828	766		<b>881</b>
<b>Outgoing students</b>							
Average age	25,68	24,96	25,67	26,79	24,91	26,58	<b>25,76</b>
% male	40%	37%	38%	29%	33%	34%	<b>35%</b>
% female	60%	63%	62%	71%	67%	66%	<b>65%</b>
Average length of study (mths)	6,13	6,44	6,04	5,97	5,77	6,12	<b>6,08</b>
Average grant (€)	2001	1847	1451	1049	1173	1393	<b>1486</b>

An analysis of incoming and outgoing Erasmus students reveals that Icelandic participants are markedly older than their European counterparts, a difference of over 2 ½ years on average. Similarly the gender balance in Iceland is even more in favour of females (65%) than among the incoming students (59%). Both these trends are not surprising noting the structure of the Icelandic education system where students enter university older than in Europe and where females have become an overwhelming majority of university students in the last few years. The average Erasmus grant of outgoing students (€1486) is considerably higher than that of incoming students (€881).

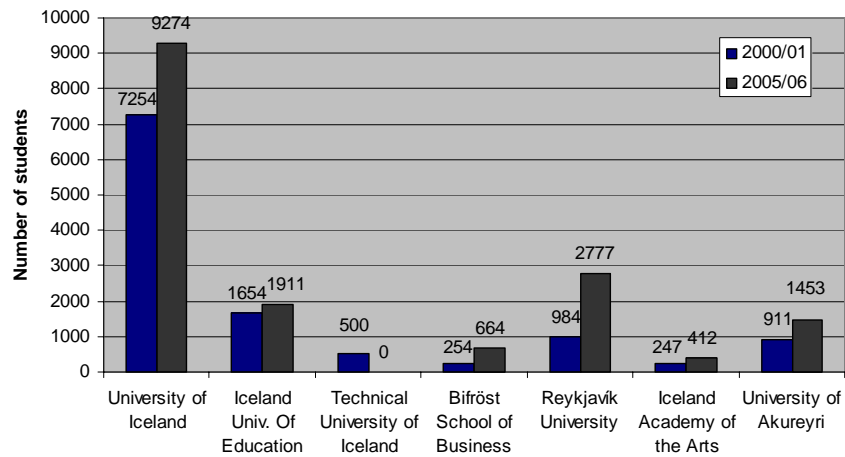
The Icelandic system of HEIs can be characterised by one large, multi-divisional public institution, the University of Iceland, and a number of smaller although growing, more specialised HEIs, both public and private. The University of Iceland has historically been, and still remains, the largest and most diverse institution in Iceland accounting for approx. 60% of the university level student population in 2006. This dominant standing of the University of Iceland has in the last few years been challenged somewhat by a growing number of private and public HEIs, most notably in the field of business studies and computer science. The structure of the Icelandic higher education system is echoed in the number of outgoing Icelandic Erasmus students 2000-2006, whereas the University of Iceland is dominant actor with approximately 65% of outgoing student flows during the

<sup>1</sup> For instance the University of Iceland has completed numerous student exchange contracts in the past few years with higher education institutions in the US, Canada, Australia, New-Zealand and Japan.

<sup>2</sup> European Commission: Student and Teacher Mobility 2000/2001: Overview of the National Agencies' final reports 2000/2001.

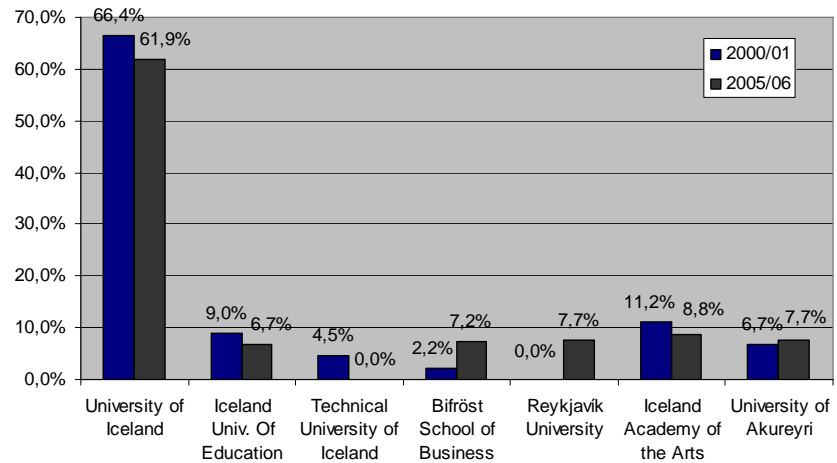
period. Other institutions, such as the Iceland Academy of the Arts and the Iceland University of Education have each accounted for approximately 10% of outgoing student flows during the same period although losing ground to the growing predominantly business universities, Reykjavík University and Bifröst School of Business.

**IS number of students in HEIs 2000/01 and 2005/06**



This structure has similarly affected the Socrates programme in Iceland in such a way that, HEIs have sought cooperation in their participation in the programme by establishing the Office of International Education (OIE) which is a service organisation for all HEIs in Iceland. In

**IS outgoing students by home institution**



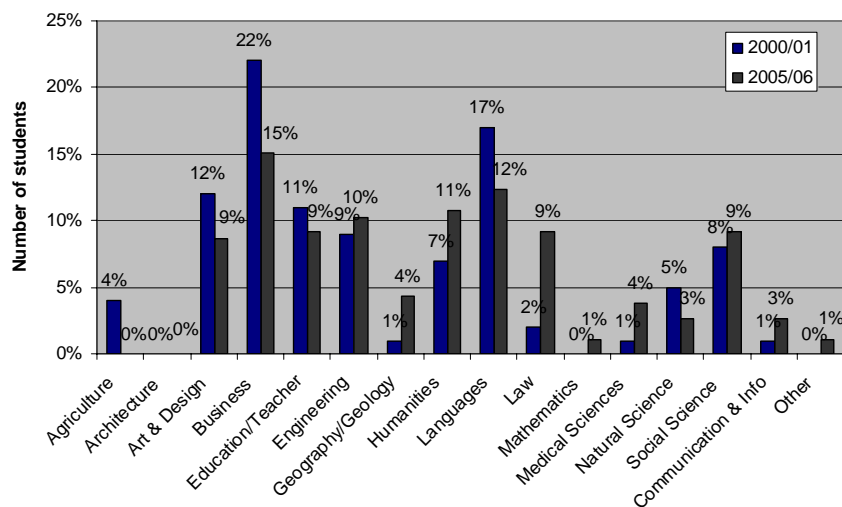
In addition to being the International Office of the University of Iceland, the OIE also hosts the Socrates National Agency (NA) in Iceland, which is responsible for the implementation of the Socrates programmes at all school levels. This centralisation of resources has called for good cooperation with international offices in individual HEIs and active dissemination procedures.

During the period of Socrates II, Denmark has remained the most popular host country for Icelandic outgoing Erasmus students, with approx. 25% of outgoing Icelandic flows. This dominant position of Denmark should not be surprising as strong historic cultural ties remain between the two countries. However, the large discrepancy between Denmark and other Nordic countries is interesting. It is important to note that student flows are not allowed between two European Economic Area (EEA) countries such as Norway, and Finland (4%) represents a much larger cultural challenge for Icelandic students who are planning a brief study period abroad. In addition, Nordic mobility programmes, such as Nordplus, may account for a proportionally low representation of countries such as Sweden (6%).

Central and southern European countries, such as Germany (13%), Italy (12%), Spain (11%) and France (10%), are the most popular among Icelandic students behind Denmark. It is interesting to note the low representation of the UK (6%). This can be explained by the strong emphasis of UK HEIs on parity of student flows. Other destinations individually represent flows below 5% during the period.

While business studies and Languages remain the most popular subjects among outgoing Icelandic students, these subjects have lost considerable ground during the Socrates II period, particularly to legal studies, humanities and medical sciences. A

**IS outgoing students by subject**



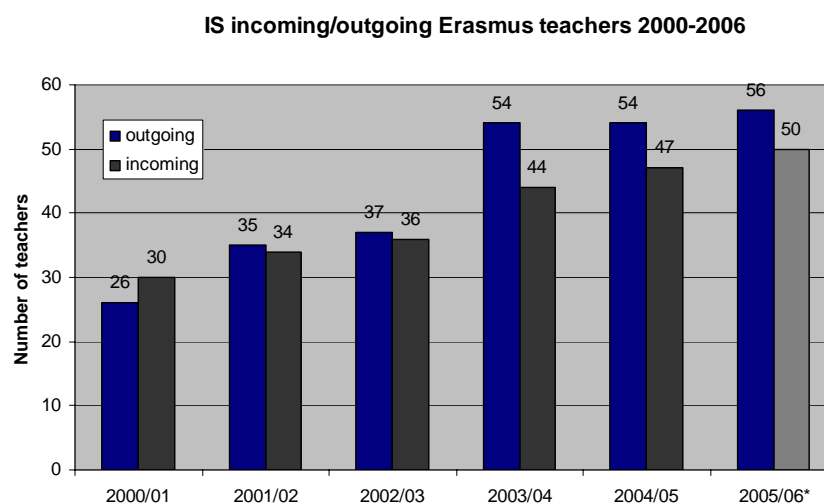
better balance seems to have been achieved between subjects among outgoing students during the Socrates II period, with eight different subjects each representing about 10% of the outgoing flows.

**Erasmus Individual Mobility: Teacher Mobility (TS):**

The decentralisation of Erasmus teacher mobility (TS) in Socrates II has increased participation in Iceland dramatically. The academic year 2000/2001 was the first year that Erasmus TS was managed on a decentralised level by the National Agencies. In Iceland this change in management structure has had a strong positive impact on teacher flows, as in 2000/2001 twenty-six (26) Icelandic teachers went abroad and fifty-six (56) in 2005/2006,



while the average number had been twelve (12) 1998-2000. As in Erasmus student mobility, Iceland seems to have obtained a balance in outgoing and incoming teacher mobility flows of around fifty incoming and outgoing TS flows.



Icelandic outgoing TS seem to be younger on average (45,8) than their European incoming counterparts (47,2) during Socrates II, while the gender balance is almost equal in Iceland. This proportion of female higher education teachers taking part in Erasmus becomes even more impressive when put into context with the general gender distribution of teachers within Icelandic HEIs, as males represent approximately 60% of all higher education teachers.<sup>3</sup>

#### IS Erasmus teacher mobility 2000-2006

	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06*	Average
<b>Incoming teachers</b>							
Average age	45,43	48,21	46,08	48,59	47,85		<b>47,23</b>
% male	60%	62%	56%	50%	66%		<b>59%</b>
% female	40%	38%	44%	50%	34%		<b>41%</b>
Average length of teaching (days)	8,73	7,03	7,00	6,25	7,57		<b>7,32</b>
Average grant (€)	830	762	724	636	661		<b>722</b>
<b>Outgoing teachers</b>							
Average age	44,65	43,40	48,81	48,00	45,20	44,95	<b>45,84</b>
% male	46%	40%	51%	54%	56%	68%	<b>52%</b>
% female	54%	60%	49%	46%	44%	32%	<b>48%</b>
Average length of teaching (days)	10,85	11,23	9,68	12,35	10,17	9,77	<b>10,67</b>
Average grant (€)	1296	1247	1174	1232	1293	1249	<b>1249</b>

\*Numbers for incoming TS 2005/06 not available.

Icelandic teachers teach longer (10,7 days) than their incoming colleagues (7,3) and the Erasmus grant is also considerably higher in Iceland.

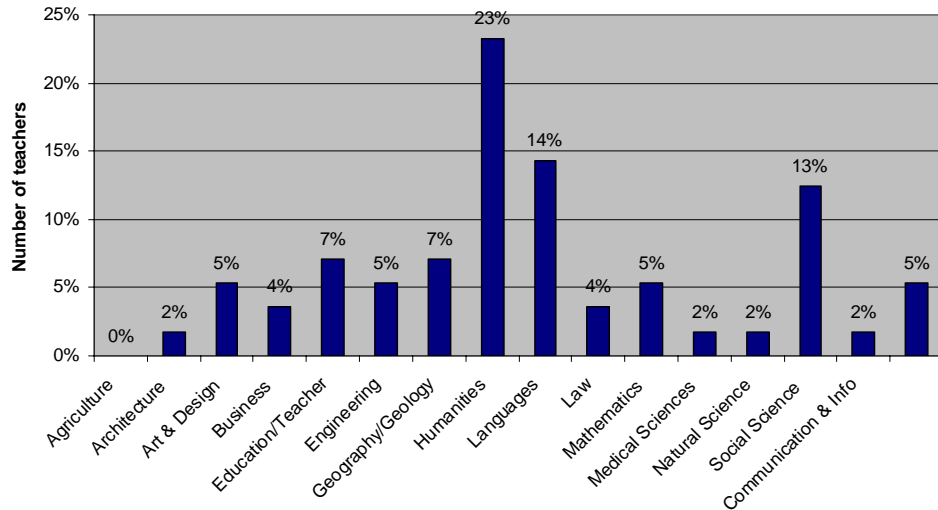
Most Icelandic teachers taking part in TS in 2005/06 come from the humanities (23%), while languages (14%) and social sciences (13%) are the only subjects with over 7% of the total TS flows. The low participation of TS particularly in the field of business studies, and to a lesser extent legal studies, is noteworthy in the context of strong SM participation in these

<sup>3</sup> Hagstofa Íslands (2002). *Landshagir 2002*. tafla 20.17.

fields during the same period. On the other hand it is interesting to note that all but one subject areas are represented in Icelandic TS flows in 2005/06.

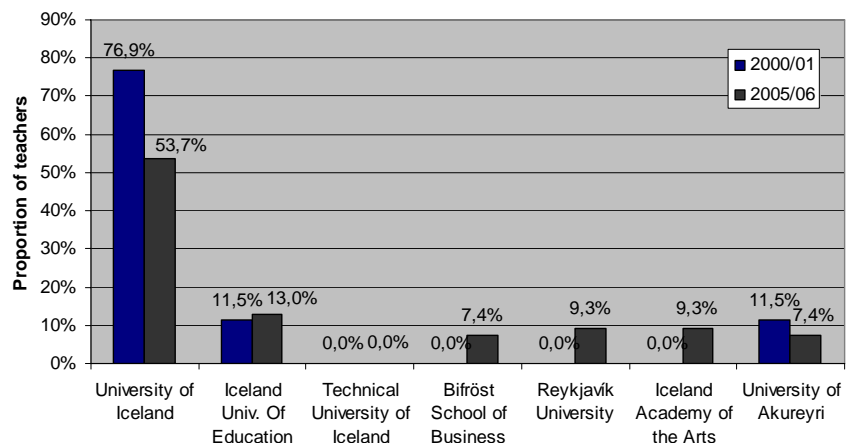
The most popular destinations for Erasmus TS among Icelandic higher education teachers during Socrates II were Italy (22%) and Germany (19%). This is not surprising, especially when put in context with the high proportion of Icelandic teachers in the field of languages. Well behind these two destinations come Denmark, United Kingdom, Finland, France and Spain, with 6-12% respectively of outgoing Icelandic TS flows.

**IS outgoing teachers by subject 2005/06**



As with student mobility, the University of Iceland (UI) represents the vast majority of outgoing teacher flows, although its supremacy has been eroded considerably, by over 20% during the Socrates II period. As with SM the gainers are Reykjavík University, Bifröst and also Iceland Academy of the Arts, while Akureyri loses ground somewhat.

**IS outgoing teachers by home institution**



### Comenius: Individual mobility

Comenius was launched along with the Socrates I programme in 1995, and marked the starting point of Icelandic participation in the academic year of 1995/1996. During Socrates II two-hundred-sixty-nine (269) Icelandic **in-service-training (IST)** (Comenius 2.2) were implemented in the period 2001-2006. The number of Icelandic ISTs has been stable around 50 per annum with the sole exception of academic year 2004/05.

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Total / average
<b>IST</b>	48	43	48	79	51	<b>269</b>
<b>Prep visits</b>	11	11	11	13	11	<b>57</b>
<b>seminars</b>	16	5	7	2	4	<b>34</b>
<b>SP</b>	25 (6)	24 (6)	26 (3)	23 (4)	28 (6)	<b>126 (25)</b>
<b>LP</b>	5 (2)	4 (1)	3 (1)	4 (2)	4 (2)	<b>21 (8)</b>
<b>DP</b>	1 (0)	10 (1)	18 (2)	17 (3)	14 (3)	<b>60 (9)</b>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>31 (8)</b>	<b>38 (8)</b>	<b>47 (6)</b>	<b>57 (10)</b>	<b>46 (11)</b>	<b>206 (42)</b>
<b>Teachers:</b>						
<b>female</b>	157	255	338	401	212	<b>1363</b>
<b>%</b>	61%	76%	78%	79%	74%	<b>75%</b>
<b>male</b>	101	81	96	106	73	<b>457</b>
<b>%</b>	39%	24%	22%	21%	26%	<b>25%</b>
<b>Language Assist.</b>	4	4	3	5	5	<b>21</b>

Most Icelandic participants have gone to Denmark with the United Kingdom a close second. These two target countries thus account approx 60% of all Icelandic Comenius individual mobility in the period. Cultural and geographical proximity could be mentioned as possible explanations of this trend, in addition to English and Danish being the first two languages that Icelandic primary level students study.

The involvement in individual mobility by school level during Socrates II is mostly among secondary (50%) and primary schools (40%) with limited although growing representation from the pre-primary school level. The gender distribution among teachers in IST is predominantly female (79%), which is indicative of the gender distribution of teachers at primary level in Iceland, which is currently around 80%.

Fifty-seven (57) **preparatory visits** (Comenius 1) have been implemented in Iceland during 2001-2006. The distribution between school levels, compared to Comenius individual mobility, shows better representation from pre-primary level (14%), 26% from secondary level, with the remaining 60% of participants coming from primary level schools. The distribution by gender is much more favourable to males than in individual mobility activities, with approx. 40% of participants in Comenius preparatory visits being males during this period. Therefore it may be argued, contrary to individual mobility, that

Icelandic males are proportionally active in Comenius preparatory visits compared to females.

The Icelandic modern society can be characterised as being composed of a single dominant metropolitan area around the capital Reykjavík with over 60% of the total population of Iceland in 2002. Therefore the majority of school children, in addition to the institutions responsible for the implementation of Socrates, are located in the capital area. Much emphasis has been laid within the Icelandic NA on ensuring the participation of the rural areas in Comenius activities with good success.

Icelandic participation in Comenius 2 language assistant activities have been limited, with a total of 21 assistants taking part in 2001-2006. The Icelandic participants have been 65% female. The number of incoming Comenius 2 language assistants is noteworthy, with Iceland receiving approx. 10-15 assistants annually.

### **Projects:**

Icelandic participation in projects under the auspices of Comenius 1 has been active in recent years, and in 2001-2006 two-hundred-forty-eight (248) projects were implemented with Icelandic participation, thereof 42 projects co-ordinated by Icelandic schools. Out of the 248 projects, a considerable majority (151 thereof 25 as coordinators) were School Projects, 29 (thereof 8 as coordinators) were Language Projects and 69 (thereof 9 as coordinators) Development Projects.

The most active partner of Iceland in School Projects during the period has been Germany, with the southern European countries of Italy and France as the second and third most popular partner for Icelandic Schools. This strong showing of central and southern European schools in these projects is interesting and can be taken as an indication of a strong European dimension. Iceland does not seem to participate as much in projects co-ordinated by fellow Nordic countries nor the UK. However, a cautionary note must be made on any strong interpretation of these data as it may reflect the emphasis of the Commission in selecting the most appropriate candidates (i.e. applicants try to ensure geographical diversity in their applications).

The gender balance among teachers participating in projects is strongly in favour of females (75%) which simply however reflect the gender distribution within the teaching profession currently in Iceland. The majority of Icelandic participating schools are from the primary school level (51%), while 40% come from the secondary level and 9% from the pre-primary level. The distribution of projects between the rural areas and the Reykjavík metropolitan area corresponds very well to the actual balance between these two areas, with 57% of Comenius School Projects coming from the Reykjavík area. Therefore the rural areas are very well represented in these projects, even stronger than the actual national proportion of students in the respective areas would have indicated.

## Grundtvig

Iceland has taken part in **Grundtvig** (formerly *Adult*) during the period of Socrates II. Participation in Learning Partnerships (LPS) has been between 1 and 5 each year, with two coordinated in 2002 and 2005 and one in 2004. Iceland has taken part in 14 preparatory visits 2001-2005 and a total of 5 seminars in 2004 and 2005.

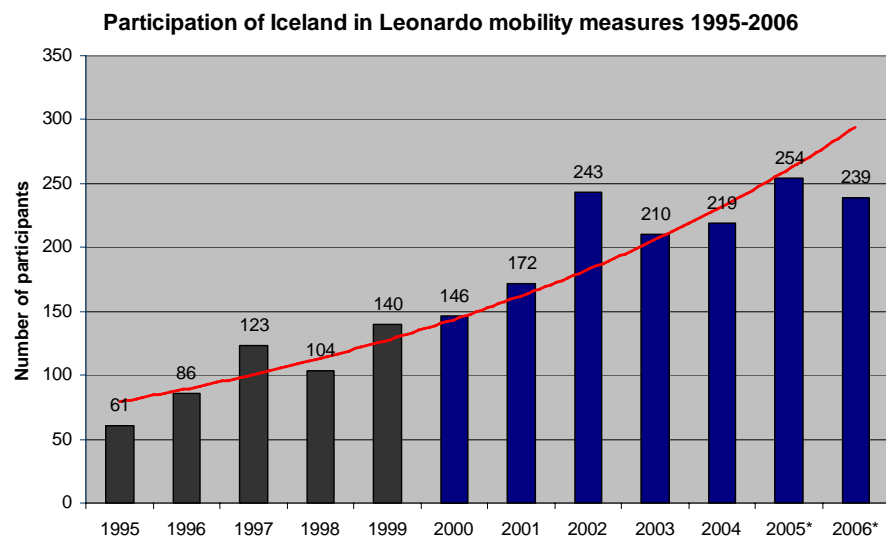
Twenty-six training grants were awarded in Iceland during the period, and 38 Grundtvig 3 mobility grants were awarded between 2003 and 2005, most of them (25) in 2003.

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
<b>LPS</b>	1	3 (2)	x	4 (1)	5 (2)
<b>Prep visits</b>	6	3	x	5 (3)	0 (2)
<b>Training</b>	1	5	x	16	4
<b>Mobility</b>			25	7	6

### 2.1.2 Leonardo

From the outset Icelandic participation in Leonardo has been active. The participation of Iceland in the European Union (EU) Leonardo programme can be traced back to the initial launch of the programme in late 1994. Leonardo I, which covered a five-year period, commenced in the beginning of 1995 and was completed in 1999, when the Leonardo II programme was introduced.

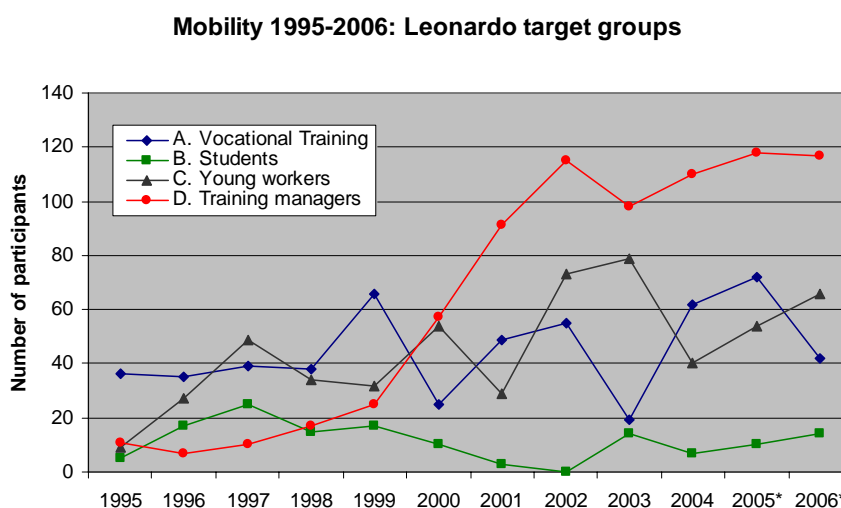
The participation of Iceland in Leonardo II can be divided into two distinct measures of the programme, i.e. **mobility** under selection procedure A (target groups A, B, C and D) and **projects**



under selection procedure B (pilot projects, transnational networks and language competencies projects).<sup>4</sup>

The participation of Iceland in Leonardo mobility measures can be described as a period of relatively constant and steady growth. In contract year 2000, the first year of Leonardo II, a total of 146 individuals from Iceland took part in Leonardo mobility. This number rose to a total of 239 individuals in 2005/06. This demonstrates a strong level of growth in Icelandic participation within this measure, as the number of participating individuals in 2005/06 is close to fourfold 1994/95-levels. A particularly strong rise occurred during the current Leonardo II programme, a growth of approx. 100 individuals per annum between 2000 and 2006 or approx. 80%.

When the mobility participation of Iceland in Leonardo II is divided into target groups, interesting and somewhat diverging developments are revealed. Two distinct developments can be noticed: Strong growth in target group D and on average a stable level of participation in the other three groups.



In target group D, *training of managers*, the level of participation has increased from approx. 60 to 118 individuals, or by 90% during the Leonardo II period. In target group A, *vocational training*, the level of participation has increased from 25 individuals, peaking in more than 70 in 2005 but dropping back to approx. 40 in 2006. The mobility of *young workers* within target group C, has been moving around the 50 level during the period. On the other hand participation in target group B, mobility of students, has been limited to below 20 per annum in Iceland and in fact no participation took place in contract year 2002..

As demonstrated above, the participation of Iceland in Leonardo mobility measures is strongest within target group D, accounting for around 50% in year 2006. Target group C

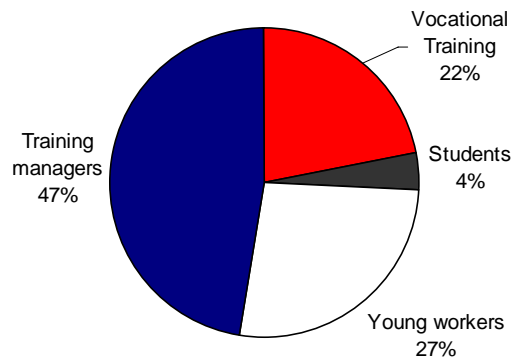
<sup>4</sup> See LEONARDO DA VINCI: Community Vocational Training Action Programme, Second phase: 2000-2006. General Guide for project promoters, version 2003-2004. European Commission.

accounts for 28% of all mobility in 2005 and 2006. Target group A accounts for 18% of mobility in 2006, while target group B participation only corresponds to just over 5% of total mobility of Icelandic participants during Leonardo II.

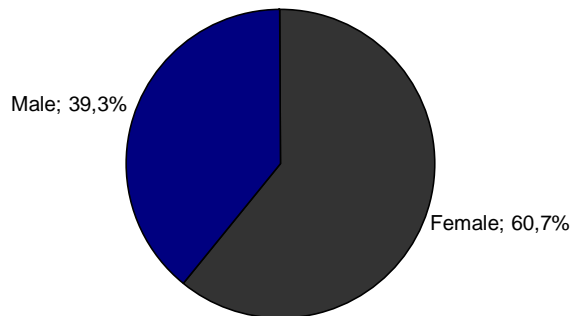
A noteworthy feature of Icelandic participation in Leonardo II is the active participation of females, which in fact has been discernible from the launch of Leonardo in 1994.<sup>5</sup> Females have from the start been a majority of Icelandic participants in Leonardo, and during the period 1994-1999 accounted for 51% of Icelandic Leonardo mobility participants. This strong showing of Icelandic females is further supported by

participant numbers in Leonardo II. With numbers from 2000-2004, female participants account for over 60% of Leonardo mobility participants in Iceland.

**Participants 2000-2006 by target group**



**Mobility 2000-2004: Gender distribution**

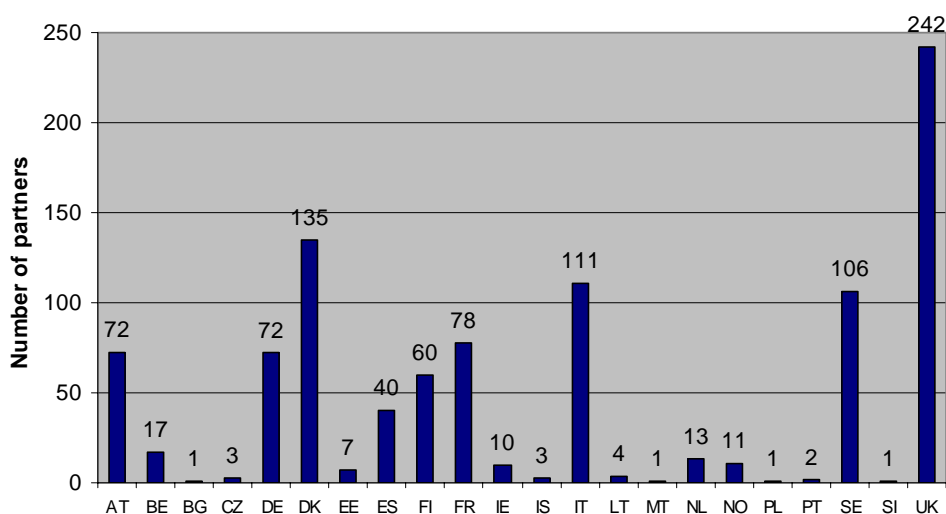


<sup>5</sup> Mat á þátttöku Íslendinga í Leonardo da Vinci – starfsmenntaáætlun ESB. 1995-1999. Menntamálaráðuneyti. 2000.

There seems to be a good balance between the major groups of applicants in Leonardo II. Approximately half of mobility applicants come from the educational system, either secondary schools or university institutions, while the other half comes from public agencies, the business community or various other entities. A majority of Leonardo applicant institutions are located in the capital area, Reykjavik and surrounding municipalities, which account for over 60% of the total population of Iceland. Within the Icelandic NA emphasis has been put on ensuring the participation of rural communities in Leonardo measures, and in 2000-2006 approximately 27% of applicant institutions are located in rural areas. In addition, a substantial number of Icelandic Leonardo applicant institutions, although located in Reykjavik, service individuals from the whole country.

Iceland has enjoyed a wide variety of mobility partners during Leonardo II. The most popular partner country in 2000-2004 has been the United Kingdom. Denmark, Germany, Sweden and Italy are also among the most popular partners for Icelandic mobility applicants. Austria, Finland, France and Spain are similarly fairly represented, while fewer travel to

Mobility partners 2000-2004



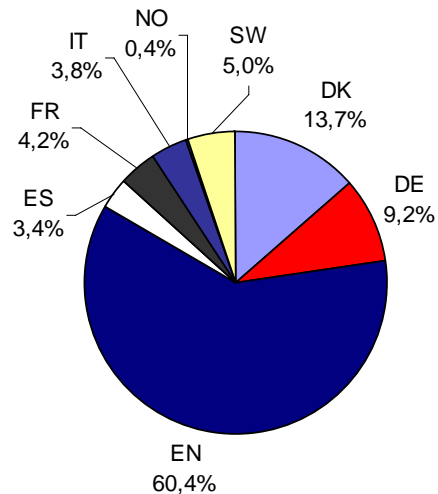
Ireland, Belgium, Portugal and the Czech Republic. These results seem to emphasize the importance of geographical proximity as the four most popular destinations can be regarded as relative neighbours to Iceland. Nevertheless other more distant destinations are fairly represented as well, such as Italy and to a lesser extent Spain. It is interesting to note that these results are almost identical to those of Leonardo I, where the United Kingdom was the most popular, followed by Denmark, Italy and Germany. However, Sweden has become more popular during Leonardo II as well as Finland.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Mat á þáttttöku Íslendinga í Leonardo da Vinci – starfsmenntaáætlun ESB. 1995-1999. Menntamálaráðuneyti. 2000.



As could be expected from the list of partner states above, the most frequently used language in Leonardo mobility with Icelandic participation is English (60%). Danish (14%) and German (9%) come next, while Italian and Swedish are fairly represented.

**Mobility 2000-2004: Language used**



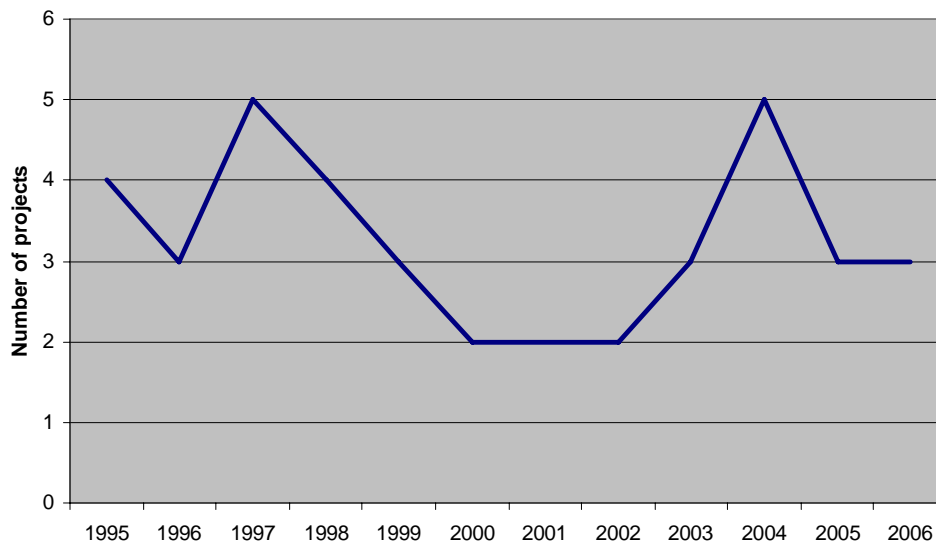
As in Leonardo I, there is a tendency among Icelandic participants to limit their Leonardo II mobility to shorter periods. A great majority of participants in target group D and A limit their stay to 1-3 weeks. Similarly a substantial majority of participants in target groups C and B limit their stay to 3-4 months. This is the same tendency as was displayed in Leonardo I where participants predominantly seemed to prefer shorter periods of Leonardo mobility.

## Leonardo projects

In addition to mobility measures, Icelandic participation in Leonardo II has been confined to **projects** under procedure B, co-ordinating mostly *pilot projects* (II.2) but also projects in the fields of *language competencies* (II.3) and *transnational networks* (II.4).<sup>7</sup> Thus far Iceland has coordinated twenty (20) Leonardo II projects.

As demonstrated below, two or three Leonardo projects have been launched in each of the Leonardo II years with the notable exception of 2004 where five Icelandic projects were

Number of IS Leonardo projects 1995-2006

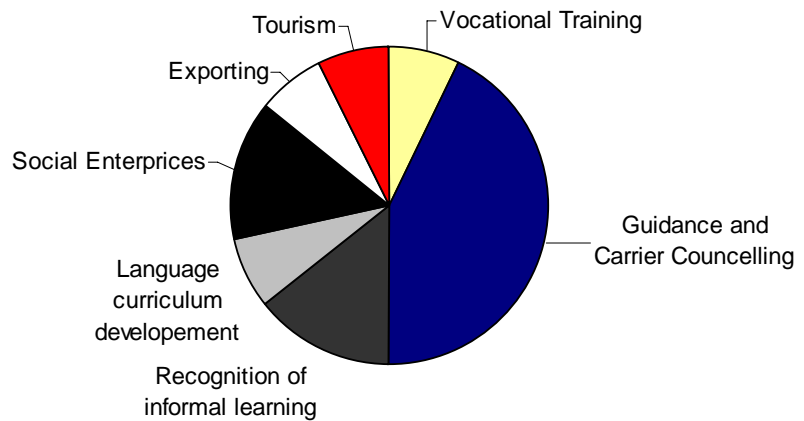


launched. This development of project numbers is the result of Commission policy where fewer projects have been awarded grants while each project receives a larger grant amount. Thus, this development of project numbers between Leonardo I and Leonardo II should not be confined to Iceland, as this should be a general development among participating countries. However, it is interesting to note that one-third of the projects are co-ordinated by institutions that are located outside the Reykjavik capital area, which indicates that implementing actors have successfully reached prospective applicants all over the country. This is a considerable improvement from 1995-1999 where only 19% of projects were co-ordinated by actors outside the Reykjavik area. Similarly interesting is the diversity of Icelandic co-ordinators who come from the educational and healthcare sectors, from centres both for vocational training (*Mennt*) and young people in general (*HittHúsið*) in addition to public export organisations.

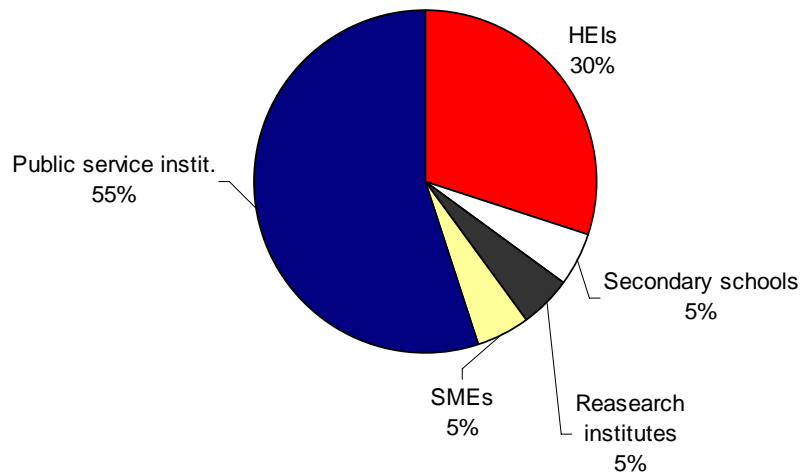
<sup>7</sup> See LEONARDO DA VINCI: Community Vocational Training Action Programme, Second phase: 2000-2006. General Guide for project promoters, version 2003-2004. European Commission.

Guidance and career counselling represent the largest sector of Leonardo projects in Iceland, just below 50% in 2000-2004, while Social Enterprises and Informal learning both represent a considerable portion of Icelandic projects in Leonardo II.

**Leonardo Projects by sectors 2000-2004**



**Leonardo Project Managers 2000-2006**



Project managers in Icelandic projects predominantl y come from public service institutions (55%) and higher education institutions – HEIs (30%).

The remaining portion is evenly distributed between secondary schools, research institutes and small and medium enterprises.

## **3 Impact of the programmes and actions**

### **3.1 Socrates**

From the outset, Icelandic participation in Erasmus can only be characterised as one of steady growth, initially in student exchanges, but more recently in teacher exchanges supported during Socrates II by decentralisation and higher grants for individual flows. More recently added activity at other school levels has been witnessed, most notably through the Comenius initiative. Icelandic participants have embraced the Socrates programme, which has continued to flourish in Iceland during Socrates II, which in turn has obviously met a national need.

At the university level, an official increase in internationalisation has taken place during the Socrates II phase, which benefited and gained momentum from existing structures within the Socrates framework, as well as other international existing exchange and communication programmes. European cooperation, through the Bologna process has had a definite impact on Icelandic higher education structures with legal changes for instance regarding learning outcomes and diploma supplements with all degrees. The participation in Erasmus had already prepared the Icelandic HEIs, calling for constantly more The involvement in Erasmus has benefited Iceland as constantly more students seek to enjoy a part of their studies in Iceland, so much that since 2003/04 more incoming students than outgoing take part in Erasmus in Iceland. The most active Icelandic HEIs currently have to select partner institutions abroad to maintain balance in student flows.

During Socrates II, new dimensions have been opened particularly for pre-primary, primary and secondary schools with added emphasis on Comenius, and for instance teacher exchanges. The introduction of assistant teachers in primary and secondary schools has been successful and given added value to receiving institutions, for instance in language teaching.

The implementation of the programme in Iceland seems to be performed quite effectively. According to NA staff the Socrates II process has been successful although varying levels of activity has been witnessed in individual actions or sub-actions of the programme. According to Icelandic project co-ordinators and participants the European dimension has been present in their activities. Changes towards decentralisation have led to increased activity among HEIs in TS, which has been noticeably stronger than during Socrates I. This trend was reinforced by the application of new guidelines regarding distance and travel costs for Icelandic participants.

According to participants the benefits from participation in mobility activities have largely been in the form of enhanced linguistic ability, i.e. participants have added to their previous knowledge in the relevant European language. University teachers often develop new teaching material for their TS visits abroad, which in turn generates new ideas for their teaching at home. Academic papers and articles often result from such Socrates participation, as a different environment and academic setting often causes different and often novel ways of approaching academic issues. Socrates participation has thus had an

impact through the development of teaching material and methods. Examples were displayed to evaluators both from both school and higher education levels. .

Equal opportunities between males and females has been maintained successfully by Icelandic implementing authorities during Socrates. The gender distribution in Erasmus student mobility corresponds well to the situation within the higher education system with females enjoying a majority in most subject fields. The strong showing of females in Erasmus TS is pleasing as females were approx. 50% of Icelandic TS-participants between 2000 and 2002, while males currently represent over 60% of all teachers within Icelandic HEIs. Gender distribution in Comenius activities generally correspond to the gender distribution at primary level, with females proportionally active in individual mobility while males are proportionally active in preparatory visits. Attention should be brought to the strong participation of rural areas in Comenius, as most primary level schools and most if not all secondary level schools have taken part in the action in Iceland. Even the smallest schools have become active Comenius participants. However, the increased participation of pre-primary level schools should be a focus of implementing authorities in the future.

Schools participating in Comenius especially mentioned the added value of offering their staff and students the possibility to take part in international projects within the daily school routine. The main motivations that induced Icelandic individuals to take part in Erasmus mobility activities were on the one hand to increase and diversify their knowledge in the particular field, and on the other hand, to satisfy growing demands by Icelandic HEIs to take a semester or two at a foreign HEI. However, the motivations for project co-ordinators are more diversified and more specific to the objectives of each individual project. Nevertheless, in general, project co-ordinators indicated that the importance of international co-operation for the further development of their projects was a determining factor for their decision to apply for Socrates grants. Different views, knowledge and differing experiences among Europeans are similarly important for Icelandic TS-participants and generally promotes interest in the programme.

According to participating co-ordinators in Comenius a marked difference has generally been displayed in participants work, predominantly through their increased confidence. Many participants have been involved in development work within their institutions. However it is always difficult to determine precisely what is the cause or effect of individual action. Participation in Socrates has increased the administrative competence of school administrators as well as teachers and been invaluable in establishing connections with European colleagues. Comenius students have generally been very enthusiastic and have gained a wider perspective and added interest in different cultures.

The Socrates programme has opened up various new and exciting possibilities for Icelandic participants, who previously were mostly confined to Nordic co-operation when seeking participation in formal, international training initiatives. Participants in Socrates mobility generally visit countries that can be regarded as relative neighbours to Iceland. As previously mentioned, the most popular destinations are Denmark and Germany. Linguistic, cultural and cost factors can be identified as possible explanation for this selection of

mobility partners. However, the strong commitment to other, more distant countries such as Italy and Spain should not be underestimated. According to implementing actors the programme has increased relations with more distant destinations such as southern and eastern Europe.

The target groups of the programme are being penetrated successfully in Iceland at all school levels except perhaps at the pre-primary level, which however is gaining momentum in the latter half of Socrates II. Higher education institutions are very active in the programme as well as secondary and primary schools. Participation has generally been most vibrant in mobility activities and Comenius school projects while other actions and sub-actions have not been as active.

## **3.2 Leonardo**

Both the preceding analysis in chapter 2 as well as confirmation from participants and national authorities indicates that the implantation of Leonardo II in Iceland has been a success. Although when evaluating the impact of Leonardo on the Icelandic vocational education system as a whole the judgement must be more passive. The programme has given varied opportunities to motivated individuals and groups of individuals to pursue, promote and disseminate new ideas and practises into the system, while at the same time not transforming it in any fundamental aspects. During the period of Leonardo II in Iceland, vocational education has fought a defensive battle in Iceland in competition with more conventional education possibilities.

Leonardo has without a doubt met a distinct a need within the Icelandic vocational system as the participation of Iceland has been very active and on par with most if not all other participating nations. Identified target groups have been penetrated successfully during the period, producing the current situation in Iceland (along with other European education initiatives) where European educational cooperation has become mainstream. There is a consensus among both political authorities and implementing actors that the target groups of the programme, especially the employment sector, are being reached more successfully in Leonardo II than previously. The Leonardo II activities implemented in Iceland adhere to the priorities and objectives set by the Commission and projects have been selected on the basis of Commission selection criteria.

The number of Leonardo applications indicate that there is strong interest in the programme and that activities correspond to national needs. There are generally more applications than it is possible to satisfy at each application deadline. Especially, the demand for mobility participation has been increasing strongly as more and more individuals become informed of this possibility via NA dissemination strategies as well as shared experiences from former participants.

The main motivations that induced Icelandic individuals to take part in Leonardo mobility activities were on the one hand to increase and diversify their knowledge in the particular field, and on the other hand, to create a competitive advantage towards prospective competitors in the employment market. However, the motivations for project co-ordinators are more diversified and more specific to the objectives of each individual project. Nevertheless, in general, project co-ordinators indicated that the importance of international co-operation for the further development of their projects was a determining factor for their decision to apply for Leonardo grants. Different views, knowledge and differing experiences among Europeans are therefore important for Icelandic project co-ordinators and generally promotes interest in the programme.

Participants in Leonardo II mobility display strongly that their participation has improved both their linguistic and especially their professional competencies. Various success stories have been brought to the attention of evaluators in such different fields as auto mechanics and hairdressing. In some instances, Leonardo participants have brought innovative ideas and new competencies into their respective sectors that have made them valuable for employers. The impact of Leonardo participation on linguistic competencies is generally greater when participants possess substantial previous knowledge of the language in question, most commonly English and Danish.

Regarding procedure B projects, Icelandic project promoters emphasized the importance of knowledge transfer between partner countries which had successfully taken place. Promoters agreed that participating in Leonardo had been a learning experience and partners had benefited from the process. Learning different methods, discussing varying emphasis and reaching a joint conclusion were among the main benefits promoters mentioned from their Leonardo experience, which in all instances had been enjoyable. In most instances, Leonardo projects had effect on an organisational level, in addition to individual level, as promoters usually had regular consultation meetings both within their organisation to report on the progress of their Leonardo projects. Therefore, co-operation within and between partner organisations has been witnessed as a result of Leonardo projects which may lead to other forms of co-operation in the future.

According to Leonardo NA representatives, the links between vocational training and labour/employment representatives has been improved in Iceland. To a large extent this has been made possible through structural reorganisation in the vocational system, especially the establishment of EDUCATE that has brought together in a single organisation all relevant stakeholders. The Leonardo programme was originally a catalyst for the establishment of EDUCATE's predecessor..

The implementation of Leonardo in Iceland is performed in accordance with Commission guidelines and therefore all, either procedure A or B, applications are evaluated on the basis of EU criteria regarding target groups. More females than males have taken part in Leonardo in Iceland from the outset, which in general should be interpreted as very positive in the respect of promoting equal opportunity.

Interviews with both mobility participants and project promoters indicated that both groups were well aware of the European dimension involved in the programme. Some project promoters viewed their Leonardo participation as an important extension of previous Nordic co-operation. Leonardo participation has also ignited further consultation and collaboration in related or even unrelated and exciting new fields. According to Leonardo NA representatives the Commission emphasis on North-South, East-West co-operation has not been as pervasive in Leonardo II as previously, allowing for more personal contacts which is regarded as a positive development.

Overall there is limited interrelation between Socrates and other education and training programmes. However, for example Socrates student mobility could possibly coincide with Leonardo and Youth student mobility. Also there are contact points between on the one hand between language related projects in Leonardo and Socrates (Lingua), and on the other hand between Socrates adult education (Grundtvig) and Leonardo. Minerva and E-learning interrelate with other actions as they are inevitably supposed to.

The national structures for the EU education and training programmes (Socrates, Leonardo, Youth) are separate in Iceland but there is good co-operation between the various implementing agencies especially in the form of promotion and dissemination activities. All are governed by independent boards, chaired by a representative from the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, and additionally manned with representatives of other stakeholders.

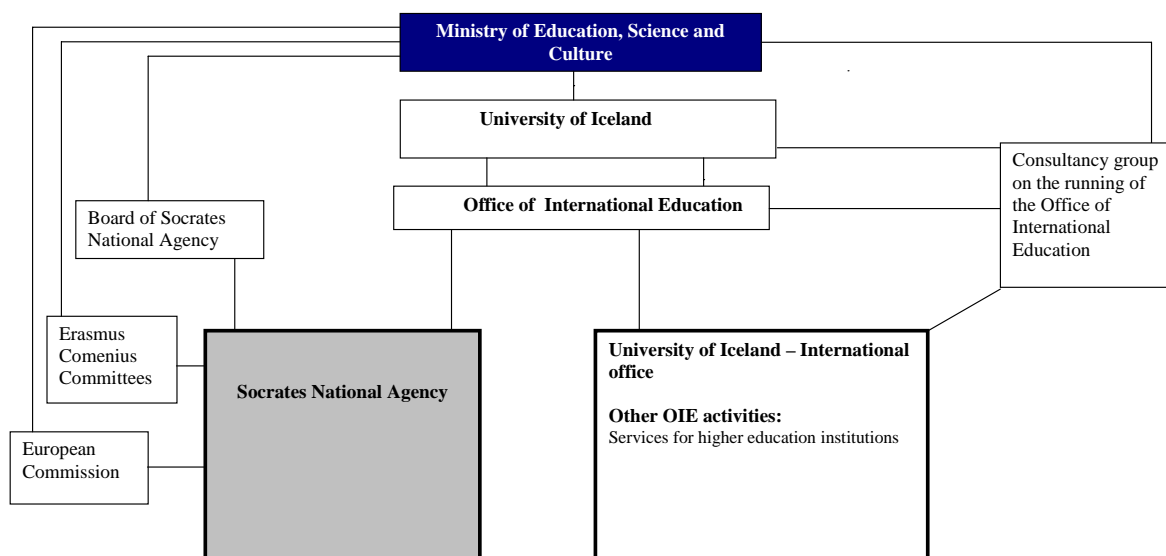


## 4 Programme management

### 4.1 Analysis of management procedures

#### 4.1.1 Socrates

In the year 2000 the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture renewed the agreement with the University of Iceland regarding the hosting of the Socrates National Agency. The Socrates NA is a part of the Office of International Education (OIE) run by the University of Iceland. OIE is a service centre for all higher education institutions in Iceland and one of its tasks is the running of the Socrates NA. The OIE has therefore from the outset of the Erasmus programme been the national implementing actor. Therefore valuable experience, knowledge and tried processes have been built up within the NA during this time period.



Overseeing the National Agency is an independent National Committee (the NA Board) appointed by The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture which acts as a board of the NA which in turn is responsible for the implementation of the programme. The National Committee consists of five representatives, one appointed from the University of Iceland one from other higher education institutions, one from primary schools, one from secondary schools and one appointed by the Ministry of Education Science and Culture. Meetings of the Committee are attended by the manager of the NA. The Committee develops and updates national strategies and priorities for Socrates.

The National Committee appoints members to the Erasmus and Comenius selection committees. The National Committee also has the final say on the distribution of grants in

those parts of Socrates that have not special selection committees t.i. Grundtvig, Preparatory visits for centralised actions and Arion. External experts have also been consulted regarding evaluations of Grundtvig and Arion applications.

The Erasmus and Comenius selection committees make suggestions on allocation of Socrates funds for decentralised actions. Comenius applications are distributed to committee members who utilize evaluation forms when reading the applications. All decisions made by Erasmus and Comenius selection committees are presented to the National Committee for discussion and final approval.

As demonstrated below the finances of the Icelandic NA have been stable with a budget between €280.000 and €320.000 during Socrates II.. A national contribution, from the Ministry of Education Science and Culture and the University of Iceland accounts for approximately three-quarters of the NAs annual operating budget, with the Commission contribution between €71.300 and 85.000 during the period in question. The Commission contribution has been growing somewhat during the period.

	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04*	2005/06*	Total	%
<b>National contribution</b>	€212.872	€199.431	€234.674	€391.506	€477.172	<b>€1.515.655</b>	<b>73%</b>
<b>EU contribution</b>	€71.326	€79.475	€83.485	€161.716	€169.717	<b>€565.719</b>	<b>27%</b>
<b>total</b>	<b>€284.198</b>	<b>€278.906</b>	<b>€318.159</b>	<b>€553.222</b>	<b>€646.889</b>	<b>€2.081.374</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*2003/04: 01.04.03-31.12.04 and 2005/06: 01.01.05-31.12.06

Regarding information dissemination on Socrates II, NA staff, in co-operation with other organisations responsible for the implementation of European actions (such as Leonardo, Youth and others), have travelled with a “European Bus” around the whole country, giving presentations in all largest towns. Regularly there is a large European event in Reykjavik, again with the participation of other EU programmes, where Socrates is presented. Both these events are advertised in national media (TV/radio/newspapers) as well as with posters. NA staff produces and distributes various information documents to targeted audiences upon request. All documents are available at the NA’s information centre that is open to the public. The NA’s homepage ([www.ask.hi.is](http://www.ask.hi.is)) on the internet plays an important part in disseminating information and distributing documents. Application forms are available on the NA’s homepage as well as other relevant documents. Links have been made and will be updated to important and relevant homepages, such as the homepage of the European Commission.

The National Agency takes part in the Universities annual Open House. The staff of the NA organises annually an International day for all university students to promote Erasmus student exchanges. Icelandic students who have taken part in the Erasmus programme inform about their experiences, and European Erasmus students provide information on their home universities and countries to Icelandic students planning to apply for the programme. The Commission calls for proposals have been advertised in Morgunblaðið, the largest newspaper in Iceland. This newspaper reaches most households in the country. According to NA staff, target audiences have been reached by advertising in specialised press, periodicals of teacher associations and through various channels on the internet.

The processing of Socrates applications is performed in accordance with EU guidelines. All Erasmus student and teacher applications are sent to the National Agency. The NA's staff ensure that applications are correctly filled in and that applicants meet the eligibility criteria set by the Commission and at university and national level. All applications are filed and registered into a database. The same goes for other Socrates decentralised actions as all applications are sent to the NA. The NA staff ensures that applications are correctly filled in. All decentralised (other than Erasmus) Socrates applications (Comenius, Lingua, Arion, PV, Grundtvig) are registered into the Soclink database. Selection criteria set at national level are coherent with criteria set by the Commission. The NA makes special efforts to ensure that situations of conflict of interest do not occur, especially in the assessment of selection committees and the use of external experts in decentralised actions.

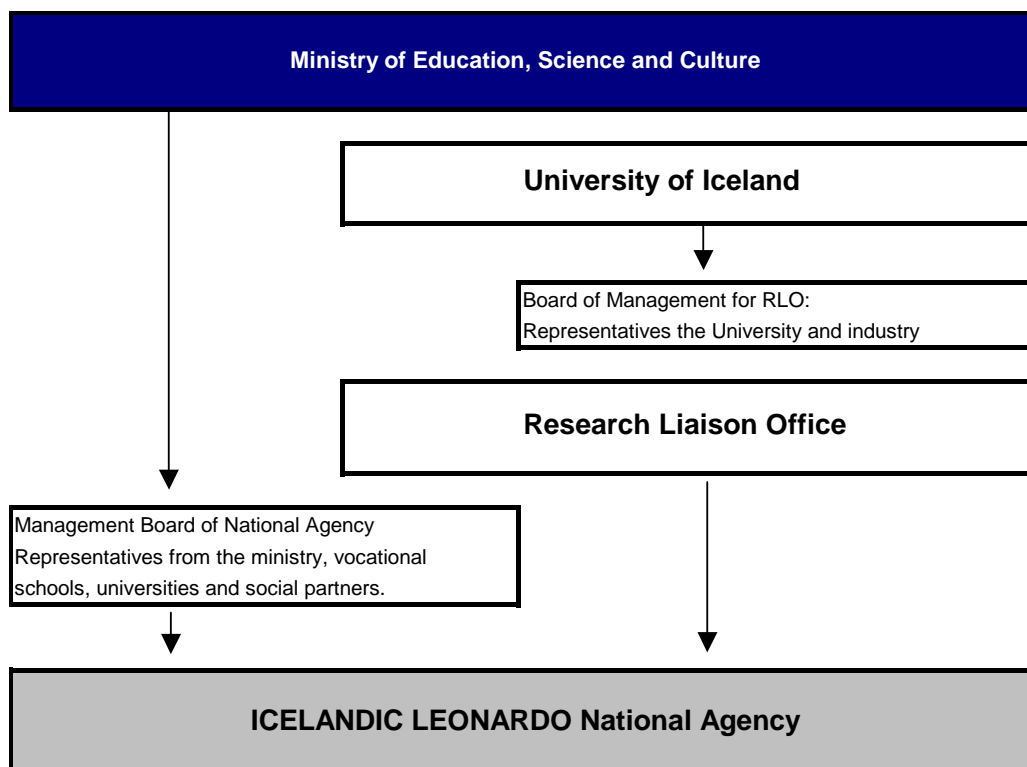
The Icelandic NA has usually been able to support all Icelandic Erasmus students, but have had to prioritise between countries and schools. This is especially relevant for students who want to visit the United Kingdom as strict rules of reciprocity usually apply to those schools. To maintain its commitment to Erasmus students the National Socrates Committee has rather decided upon lowering grants to all than refusing some eligible applicants. In Comenius there are always some refusals of applications, mainly due to insufficient funds for the particular action or application criteria is not met by the candidate in question.

From the start of the Socrates programme, close co-operation with the Commission and Technical Assistance Office (TAO) has been vital to the success of the programme in Iceland. Having good access to personnel at the Commission and TAO when needed is very important to NA staff. NA staff has participated in all formal meetings of the National Agencies held by the Commission, as well as informal NA co-operation meetings, when appropriate. However NA staff indicated that the late receipt of contracts from Brussels was a constant source of disappointment, as the Commission seems to be late in allocating finances to individual EU programmes. Operational agreements are also generally received late from Brussels. This constant uncertainty and delays in funding are undermining participation in the programme, as those participants who experience the process are not keen on repeating it, and still others prospective participants are discouraged when they hear of these organisational delays within the programme.

Icelandic participants were generally pleased with their relations with the National Agency. As mentioned earlier NA staff build on experienced processes and know-how from previous years and programmes. Participants mentioned that communications with NA staff was generally precise, direct and helpful. Similarly those who sought assistance from the NA indicated that NA staff had been pro-active in ensuring that the correct forms were received, completed in the correct manner at the correct time. Beneficiaries however mentioned that the amount of paperwork required by the Commission caused disillusion at some stages of the process, especially among beneficiaries of relatively small Socrates project grants.

#### 4.1.2 Leonardo

The Icelandic Leonardo National Agency (NA) is the implementing actor of Leonardo II in Iceland. The NA is situated within the Research Liaison Office of the University of Iceland which is the largest university level institution in Iceland. The office has from the outset of the Leonardo programme been the national implementing actor, but from 1999 in co-operation with a sub-contractor, EDUCATE, which promotes the programme and guides applicants through the application and reporting processes. Therefore, experience and knowledge has been built up within the NA over the previous nine years.



Governing the National Agency is a management board of the NA which has representatives from the ministry of education, science and culture, university institutions, secondary level institutions, labour- and employer organisations. The main responsibilities of the board are to formulate general NA strategies and national priorities, as discussed previously, distribute annual EU grant allocation between Leonardo measures and give final approval of applications, upon recommendation from the NA.

In previous three contract years, the Icelandic Leonardo National Agency has had an annual operating budget of approx. €25-575.000.<sup>8</sup> As demonstrated below, contribution from the EU accounts for approximately 50% of this budget annually. The remaining contributions have been distributed fairly equally in each of these three years between the University of Iceland and the ministry of education, science and culture.

**Funding of Icelandic Leonardo National Agency, contract years 2000-2006**

	EU funding	Proportional contribution:			Total
		EU	Ministry	UI	
2000	€229.000	50%	22%	28%	100%
2001	€249.872	50%	18%	32%	100%
2002	€236.745	50%	20%	30%	100%
2003	€232.628	50%	22%	28%	100%
2004	€232.711	50%	26%	24%	100%
2005	€241.667	50%	31%	19%	100%
2006	€241.667	50%	30%	20%	100%
<b>total</b>	<b>€1.664.290</b>				

Salaries are the largest single cost item for the NA, accounting for around 50% of the annual budget. Operational costs account for around 40%, while other cost factors such as IT-hardware and other smaller items represent the remaining proportion. As can be seen above the Commission funding has remained almost constant during the period, which according to NA has become increasingly insufficient.

Regarding information dissemination on Leonardo II, NA staff, in co-operation with other organisations responsible for the implementation of European actions (such as Socrates, Youth and others), have travelled with a “European Bus” around the whole country, holding presentations in all largest towns. Regularly there is a large European event in Reykjavik, again with the participation of other EU programmes, where Leonardo is presented. Both these events are advertised in national media (TV/radio/newspapers) as well as with posters. The NA prints large promotional posters regarding each Icelandic Procedure B project, where objectives, participants and results are introduced. In addition, project promoters introduce their results on selected occasions. All application deadlines are advertised in national media, and in addition the NA operates a homepage where all latest Leonardo developments and events are posted and EU guidelines regarding evaluation and application procedures have been translated into Icelandic (<http://www.rthj.hi.is/Apps/WebObjects/HL.woa/wa/dp?id=1000563>). As previously mentioned, EDUCATE takes part in promoting the Leonardo II programme.

<sup>8</sup> Source: Icelandic Leonardo National Agency 2003. Figures for 2002-2003 are estimated by the Icelandic Leonardo National Agency.

The processing of Leonardo applications is performed in accordance with EU guidelines.<sup>9</sup> Special attention is paid to the eligibility of all applications and specialists both from inside and outside the NA are called upon to evaluate applications as required. The application evaluation process is all performed on-line, i.e. in direct contact with the Commission. The Leonardo management board has the final say in approving Leonardo applications, as mentioned above. The main grounds for refusal are NA budget restraints. NA representatives assert that applications are rarely refused due to inadequacies of some sort, rather the NA must prioritize applications due to its limited annual budget. Therefore, Icelandic applications are generally good, and the best are selected.

Project implementation management and monitoring is performed by the NA in accordance with EU guidelines.<sup>10</sup> The NA assists promoters in completing contractual documents and organising the first project meetings. Two formal visits of the projects are performed during their life-cycle and promoters submit interim and final reports to the NA. In procedure A projects, only one report is submitted by promoters, while the NA started formal visits of mobility projects in accordance with recent EU criteria in 2002.

According to NA representatives, the operational interfaces between the Commission and the NA are very good. All NA meetings in Brussels are attended by two representatives, in addition to technical meetings. A so-called “desk officer” for the NA is located in Brussels, which has proven a successful arrangement. Overall the Icelandic NA seems pleased with its relations and communications with the Commission.

Participants in mobility measures all displayed positive sentiments toward the NA when asked of their co-operation. NA staff was both considered helpful in the application process and encouraging towards prospective applicants to take part in the programme. Beneficiaries however mentioned that the amount of paperwork required by the Commission caused disillusion at some stages of the process, especially among beneficiaries of relatively small Leonardo grants. The same can be said of project promoters regarding their experience of the Icelandic NA. They were generally content with the assistance and information they got from the NA.

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<sup>9</sup> See LEONARDO DA VINCI: Community Vocational Training Action Programme, Second phase: 2000-2006. General Guide for project promoters, version 2003-2004. European Commission.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*

## 4.2 Analysis of financial management

### 4.2.1 Socrates

Project	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	Total EUR
Operating Agreement	71.326	79.474	83.485	161.716	0	169.717	0	494.392
Launching conf. on SOCRATES								0
NETY								0
ERASMUS Action 2 SM	301.742	271.568	244.441	231.292	236.795	271.592	304.317	1.861.747
ERASMUS Action 2 TS	42.686	43.700	43.696	69.189	70.140	72.800	76.290	418.501
ERASMUS-language prep.		13.134	11.962	13.222	13.695	16.288	16.992	85.293
ERASMUS-OM to HEIs				24.471	22.997	37.370	38.235	123.073
Comenius 1	172.899							172.899
Comenius 3.2	7.320							7.320
Comenius 1 prev. 1 & lingua E		359.512	347.311	368.632	377.952	399.144	445.663	2.298.214
Comenius 2 áður 3.2 og Lingua C&B		84.509	76.680	78.587	80.293	84.083	93.851	498.003
Lingua-Launch								0
Lingua Action B	42.466							42.466
Lingua Action C	21.232							21.232
Lingua Action E - JEP	72.799							72.799
Grundtvig 2&3		15.741	42.314	51.164	82.720	50.593	57.954	300.486
Preparatory Visits	7.800	5.226	5.228	5.223	5.418	5.418	5.560	39.873
Arion	3.250	3.570	3.570	4.167	4.167	4.284	4.442	27.450
<b>Total (EUR)</b>	<b>743.520</b>	<b>876.434</b>	<b>858.687</b>	<b>1.007.663</b>	<b>894.177</b>	<b>1.111.289</b>	<b>1.043.304</b>	<b>6.463.748</b>

The bulk of EU funding to Iceland goes to Erasmus, Comenius and to a lesser extent NA operating funds. Increased funding has especially been noticed within Comenius, where funds have been increased by an impressive one-third during the period. On the other hand, funding to Erasmus in Iceland has decreased, at least in real value, during the period. Other noteworthy developments mainly include the growth in Grundtvig funds to Iceland.

Travel cost is the dominant explanatory variable when analysing high average student grants in Iceland. Not only are there long distances to travel, but they are only comfortably surpassed via air travel as opposed to rail and/or coach travel open to most other European Erasmus students. This unique geographical situation of Iceland has been the main argument for Icelandic officials when seeking special consideration during Socrates grant allocation. The Commission has been receptive to these arguments as the average grant level clearly shows. However, according to NA staff, similar consideration is not sufficiently paid in sending countries to Erasmus students travelling to Iceland. These students usually complain of high costs from their Erasmus visit to Iceland.

NA staff considered Commission grants in general to be sufficient. On the other hand, demand exceeds supply so additional funding would be welcome. It is important to mention in this respect that implementing authorities should be informed well in advance of grant

amounts to expect per annum in each Socrates action. The Icelandic NA has had to return funds to Brussels as its staff was too hesitant in allocating funds, as grant amounts were not known although application deadlines had already passed.

According to Comenius beneficiaries, Socrates funding has generally been insufficient. Grants have not covered its estimated share of total costs and participants have in many instances had to be instrumental in collecting additional funding. Local municipalities have in some instances been willing to provide additional funding to Comenius projects, although personal contributions are often called for.

Erasmus students are mostly content with their grant levels. NA staff emphasize to all applicants that the Erasmus grant is not supposed to cover all costs generated by the exchange, but rather to be the necessary catalyst. This objective seems to be achieved in Iceland as students travel in large numbers to other European countries, as demonstrated in chapter 2. Additional sources of funding for Icelandic students are mainly the Icelandic Student Loan Fund which considers Erasmus exchanges as eligible activity for its loan scheme. Personal funds are usually called upon as well among Icelandic Erasmus students.

Higher education teachers participating in Erasmus TS have indicated that funding has been becoming satisfactory through changes made with Socrates II. Through decentralisation and added allocation of funds to TS in Iceland, grant levels have become sufficient for an increasing number of teachers to start considering participating in the action. Often host institutions are willing to provide housing for visiting teachers, which cut costs significantly. As teachers participating in TS are often very active in promoting student exchanges within their institutions, they voiced their concerns over the development of lowering student grants. Continuation of this trend in Iceland will make it increasingly difficult for interested faculty members to promote the action among their students.

The NA is a part of the central book keeping system of the University of Iceland. All transactions from the NAs bank accounts are filed in the book keeping system of the UI. To facilitate management of funds the NA has had in the past and will proceed with separate € bank accounts for each Socrates action. As with other public agencies, the UI is subject to regular scrutiny by the Icelandic National Audit Office.



#### 4.2.2 Leonardo

	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	Total
<b>Mobility</b>	€ 217.863	€ 318.801	€ 355.488	€ 380.632	€ 424.000	€ 429.000	<b>€ 2.125.784</b>
<b>Projects</b>	€ 615.156	€ 632.733	€ 952.195	€ 1.795.519	€ 1.055.674	€ 959.491	<b>€ 6.010.768</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>€ 833.019</b>	<b>€ 951.534</b>	<b>€ 1.307.683</b>	<b>€ 2.176.151</b>	<b>€ 1.479.674</b>	<b>€ 1.388.491</b>	<b>€ 8.136.552</b>

There has been a steady increase in Leonardo mobility funding during 2000-2006 in Iceland. Funding to projects has of course been reliant on the number of projects launched per annum, which peaked in 2004/05.

National authorities are generally content with the level of grants allocated to Iceland within Leonardo II. Similarly Icelandic beneficiaries generally seemed content both with their grant amounts and with the assistance provided by the National Agency.

## 5 General conclusions and recommendations

- The implementation of Socrates and Leonardo II activities in Iceland has been very successful and adhered to the priorities and objectives laid out by the Commission. This has been confirmed by participants, national implementing actors (NAs) as well as national authorities. Regular reporting to EU institutions and professional commitment of implementing actors has contributed to the adherence to programme priorities.
- The impact of Socrates II has been most noticeable in the Icelandic higher education system. The impact of student and teacher mobility and the Bologna process have been important in the internationalisation of the Icelandic HEIs during the last decade, although the Icelandic higher education structure was already in line with the Bologna proposals. Although not as influential, Socrates has added a new dimension to aspects of other/lower school levels in Iceland.
- Leonardo II has reached all target groups in Iceland quite successfully. There is a general belief among both political authorities and implementing actors that the target groups of the programme, especially the employment sector, were reached more successfully in Leonardo II than previously. Both the implementation and participation in mobility and projects has been of high standard. Although the impact of Leonardo II in Iceland cannot be evidenced as strongly as for instance that of Socrates on HEIs, Leonardo II has provided individuals and groups within the vocational sector with important tools for innovation and progress in individual areas. The impact of Leonardo II in Iceland can therefore be characterised as stronger on the micro rather than macro level.
- Participants generally expressed a very positive view towards both the Leonardo and Socrates II programmes and their experience. The good service of NA staff was regularly mentioned, although the constant issue of too much paperwork was also frequent. According to participants the most important aspects for successful mobility are strong structures for receiving students/teachers and that mobility is an integral part of a study programme but not simply a seminar or course which has no impact on total progression.
- The participation of Iceland in Erasmus student mobility can be characterized from the outset as a period of strong growth. A good balance has been obtained and maintained between incoming and outgoing students. Statistics however indicate that the earlier period of growth might be coming to an end. Decentralisation seems to have revitalised Erasmus teacher exchange (TS) activity in Iceland. Comenius activity has been strong during Socrates II especially within individual mobility and preparatory visits. Comenius school projects are similarly penetrating the Icelandic secondary and primary school levels effectively.
- Target groups are being penetrated very effectively at higher education, secondary and primary levels. Attention should be brought to the strong participation of rural areas in Comenius, as most primary level schools and most if not all secondary level schools

have taken part in the action in Iceland. However, the increased participation of pre-primary level schools should be a focus of implementing authorities in the near future.

- Equal gender opportunities have been maintained successfully by Icelandic implementing authorities. The gender distribution between the sexes in Erasmus student mobility corresponds well to the situation within the higher education system with females enjoying a majority in most subject fields. The strong showing of females in Erasmus TS is pleasing. Gender distribution in Comenius activities generally correspond to the gender distribution at primary level, with females proportionally active in individual mobility while males are proportionally active in preparatory visits.
- Processing of applications and project implementation management and monitoring is performed by the NAs in accordance with EU guidelines. Overseeing the National Agencies is an independent National Committee (the NA Board) appointed by The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture which acts as a Board of the NA and develops and updates national strategies for and gives final approval where applicable. Promotion and dissemination activity for both Socrates and Leonardo II has been active. Various activities are performed on a regular basis, all over the country, often in participation with representations from other EU education and training programmes.
- The Icelandic NAs have enjoyed good co-operation, both formally and informally. Institutes of the University of Iceland host both agencies and therefore there is a direct administrative link. Less formally, regular meetings are held involving all the staff of both agencies and mutual events have been held. Interrelations between Socrates, Leonardo and Youth have been identified above, which could provide impetus for even stronger co-operation between these programmes. Closer co-operation at national level is advised.
- Suggested innovations might include grants for the development of Leonardo project results. Currently, there is a need for more flexible time constraints to finalize and disseminate project results, as at present there is a 2-3 year time frame for projects which usually only suffices to complete the final product. A more dedicated grant system for this valorisation process might be beneficial. It should be of utmost importance to the Commission ensure the relevance and applicability of Leonardo project results
- Political decision makers are satisfied with the level of grants allocated to Iceland within Socrates and Leonardo II. Similarly Icelandic beneficiaries generally seemed content both with their grant amounts and with the assistance provided by the National Agencies. The finances of the NAs are subject to inspection by the Icelandic State Audits Authorities annually.
- The relationship between Icelandic stake holders and the Commission have been good during the period. However national actors mentioned the importance of the concept of proportionality, most notably in relation to finances and audits. The existing sense of partnership between national actors and the Commission should be strengthened further following Socrates and Leonardo II, where the added emphasis of proportionality could

prove a catalyst for increased efficiency in programme management both at national level as well as in Brussels.