EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

(To be filled in and uploaded as deliverable in the Portal Grant Management System, at the due date foreseen in the system.

⚠ *Please provide one sheet per event (one event = one workpackage = one lump sum).)*

PROJECT	
Project name and acronym:	Empowering youth Participation for Inclusive and plural Communities — EPIC_IDEA
Participant:	Istituto Cooperazione Economica Internazionale (ICEI)
PIC number:	932287177

EVENT DESCRIPTION			
Event number:	D3.1 (WP3)		
Event name:	National event for youth workers – Italy		
Type:	Event		
In situ/online:	In situ		
Location:	City of Reggio Emilia, Italy		
Date(s):	1st – 3rd April 2025		
Website(s) (if any):	https://icei.it/en/progetti/epic_idea-empowering-youth-participation-for-inclusive-and-plural-communities/		
Participants			
Female:	17		
Male:	11		
Non-binary:	0		
From country 1 [Italy]	28		
Total number of participants:	28	From total number of countries:	1
Description *Provide a short description of the event and its activities.*			

INTRODUCTION

The National Event for Youth Workers in Italy took place in Reggio Emilia from the 1st of April of 2025 to the 3rd of April 2025, in which a total of **28 participants between youth workers, technical staff, operators and educators** from 7 Italian Cities (Milan, Reggio Emilia, Turin, Montesilvano, Pontedera, Portomaggiore, Casalecchio di Reno).

The general objectives of this activity were to gather youth workers (operators, technical staff and educators) from third sector organisations and youth centers to:

- Provide competences on the anti-rumours and future thinking methodologies.
- Facilitate the exchange of experience among peers.

The **specific objectives** were:

- Group building activity.
- Emergence of participants' experiences, skills and needs in the area of non-formal education as a tool to promote youth participation.
- Innovative pedagogical instruments (as digital resources and tools) for working with young people, including tools to promote effective communication actions with and for young people.
- Training on the Anti-Rumours strategy and the Future thinking methodology.
- Planning of project activities at local level (as Anti-Rumours Actions) and set up of the “Community of practices (WP 7).

More specifically, the idea was to make come to light some challenges that the Youth Workers face in their daily work about **Youth Participation**. Once the most important challenges are identified, the Youth Workers were asked through the Anti-Rumours Strategy, the Future Thinking Methodology and Advocacy to select how to tackle these challenges.

Agenda of the Event

EVENTO NAZIONALE PER YOUTH WORKERS

1 – 3 APRILE 2025, REGGIO EMILIA

	Martedì 1 Aprile	Mercoledì 2 Aprile	Giovedì 3 Aprile
09.00	Ritrovo presso la reception dell'Hotel San Marco *In alternativa i partecipanti possono raggiungere gli Orti Spallanzani autonomamente*		
09.30 11.00	**Benvenuto e introduzione** *A cura di ICEI* *La mattina del 1° aprile inizierà alle h.10	**Future Thinking #1** *A cura di InTra*	**I prossimi passi di EPIC_IDEA #1** *A cura di ICEI*
11.00 11.30	**Coffee Break**		
11.30 13.00	**Creazione del vocabolario condiviso** *A cura di ICEI*	**Future Thinking #2** *A cura di InTra*	**Valutazione e saluti** *A cura di ICEI*
13.00 14.30	**Pranzo**		
14.30 16.00	**Anti-rumours e partecipazione giovanile #1** *A cura di ICEI*	**Advocacy #1** *A cura di Gianluca Grassi*	**Partenza**
16.00 16.30	**Coffee Break**		
16.30 18.00	**Anti-rumours e partecipazione giovanile #2** *A cura di ICEI*	**Advocacy #2** *A cura di Gianluca Grassi*	
19.30 21.00	**Cena**		

#Day 1: 1st of April 2025

#Day1- Activity 1.1 - Introduction to the project and team building

The first day of activity began with a general **introduction to the EPIC_IDEA project**, during which the objectives and planned activities for the upcoming months were presented, followed by an overview of the training methodology, providing participants with a framework for the learning journey.

To foster mutual acquaintance and build a collaborative atmosphere, several team-building activities were proposed. One of the first was a **BINGO game**, where participants had to complete a card with the names of others, engaging in a playful way. Following this, participants in couple were invited in describing their role and work context, thus facilitating a deeper understanding among the group. These activities helped create an open environment, stimulating collaboration and interaction among participants.

#Day1- Activity 1.2 - A common/shared vocabulary

The first activity, following ice-breaking and team-building exercises, gave participants the opportunity to discuss and align on terms such as “youth work,” “non-formal education,” “participation,” “stereotype,” and “rumour.” Together, they developed shared definitions and reflections, which were then compared with the working definitions used at the international level (especially by the Council of Europe).

At the end of this session, the **Anti-rumours Strategy** was introduced to participants, covering its origins, practical use, and main phases.

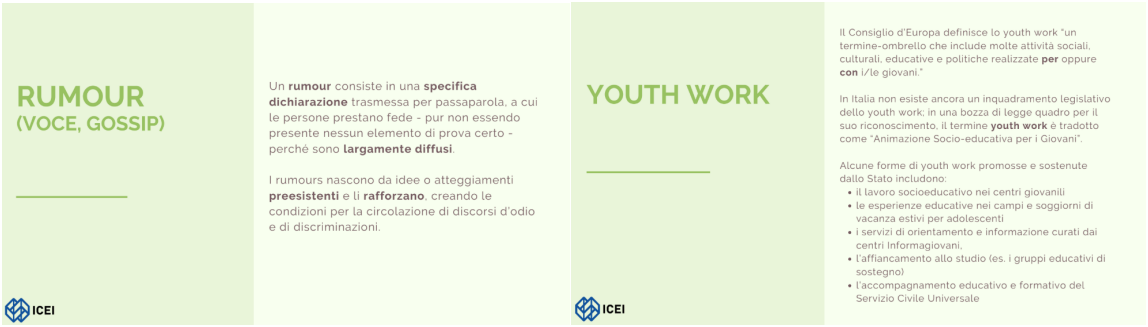

Figure 1. Slides from the introductory session on Anti-Rumours Strategy

#Day1- Activity 1.3 Exchange between Youth Centers: Challenges to Youth Participation

Through a spatial sociometry activity, participants were invited to take a physical position in the room in response to certain statements read by the facilitator. The space was organized along a spectrum with “strongly agree” at one end and “strongly disagree” at the other. This allowed participants to express their views and reflect on common rumours and **stereotypes about youth participation**—such as **their excessive use of social media, lack of political engagement, and intergenerational dynamics**. The statements were intentionally provocative to encourage open, lively debate.

Examples of statements: *“For today's young people, activism means posting on Instagram”/ “There are plenty of opportunities for young people to get involved — it's just that they're not interested in institutional politics”/ ”For today’s boys and girls, religious and ethnic diversity is something taken for granted — it doesn’t cause any issues”.*

At the end of the positioning activity, participants were divided into groups; each group identified the main challenges related to youth participation and the rumors or stereotypes associated with them, trying to answer the following questions:

What are the challenges to youth participation in Italy today?

Try to frame the challenges by starting with "How can we... / How do you..."

For each challenge, identify or associate a rumor or stereotype about young people.

These challenges were then shared in a plenary session and grouped into four overarching themes, which formed the basis for the work on Day 2.

The **four main themes** emerged were:

1. How to shift the attitudes of both young people and adults toward youth participation.
2. How to support and include young people with fewer (especially socio-economic and cultural) opportunities in participation projects.
3. How to overcome project-based thinking and timing.
4. How to stay aligned with the needs and priorities of young people.

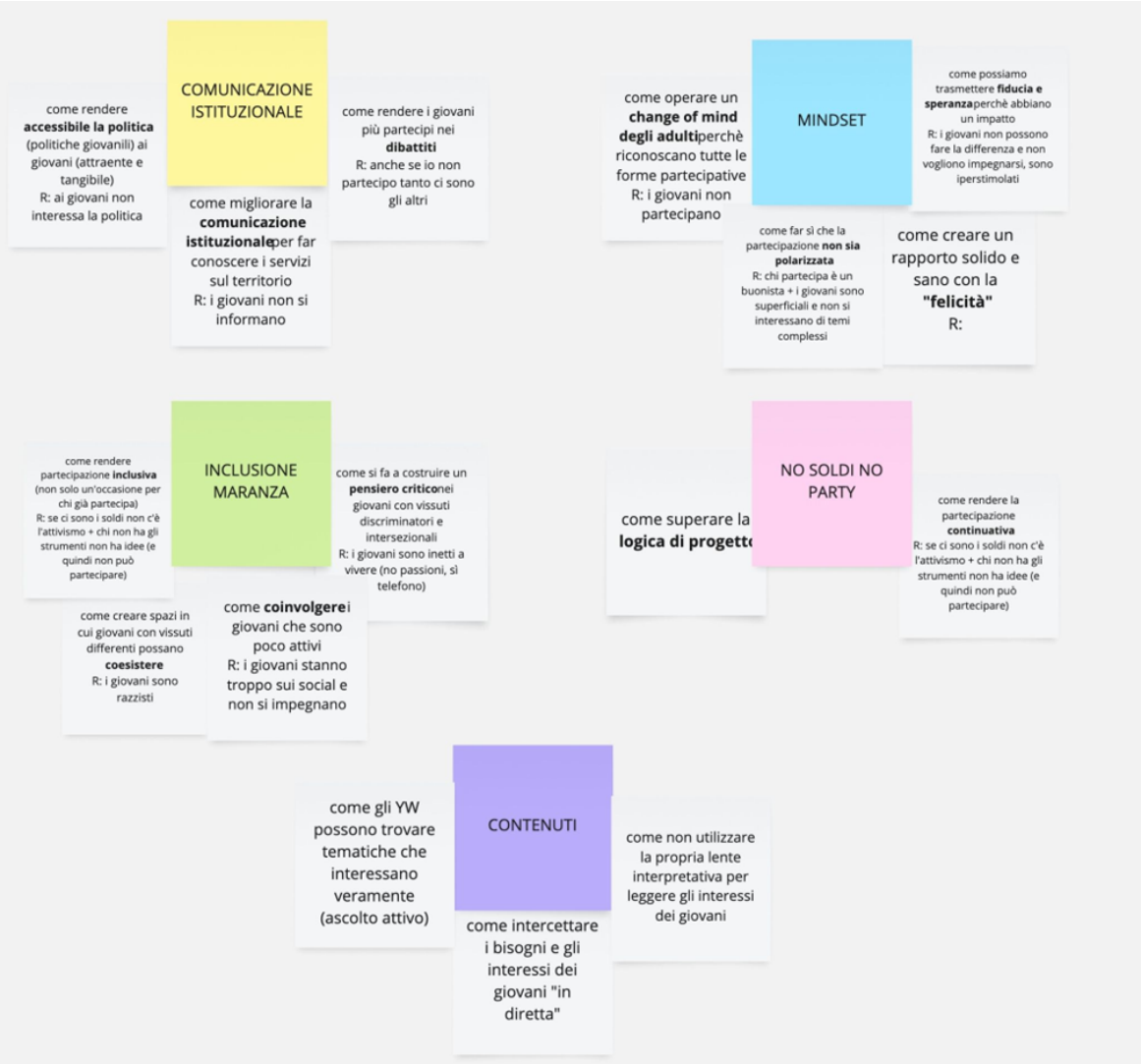

Figure 2. Set of challenges emerged from group discussions to overcome issues related to youth inclusion in city participation

The first day ended with a social dinner.

#Day 2: 2nd of April 2025

The second day was divided into two thematic sessions: In the morning, the focus was on **Future Thinking methodology**, where participants explored methodologies for strategic foresight and planning. In the afternoon, the session shifted to **Advocacy session**, with an emphasis on how engaging local authorities and fostering collaboration for youth-focused projects.

#Day2- Activity 2.1 – Introduction to Future Thinking

Social Researchers and expert from INTRA Association, that is helping ICEI in the elaboration of the Report of Analysis on WP2, held a training activity specific on Future Thinking Strategy.

The activity consisted of two main parts:

The **first part** included a frontal presentation in which the key concepts of Future Studies and Design Futures were introduced to participants. Through a theoretical overview accompanied by concrete examples, tools and methodologies used to facilitate collective imaginaries and decision-making processes were illustrated. Participation was active and curious, with numerous questions from the group generating a rich and constructive exchange.

Figure 3. InTra introductory slides to Future Thinking approach

The **second** part took the form of an interactive workshop, consisting of two main phases. The activity was instructed by the results of the previous day's training, in which a set of challenges emerged to overcome issues related to youth inclusion in participation issues *(Figure 1).* Participants selected a “favorite” challenge through an online questionnaire and were divided into four working groups based on their preferences (two of five people and two of four).
From these challenges, the workshop was designed as an exercise in imagination and strategic planning geared toward their resolution.

- In its **first step**, the groups came up with a possible future set in 2035, in which the assigned challenge had been successfully overcome. To do so, the first step was to break down the present, and thus the challenge, into its basic components (who, where, when, why), and then project these components 10 years ahead, imagining how they had changed, been removed or integrated. The scenario thus outlined was then summarized through a newspaper article that was imagined to be published in that 2035. Each group then had to imagine a title, subtitle, and possibly an image for their article, which proved to be a useful narrative tool for concretizing the dynamics and positive impacts of the imagined change.
- The **second phase** of the workshop then introduced the technique of backcasting, which allowed the groups to work backwards from the desired future to the present, identifying three key actions needed to make it happen.

The **final phase** of the activity then involved plenary sharing of the results. Each group presented its paper, and the strategies identified, resulting in a collective discussion of different visions, values and approaches.

The work was intense and engaging, stimulating dialogue and discussion.

Working under tight time constraints facilitated effective processing.

EXAMPLE OF NEWSPAPERS

Title: Finally, Co-design for the Future of Social Affairs.

Subtitle: The Birth of the Social Dialogue Department, the Link Between the Municipality and Social Entities: Together, we work better!

Challenge 2025
Who: Young people, local institutions, CSOs.
Where: Social spaces in the city and province, parks.
When: Always.
Why: Sense of belonging, finding spaces for discussion to bring together resources, skills, and passion.

Scenario 2035:
Who: Young people, local institutions, CSOs, general population.
Where: Shared spaces between local entities.
When: Always.
Why: to activate collaborative methods between different organizations.

Key actions needed to make happened:

- Involvement of professionals/experts.
- Continued relationship between institutions and organizations through co-design and the sharing of expertise.

Title: Amir Youseff New Mayor of Reggio Emilia.

Subtitle: Exemplary citizen of Reggio Emilia who has distinguished himself over the years in environmental and social issues (no specifics on origins, personal story, background, etc.).

Challenge 2025 :
Who: Educators, adults, young people with diverse backgrounds and vulnerabilities, community.
Where: school and extracurricular activities.

Scenario 2035:
Who: Community, institutions.
Where: national level.
When: in daily life.

Key actions needed to make happened:

- Fluid community: voting without prejudice, based solely on the proposals presented.
- Hate speech becomes punishable, and institutions and the media commit to ensuring fair and accurate information.
- Educators and third-sector organizations work to create spaces for discussion and opportunities where backgrounds are not a barrier to participation.

#Day2- Activity 2.2 - Advocacy Session

After lunch break, the group was invited to take part to the **Advocacy session**, held by Gianluca Grassi former expert on International Relations and Intercultural Dialogue of Municipality of Reggio Emilia, with the aim at strengthening the competences and knowledge on the structure and political/administrative functioning of local authorities also in view to start the work for the policy labs planned as part of the project (WP21).

Additionally, it aimed to explore possible direct and indirect actions to raise awareness and foster collaboration with the municipal administration.

In particular, the discussion centered around the different strategies to be activated in two scenarios:

1. The municipal administration is in favour of the proposal.
2. The municipal administration is not in favour of the proposal.

Starting from the four working groups activated in the morning session, participants were asked to "localize" the future thinking process by outlining a point-by-point strategy to be implemented within the first 12–18 months of the project.

Figure 4. Specific slide from Advocacy Session

After refining their proposals, the four groups presented their outcomes.

Group 1 – How to stay aligned with the needs and priorities of young people

Case study 1: The municipal administration is in favour of the proposal
An official meeting is requested with the municipality to present the festival project, emphasizing the benefits in terms of communication, tourism, commerce, and youth visibility. The group requests logistical and structural support, not direct funding, as the project is already financed—this includes use of public space and infrastructure.

Case study 2: The municipal administration is not in favour of the proposal
In this scenario, the group would exert direct pressure by threatening to relocate the project to another municipality willing to host it, highlighting the loss of both direct and indirect benefits. If dialogue cannot be re-established, a press conference will be called to publicly denounce the rejection.

Group 2 – How to foster and manage the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities (especially economic-cultural)

Case study 1: The municipal administration is in favour of the proposal
The group will work to showcase the impact of the project on both the citizenry and local leadership by presenting data and outcomes of inclusion-focused activities. They will also request additional financial resources to strengthen and expand the initiative, aiming for slow and steady growth, regularly assessing the need to broaden both the scope and reach of activities.

Case study 2: The municipal administration is not in favour of the proposal
The group will focus on collecting and organizing data on past results and similar experiences to demonstrate the project's potential as an investment in the city's future. To raise public awareness, communication activities will be implemented to disseminate best practices, featuring young participants as spokespersons and organizing initiatives to highlight how such projects align with local equity and inclusion policies.

Group 3 – How to overcome project-based logic and timelines

Case study 1: The municipal administration is in favour of the proposal. The group will propose a formal agreement, memorandum of understanding, or collaboration pact in which all stakeholders involved in youth participation commit to co-planning and cooperating. Each party would identify their specific competencies to be shared within a systemic framework. The intervention will be co-designed with the municipality from goals and objectives to methods, following a model of "shared governance."

Case study 2: The municipal administration is not in favour of the proposal
A co-planning and co-intervention process will be initiated without municipal involvement, using the network's available resources to launch a pilot project in the local area. As the project gains traction,

results will be shared with the administration. If successful, this may reopen dialogue and lead to a proposal for municipal funding to scale the initiative from pilot phase to a territorial service.

Group 4 – How to change the attitude of both youth and adults towards youth participation; how to stay aligned with the priorities of young people

Case study 1: The municipal administration is in favour of the proposal
The group will request a community space from the municipality to host activities, along with "in-kind" contributions (e.g. use of public spaces, equipment like platforms, chairs, tables, print services). Indirect contributions from the territory will be leveraged. Data on direct and indirect benefits and a preliminary budget will be submitted to further support the proposal. Institutional visibility among a youth demographic—often disengaged from politics—will be highlighted as an added value for the municipality.

Case study 2: The municipal administration is not in favour of the proposal
If the response is negative, the group will push the administration to justify the rejection and seek alternative municipalities willing to support the initiative. Local media will be engaged to raise public awareness and exert pressure on the municipality by involving public opinion.

The session concluded with an analysis of the strengths and vulnerabilities within each scenario. Participants also proposed strengthening the awareness and involvement of local authorities across different territorial projects, while also representing the wider extra-local network.

The second day ended with a social dinner.

#Day 3: 3rd of April 2025

#Day3- Activity 3.1 – Project next steps

The third and final day of work began with a participatory reflection on the next steps of the project, with a particular focus on expectations for the coming months and the upcoming **Youth Camp** (WP8).

Participants worked in small groups, freely choosing which day of the Youth Camp to imagine and develop. Each group outlined a possible program for their chosen day and reported their ideas on flipcharts. These proposals were then presented and shared in a plenary session, allowing for collective discussion and feedback.

The Youth Camp in Italy has been planned in the first half of September 2025.

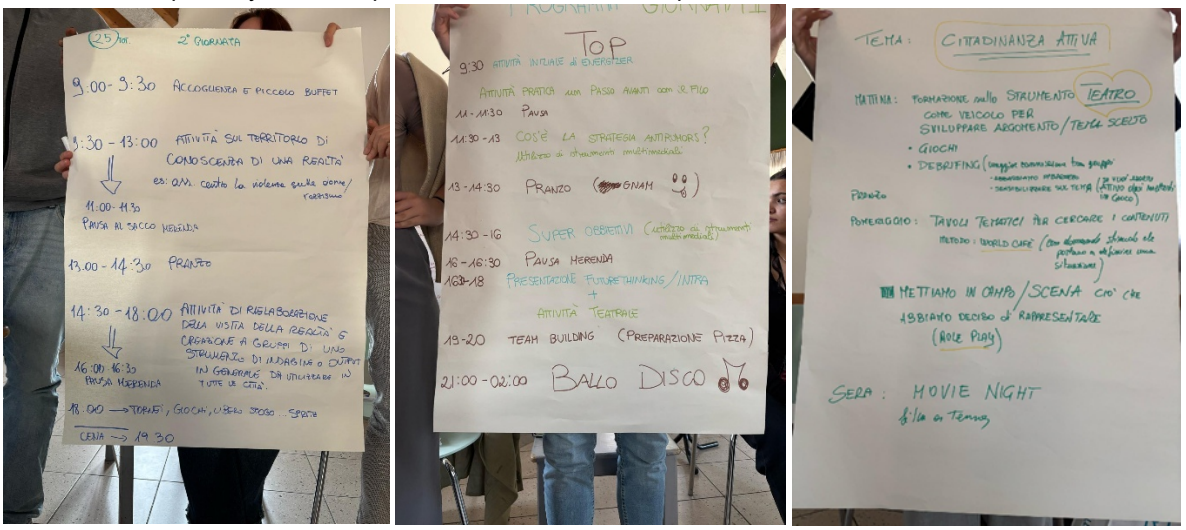

Figure 4. Some of the flipchart with the daily program for the Youth Camp

#Day3- Activity 3.2 – Final Evaluation of the Event

The second part of the morning was dedicated to a **collective final evaluation** of the days spent together. Participants took part in a three-phase reflection session, specifically designed to stimulate a deeper evaluation of the learning experience, the methodologies explored, and the overall working atmosphere.

Participants reflected on the usefulness and feasibility of the methodologies discussed during the course, using a two-axis matrix marked on the floor with masking tape. The horizontal axis represented usefulness (from "less useful" to "more useful"), while the vertical axis indicated feasibility (from "less feasible" to "more feasible"). Each participant positioned in the space according to their assessment of specific methodologies, such as Anti-rumours techniques, Future Thinking (particularly backcasting and forecasting), and Advocacy. One by one, some participants shared the reasoning behind their positions, offering valuable insights into how these approaches are perceived in their local contexts and in their work with young people.

Among the reflections collected:

- **Anti-Rumours Strategy**: most all participants positioned themselves in the quadrant indicating high usefulness and high applicability.

- **Future Thinking**: responses were more varied, with participants spread across all four quadrants. While the methodology was widely recognized as valuable and thought-provoking, some participants expressed concerns about its applicability with young people, considering it particularly suitable for youth workers but more difficult to adapt directly to youth audiences. Nonetheless, it was also noted that some Future Thinking activities could be specifically tailored to different target groups.

- **Advocacy**: a clear distinction emerged between participants from large cities and those from smaller municipalities. Youth workers from big cities found the methodology useful but less applicable, citing a perceived distance from local institutions. In contrast, those from smaller towns evaluated it as both useful and applicable, thanks to a closer and more accessible relationship with institutional representatives.

The second step of the final evaluation was carried out focusing on how participants felt and the usefulness of the overall experience. Each participant was invited to answer one of the following numbered questions by rolling the dice:

1. What did you like about these 3 days?
2. What did you not like about these 3 days?
3. What activity did you like the most?
4. Which one did you find the most difficult and why?
5. I would like to thank _____ for...?
6. What are you taking home from these three days?

From the activity, it emerged that participants appreciated the opportunity to meet new people, the welcoming atmosphere, the training program, and the location. They valued learning from others with more experience and enjoyed the food and the chance to reconnect with familiar faces. The **non-judgmental exchange climate, energizers, and the work in group and the possibility to share experiences were particularly appreciated.** Participants expressed gratitude for the kindness, empathy, and integration they felt, as well as the multidisciplinary nature of the group. What they took home from the experience included a **sense of lightness, recharged energy, and renewed motivation.**

Following this, as the third and final evaluation activity, a creative collage exercise was introduced. Participants used newspaper clippings and other available materials to create a collective collage reflecting the meaning of the project and the vision of society it promotes. This activity allowed participants to visually and symbolically express what they had learned and how the course had impacted them. It provided a space for both personal and collective reflection, fostering creativity, critical thinking, and deeper engagement with the project's values and goals.

Figure 5. The collective collage resulted by the final evaluation activity

Finally, all participants were invited to complete the official evaluation questionnaire requested by the European Union (CERV Programme), related to assess the event.

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	01.04.2022	Initial version (new MFF).