

PROJECT IN RESPONSE TO THE JOINT ACTION CALL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Theme 1: Construction of bridges between qualifications: a system of transfer and accumulation of training credits for lifelong learning.

TRANSFINE

TRANSfer between Formal, Informal and Non-formal Education

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

1. ANALYSIS OF THE CONTEXT

The ECTS system

For several years, many higher education institutions (HEIs), with the support of the European Commission, have been using the ECTS system to facilitate the mobility of students and formally recognise periods of study in other HEIs, whatever their educational system. These arrangements have had particular significance in relation to ERASMUS exchange visits. The system began at the end of the 1980s with almost 150 HEIs in 5 disciplines. In the annexe to the decision of 15 June 1987, this action was described as follows: the promotion of a European system of unit accumulation (academic credit) transferable throughout the Community, on a voluntary and experimental basis with the aim of allowing students who have taken or completed a programme of study at higher education level to obtain credits for these programmes undertaken in a university in another member state. Recent reports (Adam and Gemlich 2000 and Adam 2001) referred to more than 1000 and the ERASMUS programme speaks of more than 1200 HE institutions, involving between 5000 and 6000 faculties or departments, located in the EU, the EEA and the CEE countries. Thus ECTS has progressively widened its scope and range and become an accepted frame of reference.

The system is based on credits that the student can accumulate. One university year is represented by 60 credits. The number of credits for a module of education and training may vary. It is not proportional to the length of the module or the number of teaching hours but to the workload that the module represents for the student: attendance in classes, practical work, seminars, private study, work in the library, assessment and exam time

In recent years the promoters of the system have launched a debate about the contribution that ECTS might make to lifelong learning and how it could be used to take account of learning other than formal academic knowledge. Once a programme of study is constructed using credits that can be accumulated, why should it be restricted to young people in HE in the early stages of their careers? Why not envisage a system in which everybody can continue to accumulate credits when they wish to do so? Why should the arrangements for ECTS not be used as the underlying framework for lifelong learning?

At the beginning of 1999, the European Commission set up a Working Group to consider the development of ECTS into a global system for the accumulation and transfer of credit within a lifelong learning perspective. This is also addressed in the two reports¹ by Adam. Adam and Gemlich suggest that the evolution of the ECTS system should lead to a set of arrangements for lifelong learning based on a system of credits, as simple and transparent as possible, taking into account, among other things, diplomas, professional knowledge and skills and the accreditation of prior experiential learning. This would necessitate a redefinition of the notion of credit, taking into account competences, and a rethinking of the assessment procedures, introducing more qualitative approaches. In November 2000, this debate was the focus of an international seminar in Leiria (Portugal) entitled 'Credit Accumulation and Transfer Systems', bringing together around 100 leaders of institutions and universities. A feasibility study is currently in progress co-ordinated by the Fachhochschule of Osnabrück.

The ECTS system was also part of the process of reflection launched by the European Ministers responsible for Higher Education at their meeting in Bologna in June 1999 and continued in Prague on 19 May 2001, addressing the creation of a European Higher Education Area by the year 2010 (the 'Bologna Process'). The Bologna declaration recommended the adoption of a framework of common reference points based on a system of credits such as ECTS, and confirmed that the credits could be acquired outside the formal education system and be recognised by the universities. The Prague meeting advocated a generalisation of the system based on the idea of a learning pathway and the diversification of modes of participation.

A lifelong learning perspective

The idea of lifelong learning is a central concern of European institutions. The recently published Memorandum and the discussion that will take place over the coming weeks with member states and educationalists will crystallise around this focus.

In our view, 5 factors have contributed to the increased significance of this preoccupation:

- The evolution of a working career which is less and less like a straight upward line, in the same company, in the same economic sector, organised around progression through a hierarchy of responsibility and increasing salary, but more like a pathway often disrupted by voluntary and/or involuntary breaks, sometimes but not always classified as unemployment.
- Mobility is necessary - one of the new rules of the game: internal and external mobility, geographical mobility and change of profession.
- The development of complex technologies and the implementation in the organisation of work, which is more and more responsive and autonomous, mean that the tasks and activities involve (often unconsciously) higher and

¹ Adam, S and Gemlich, V. (2000) Report for the European Commission: ECTS extension feasibility project.

Adam, S (2001) Report for the Confederation of European Rectors' conference, Transnational Education Project: report and recommendations

higher levels of knowledge, require more and more intellectual ability and constitute real opportunities for learning

- The volume of information and the stock of knowledge available is growing exponentially and continuing education and training can no longer, at least as it is commonly understood at present, adequately respond to this phenomenon (and it remains to be seen whether it is capable of the necessary continuous adaptation).
- The paradox of extremes with, on the one hand the raising of the average level of education and training for a majority of the population and on the other a significant proportion who remain untouched by this trend.

The diversity and complementarity of the location of learning

The commentary of political and economic decision makers usually emphasises what happens in the workplace. However, the idea that what happens outside work in the personal and social world is also a source of learning, has begun to take hold. The idea has its origins in the procedures that seek to accredit experience, wherever it is acquired.

The Memorandum on Lifelong Learning defines three modes of learning:

- Formal education that takes place in education and training institutions, leading to recognised diplomas and qualifications
- Non-formal education that includes all learning activities that do not lead to formalised certificates and that are provided in a wide variety of organisations: companies, non-profit making associations, private training companies, trade unions, political parties and so on
- Informal education that takes place in everyday life and is not necessarily intentional.

The Memorandum continues: 'Until now, formal education has dominated people's thinking, shaping the ways in which education and training are provided and colouring people's understandings of what counts as learning'. But if we accept that the spaces in which individuals develop are more and more 'intelligent', if we accept that the activities they undertake, whatever they are, require more and more reflexive responses (even if they are unconscious), we have to accept that these spaces and these activities have an educational dimension. Of course, not all the spaces and activities offer the same opportunities for 'education' but they all play some role in the construction of 'knowledge in action'.

Thus it has become essential to recognise the diversity of learning spaces and their contribution to individual lifelong learning and development.

The second important point in the Memorandum is the complementarity between the 3 modes of learning. It stresses that this is particularly important in a lifelong learning perspective and that it is essentially a structural and cultural issue since these factors underpin the educational system and the hierarchy of knowledge that they imply. If we approach the issue from the point of view of the individual, all individuals, whatever their early educational qualifications or personal and career situations, carry out their own synthesis of the different categories of knowledge and, using their diverse and multi-dimensional learning, construct a representation of the world, seek

to influence their everyday lives and their working lives, and to respond to (mostly unanticipated) events. In the report recently published, based on a study of a sample of 200 European projects financed by the European Commission under the Socrates programme (1995-9), the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) identified a number of strategic messages including:

- ‘All providers and players should develop their capacity to relate to, promote and support informal and non-formal learning which should be fostered in a number of settings’
- ‘Genuine and effective collaboration between providers of formal and non-formal learning, public authorities, social partners and NGOs needs to be built if lifelong learning strategies are to work’.

The process of recognition of experiential and work-based learning

We are all conscious of learning through our work and voluntary activities, in the family and of progressively mastering problems or situations that confront us. Further, we have sometimes the feeling that these learning experiences accumulate and lead to growth in our ability and our potential. However, undoubtedly due to the changing context, it is only recently that we have begun to ask questions about the recognition of these skills and understandings born in experience, in a similar way to the academic knowledge offered by schools and training organisations. Several European countries have put in place, or are beginning to construct, procedures allowing them to recognise and accredit skills and competences acquired by individuals outside the formal education system. These procedures in effect allow a value to be accorded to personal and professional experience, within a frame of reference (usually the system of formal qualifications).

This concern is therefore giving way to a more widespread and shared interest. We are passing from a phase where procedures emerged from the initiatives of key activists or responses to specific needs, to a phase characterised by arrangements on a national scale, supported by governments and the development of more sophisticated and relevant tools. This trend is clear too in the Memorandum and has been evident in recent years in a number of programmes – Leonardo, Socrates and Youth, although until now not high profile and largely uncoordinated.

Today the promoters of the ECTS system link it explicitly to the demand for accreditation of prior experiential learning. In a question and answer paper on the extension of ECTS, it is specifically noted that ‘the measurement of experience acquired outside the higher education institutions (in the workplace) can be expressed in units of courses and compared to programmes of formal education and training.

2. THE PROBLEMATIC

On the basis of our preliminary analysis of the various reports in this field, which we have conducted while preparing this project, two transversal and complementary themes have emerged:

- Confirmation of the necessity, in a lifelong learning perspective, of constructing bridges between the formal systems of education and the non-formal and informal approaches to learning, in order to create systems for continuous recognition (accumulation), for ensuring transfer from one

European country to another, and to promote geographical and professional mobility. Such bridges are seen as potentially having a significant impact on motivation and as stimulating a growth in participation.

- The arrangements envisaged are based on the successful experience of the ECTS methodology, coupled with a widening of the modes of recognition/accreditation so that they might be more accessible for groups underrepresented and less disposed to participate in traditional education and training programmes. The rationale for this choice is based on the advantages of the ECTS system (Adam, Gemlich 2000): flexibility, mobility, capacity to take account of different modes of acquiring learning (particularly through various forms of continuing training), improvement of mutual understanding and collaboration among the various partners in education and enterprises.

These two ideas underpin the first theme of the Joint Action call, which invites proposals for a feasibility study to establish whether it is possible to construct a trans-institutional European framework for the accumulation and transfer of ‘credits’, encompassing different forms of knowledge, skill and aptitude, at all levels, wherever and however these were acquired, drawing on the experience of projects in the 3 programmes – Socrates, Leonardo and Youth, each with a different focus. Socrates has promoted the testing and development of a system, now widely established, for the transfer of credits between HE institutions. In Leonardo, again with a view to transferring the value of learning, a range of methodologies and tools have been created and tested to recognise competence and aptitudes acquired in continuing education and training but also in the workplace as part of professional and work activity. The Youth programme has emphasised informal learning and the social competences needed to be an active citizen and to fully participate in the world of work.

3. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

On the basis of the above analysis, the experience of the different EU programmes and of the different partners in this project, our reading of the Joint Action call and the challenges presented in it, our proposal has 6 objectives:

1. **To continue and strengthen the reflection on the developments identified above and on their impact in the short and medium term on educational practice, and to promote common understandings among the partners in the project.** To develop the analysis of the key issues underlying the project and the articulation between them: the concept of ‘*credit*’ and the way it is operationalised in formal, non-formal and informal learning; the idea of ‘*integration*’ (ie taking account of different modes and locations where learning is acquired); *the methodological principles* that should underpin the tools to be constructed for identifying, making explicit and evaluating learning; the notion of ‘*transfer*’ between institutions, levels, countries; the idea of ‘*accumulation*’ and of an ‘*individualised professional pathway*’ within the context of lifelong learning.
2. **To assemble, describe and analyse the most important and relevant experiences in the Socrates, Leonardo and Youth programmes,** in the analysis and comparative work already undertaken, and in the initiatives underway at European and national level to construct transversal approaches.

Assemble and analyse national initiatives that might provide useful insights and ideas for further work. Identify any and all experience that might inform the work of the project.

3. **To investigate the expectations and needs in relation to an integrated and generalised approach to recognition, accumulation and transfer:** the needs of political decision makers, institutional managers, social partners (professional associations, trade unions and enterprises), the active players in the 3 relevant EU programmes, individuals. Investigate the compatibility of national systems. Take account of existing regulations and legislation.
4. **Evaluate the feasibility of an experimental set of procedures.** In particular, to investigate the problems and obstacles that might be encountered in implementing such a system. Locate the sources of potential resistance since, given the number and the diversity of the actors and stakeholders, these may be significant. Identify the conditions for acceptance of the approach among the various interested parties. Investigate the possible ways of gaining social recognition for the approach and the difficulties that might arise.
5. **Create, develop and propose the principles, methods and necessary conditions for the implementation** of an experimental, integrated set of arrangements for the transfer and accumulation of credits based on different forms of knowledge and skills, at all levels, whatever their source and whatever way they have been acquired.
6. **Construct a specification for pilot projects** that could form the basis of an integrated programme of work. Propose a number of actions that could be put in place in a very short space of time.

4. IMPLEMENTING THE PROJECT

The partnership that we have brought together is central to the way in which we have constructed the project. It is comprised of networks, each covering most countries of Europe and together covering the three forms of learning (formal, informal and non-formal) and the three EU programmes (Socrates, Leonardo and Youth). Thus it is a partnership that in our view will provide an effective group both as sources of expertise and experience and as a field for experimentation, and therefore guaranteeing the achievement of the objectives of the project. (Details of the role and contribution of each partner are set out in Section 5 – Organisation of the partnership)

The project will be undertaken in 3 phases – each phase will address 2 of the objectives set out above.

Phase 1: The first phase will aim to achieve objectives 1 and 2. It will consist of five steps

- Exchange between the partners to develop common understandings of the underlying themes and the key concepts that we have identified. A glossary will be produced defining the concepts and the way they articulate one with another
- Collection of documents, reports, dossiers, studies and examples from each of the partners and their members
- Locate and collect any other existing materials on the theme: reports and studies commissioned by the EC, conferences proceedings,

- Discussion with individuals and institutions that have already undertaken initiatives locally or nationally which have addressed the issues in this project (integration, transversality,)
- Preliminary analysis to identify the potential contribution of existing and previous work to the elaboration of an integrated approach:
 - Analysis of the documentation collected
 - Description and analysis of arrangements had a national or European scope
 - Description and analysis of significant experiences/practices
 - Analysis of tools developed and their results

This phase will pay special attention to the analysis of the principles, the methods and the tools that have been used:

- In the implementation of ECTS
- In the recognition or accreditation of prior individual, social, experiential and/or work-based learning.

In terms of the ECTS system, its advantage lies in the fact that it is now well established and well accepted in HE institutions and by their governing authorities (the declaration of the Ministers at Prague). We will therefore pay particular attention in our analysis to the way in which ECTS has been organised and implemented to achieve this acceptance by the university community. A number of features offer the possibility of adaptation to the more integrated and generalisable framework that we will be seeking to design: the notion of '*credit*' as a basic unit of reference, the abandonment of 'length of course' as a unit of measurement in favour of 'workload', the recent move away from a system simply for transfer from one HE institution to another towards one that can be used for accumulation within an individualised learning pathway.

In terms of accreditation of prior experiential learning, we have a number of experiences developed in the Leonardo programme. In so far as the Leonardo programme has financed projects related to the accreditation of prior experiential learning, the number of such projects has increased. There have also been a number of projects seeking to implement the recommendations of the White Paper, or seeking to develop tools for the recognition of skills and competences either in a specific vocational area or more generally, at a European level. Thus we have arrangements that have begun to be applicable in various European countries – the first step to generalisability. France is in the process of a significant development with new legislation putting in place ambitious and radical regulations. In addition, a considerable amount of work has been carried out in the UK and in Ireland and in the Nordic countries and most recently in the Netherlands and Belgium. On the occasion of the meeting in Paris of Ministers of Education in OECD countries, the issue of accreditation of prior experiential learning was the subject of a half-day of activity during which most countries represented were able to report advances in this field.

Finally the experience and the work carried out by the partners in this project, the initiatives in the accreditation of prior experiential learning developed in various projects, confirms our conviction that over and above traditional knowledge, the learning that is becoming essential in the construction of an individual qualification is

that which is not ‘teachable’ but which is derived from experience and makes possible subsequent learning experiences, social and professional insertion and career progression. The problem is that such learning is seldom taken into account as such. It often appears as a sort of ‘added extra’ that makes the difference rather than a fundamental constituent of social or professional identity. It should also be acknowledged that various projects in the Youth programme have emphasised this aspect of individual development and its contribution to employability and citizenship. In addition, these experiences have the advantage of reaching a population that is not usually the easiest target group for traditional programmes and are often refused admission.

At the end of phase 1 we will organise a 2-day invitation seminar in Lille for the inner and outer circle of the partnership, representatives of the European Commission, and the relevant national Ministries and Agencies. The purpose of this seminar will be the discussion of the first interim report and to take advice on the second phase of the work.

Phase 2: the second phase will seek to achieve objectives 3 and 4. It will consist of three steps.

- Meetings, in each of the 5 countries identified, with the key players - political decision makers, institutional managers and experts, social partners, managers of training organisations or associations involved in the relevant programmes and key individuals – to identify their needs and expectations in relation to a wider system for recognition of competences and aptitudes that goes beyond the existing arrangements and pilot projects and that might operate at European level.
- Discussions with these actors and stakeholders to identify the resistance, the obstacles and the legal, political, social, economic, technological ... problems at regional or national level in order to define the feasibility of the project and the minimum conditions for putting it in place.
- Analysis of legislation and regulation surrounding the systems of certification and qualifications, the accreditation of prior experiential learning in various countries, and the form of recognition and validation in enterprises.

Although the outcomes of the project should not be completely governed by this consultation, this phase is particularly sensitive for the project. It must pay particular attention to the issues raised that might constitute a consensus for the establishment of a period of experimentation. It will be important to identify the conditions for feasibility put forward and the ‘spaces’ left open, alongside the barriers that represent limits that may not be crossed. It will also be important to take account of the time factor and construct an approach that takes on board the evolution that has already occurred (and referred to above), the attitudes of the decision makers and the efforts that will be made by the promoters to move them forward, and/or the negotiations that may need to take place at the highest level among political and economic leaders.

Particular attention will be given to the needs of individuals, especially the socially excluded and those in disadvantaged groups; a significant effort will be needed here on the part of the partners working in the Youth programme. A set of arrangements located in a lifelong learning perspective is above all one that is based on individuals as users and beneficiaries. It is therefore necessary to consult the potential

participants and encourage them to express their needs. However, we know that it is generally difficult to reach these groups in a study of this sort and so our proposal is to focus on groups that we have had contact with, participants in various experimental projects, and those who have already benefited from the accreditation of prior learning.

Methodologically, various tools will be used in this phase:

- Documentary analysis of legislation and regulations
- In-depth interviews with a sample of decision makers, institutional managers and experts
- Panels/focus groups of managers in training organisations and associations
- Meetings with groups of trainees or participants in training organisations/associations identified in the first phase of the project, meetings with individuals who have benefited from accreditation of prior experiential learning.

At the end of the second phase we will organise a second seminar in Lille to discuss the reports of the teams of researchers in the 5 countries. Representatives of the groups consulted and key players from other countries will be invited. The purpose of the seminar will be to obtain feedback on the analysis presented, to complete it, and to identify the constraints that need to be taken on board in the design of a new framework

Phase 3: the third phase will address objectives 5 and 6 of the project. It will consist of 6 steps.

- Synthesis of the data and the analyses collected in phase 1 and 2
- Construction of an integrated approach to the recognition of learning, processes and procedures:
 - It must be simple to use for the actors, understandable to the users and transparent for the enterprises
 - It must be underpinned by guarantees of quality in order to build reciprocal confidence between the various players, users and beneficiaries so that it can be subsequently further extended
 - It must be accessible, open to individual expectations as well as though of enterprises, associations, local communities and other groups
 - It must build the necessary bridges without calling into question existing successful practices
 - It must be applicable to all forms of learning
- Work on the definition of what one might call a ‘common currency’ that would be the equivalent in this integrated system of the ‘transferable credit’ in the ECTS system
- Work on the supporting tools that could be used in the first phases of experimentation.
- A specification for the implementation of the first phase of experimentation.
- A conference in Brno (CZ) to launch the dissemination of the results of the project.

This will be the most important phase of the project and will draw on the high level competences in design of educational systems and structures (ingénierie) of the partners. During this phase we would hope to work very closely with those responsible in the European commission, in order to define the basic principles and conditions of feasibility.

5. ORGANISATION OF THE PARTNERSHIP

The partnership is represented schematically on pages 19 and 20.

The inner circle

The inner circle of the partnership consists of the contractor (USTL) and European networks, which themselves consist of national networks and institutions with a national dimension.

EUCEN - European Universities Continuing Education Network

EUCEN is a European network with 170 universities in membership representing 35 countries in western, central and eastern Europe. Their prime interests are in continuing education and training and the accreditation of prior experiential and work-based learning ; additionally most of the universities are also active in ECTS. EUCEN has been involved in a number of European projects and one of its key objectives is to influence the development of the practice of lifelong learning and the recognition of experience, in co-operation with EUA (the European University Association). In addition EUCEN has in membership 9 national networks for university continuing education: Austria, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Portugal, Switzerland and the UK (2) that can act as relay centres in relation to the institutions that cannot be directly involved in the project.

EUCEN will be the lead network for the project and Pat Davies, Executive Secretary of EUCEN will be responsible for the co-ordination and animation of the project. EUCEN has asked the Université des Sciences et Technologies de Lille (USTL) to undertake the administrative and financial management of the project. USTL will be represented by its Vice President responsible for continuing education, Michel Feutrie, who is also the Vice President of EUCEN.

USTL has a great deal of experience in the development of ECTS, in continuing education (it has the largest volume of continuing education among French universities), in organising pathways through the institution that facilitate access for adults at any point in their career, and in APEL it plays a leading role nationally and internationally. This experience coupled with a long history of successful management of European projects is the reason that EUCEN has chosen USTL to undertake the management of this project.

EAEA (European Association for the Education of Adults) is the largest Association of adult education organisations in Europe, combining the most active forces of adult learning provision. It is thus an ideal partner in a project that focuses on the recognition of experiential and work-based learning, and which wants to construct bridges between the formal systems of education and the non-formal and

informal approaches to learning. Through its membership, frequently composed of national associations or national co-ordinating organisations, the EAEA reaches into nearly every European country. Through its president, board members, functionaries and affiliate members, it has been an active party in most of the European adult education conferences since the inception of the Socrates Programme. It is, consequently, not only acquainted with lifelong learning policies, but has contributed to their construction and continuous adaptation to the needs of the learners. It serves as a forum for co-operation partnerships and has itself participated as a partner in various Socrates co-operation projects. It has carried out an analysis of projects for adult learning supported by the European Commission under the first phase of the Socrates programme (1995 – 1999) against the background of developing a new policy framework for lifelong learning in Europe, in which far more than 200 projects were analysed. The findings of this analysis will form the basis for conclusions and recommendations on the strategic development of the Grundtvig action during Socrates II (2000 – 2006) and on other aspects of relevance for the policy development in the area of Lifelong Learning. The Study under the title: “An Analysis of the Adult Education Precepts, Socrates Programme 1995 – 1999, messages for the future” is available on the EAEA website: www.eaea.org and in a separate publication.

The EAEA is one of seven NGO's in the NGO-Consultation on EC-Memorandum on Lifelong Learning, invited by the European Commission. Within this context, the EAEA will respond for the Workshop on Valuing Learning in the NGO Conference on the EC-Memorandum in September 2001.

The EAEA is a service association beyond the present scope of its membership. Its internet pages (www.eaea.org) contain continuously updated information on European developments, policy papers, conference findings and key contributions in the field of lifelong learning. As well, they serve as an interactive forum for exchange and the building of partnerships. Additionally, they are linked with most of the relevant European and global players in the field of adult learning including the European Commission.

AEFP (Association Européenne pour la formation professionnelle) is a network of 15 large European vocational training organisations: AFPA in France, AIKE Group in Finland, AMS in Denmark, COLO in the Netherlands, ENAIP in Italy, FAS in Ireland, FOREM for the French Community of Belgium, IB in Germany, IEFP in Portugal, INEM in Spain, LERNIA in Sweden, MENFP in Luxembourg, OAED in Greece, VDAB for the Flemish Community in Belgium and HRDA in Cyprus. These organisations are closely linked to the Employment Service in their respective countries.

The aim of the network is to exchange information and experience in the field of guidance and vocational training, to work to improve the quality and the effectiveness of vocational training, to share methods and tools through working thematic working groups, to organise exchanges between trainers and trainees to promote better mutual understanding, and to respond to EU calls for projects.

In recent years, AEFP has been involved in several European projects, of which one is a very good match to the objectives of this project proposal. The project is called:

‘The development of a common model for the recognition and/or the certification of competences’. The project aims to develop a common methodology to promote the recognition of skills acquired through experience and the transparency of vocational qualifications to facilitate lifelong learning.

FIEEA (Federation Internationale pour les Echanges Educatifs d’Enfants et d’Adolescents) is a network created in 1983 which brings together 25 European organisations in 19 countries, 15 in the EU and 3 in central Europe: Ampli Junior and Accueil Jeunes in Belgium, KNL et SNL in Finland, Francas in France, Deutsche Schreberjugend, Solidaritätsjugend et Kindervereinigung Leipzig in Germany, Typet in Greece, Arci Ragazzi in Italy, Esplac Catalan and Tiempos libres in Spain, Congleton Youth Community Centre in the UK, Kantorparkens Fritidscenter et SBBU in Denmark, the ‘Fédération bulgare des loisirs des jeunes, ELO in Estonia, Fondation culturelle éducative « Amitié » in Roumania.

The aims are: to facilitate international exchanges between young people through the member organisations and to develop co-operation in pedagogy to enhance the exchanges.

Through its experience with children, young people and both voluntary and professional workers in the socio-cultural sector, FIEEA has a good understanding of the different education and extra-education systems as well as the training systems for practitioners in this field, in different countries.

The member organisations of FIEEA participate in:

- Non-formal education of children and young people in their leisure time;
- Non-formal education of young adults responsible for children and young people during their free time

These activities contribute to the development of:

- Learning necessary for European citizenship and the building a social and economic European area: adaptability, responsiveness, multi-linguism, mobility, flexibility ...
- Transversal competences that should be recognised in individual careers and in the wider education and training of citizens.

SEFI (Société Européenne pour la Formation des Ingénieurs), founded in 1973, is a not-for-profit international association registered in Belgium. The SEFI network consists of 474 members in 45 countries, including 230 universities and engineering schools and representing around 4500 individuals. The activities of SEFI – an annual conference, permanent and ad hoc working groups, European projects, seminars, publications and periodicals etc – correspond to its objectives. These are : to develop and strengthen the situation of engineers in Europe, to provide services and improve the circulation of information on the training of engineers in Europe, to improve the communication and exchanges between teachers, students, and researchers, to develop co-operation between different types of training organisations, to strengthen co-operation between industry and all those involved in training activities for engineers, and to promote the European dimension in engineering training.

SEFI is keen to participate in this new European project, particularly in the collection of information (documents, reports, etc) and existing working materials relevant to the

project objectives ; and in the dissemination of the work and results of the project. SEFI is a partner in the inner circle and will nominate a representative to the Steering Group and 2 representatives to the Project Group, which will be responsible for the implementation of the project and the organisation of the proposed activities. It will bring the experience of numerous European projects linked to theme among which is the lifelong learning project EuroRecord, led by the working group ‘SEFI-Formation continue’ chaired by Mr. Montesinos, UP Valencia (E). EuroRecord (European Record of Achievement for Professionals in the Engineering Industry) is a developmental process supported by software that helps engineers to identify their needs for continuing professional development taking into account the learning they have acquired, whatever its form. The project brings together a large number of partners, mostly from Eastern Europe (EE,PL,SK,RO).

Each of these partners in the inner circle will nominate a representative to the ‘**Steering Group**’, including USTL as the contractor responsible for the administration and finance of the project. This group will have responsibility for the overall direction of the project, contacts with the promoters and the national authorities, and the involvement of the most important institutions and organisations to implement the project. It will meet 3 times during the project; between times it will receive regular reports from the Co-ordinator and give advice by e-mail and via the internal website.

Each of the partners in the inner circle will also nominate 2 representatives of organisations with experience and expertise in the field (in particular AFPA for AEF, Francas for FIEEA) who together will comprise the ‘**Project Group**’. This group will be responsible for the achievement of the project objectives and the proposed activities, under the leadership of Pat Davies, the project co-ordinator.

For phase 2 of the project, this ‘**Project Group**’ will be responsible for putting together a ‘**team of researchers**’ in each country selected; each team of researchers will be responsible to a EUCEN member university in that country.

The outer circle

To address the range of issues in the project (the problematic), it will be necessary to mobilise institutions, actors and experts beyond the inner circle of partners; we also wish to involve such players because they are able to make a vital contribution to the success of the project and ultimately the whole approach that comes from it.

The list cannot be complete at this stage but we have identified a certain number who have agreed in principle to collaborate in the project :

EUA

NUFFIC – Netherlands Organisation for International Co-operation in Higher Education, in the Hague

CINOP – Centrum voor innovatie van opleidingen, at Hertogenbosch in the Netherlands

LET – Learning from Experience Trust, in London

ECTS experts – Stephen Adam, Richard Whewell

ENQA – European Network of Quality Agencies

Tuning Project

Agencies for Socrates, Leonardo and Youth

The partnership will involve them at various stages of the project, formally and informally, to obtain their views, suggestions, comments, proposals. In particular they will be invited to one or both of the seminars (see workplan).

A website

A website will be constructed comprising two parts :

- An 'internal' site – databases, documentation centre, discussion form, administration and management
- An 'external' site – information about the project, progress reports, general awareness raising on the questions raised by the project, discussion forum, contributions, dissemination

6. WORK PLAN

Phase 1 – Review of the 'state of the art'

This phase will be European in scope: it will collect and analyse data across the widest possible range.

Step 1: Identification and collection of information and data.

4 main activities:

1. Collection of dossiers, reports, all available documents having a direct relevance to the project. **[All the partner networks]**
2. Collection of data on ECTS and the practices developed by the universities, particularly the most advanced **[EUCEN]**
3. Review of existing practices in accreditation of prior experiential learning in EU countries **[EUCEN]**
4. Identify the most interesting projects in the 3 programmes (Socrates, Leonardo and Youth) ie those that have developed a transversal approach across more than one field and/or those that have developed tools that could be adapted. The networks, the national agencies, syntheses, analyses and reports on earlier projects, the compendium for current projects and members of the organisations in the outer circle will be surveyed. **[All the partner networks]**

Step 2: Analysis of data

Analysis of the data collected in step 1 and visits to particular projects to clarify and re-inforce analysis **[Project Group]**

A common framework of analysis will allow this work to be undertaken by the Group. The purpose will be to analyse the results of the various initiatives and projects, positive and negative results, to understand the institutional, cultural, and material conditions and the skills and competences that were necessary to put in place and drive forward a system of transfer, or even accumulation and mobilisation of diverse forms of learning.

At the end of phase 1, an interim report will be produced **[Project Group]**

The interim report will provide the material for a two day invitation seminar in Lille [USTL/EUCEN] for around 100 people including :

- The Project Group
- The outer circle organisations and experts
- Representatives of the European Commission
- Representatives of the relevant Ministries (Education, Employment, Youth)
- Representatives of the relevant Agencies

Phase 2 – Analysis of needs

At the end of phase 1, we will identify 5 countries, including at least one of the CEE countries, that will be involved in the analysis of needs in phase 2. The choice of these countries will be made on the basis of the work carried out in phase 1 and include three levels of development (strong, average and weak) in relation to ECTS and the accreditation of prior experiential learning and procedures for the recognition of different kinds of learning. [Project Group] Phase 2 will consist of 3 steps.

Step 1: Collection of data

We have identified 4 categories of actor that we would wish to make contact with in this phase, using individual and group interviews, working group meetings, focus groups and panel discussions and possibly targetted questionnaires. This field work will be undertaken by the team of researchers in each of the 5 countries, put together by the partners. [Team of researchers]

We envisage contacts with around 30 actors in each country in 4 categories:

- Political and policy decision makers: senior civil servants, offices of Ministers, managers of government agencies, key memebtrs of parlement
- Social partners: professional and trade orgnasitions, trade unions, enterprises
- The providers of education and training: universities, vocational training organisations in the public and private sector, associations for young people, educational publishers,
- Experts in key positions that could represent the needs of the target groups of individuals.

Our assumption here is that the key experts/organisations have already conducted their own analyses and have clear evidence of the needs of the target groups ; they have identified the necessary responses and possibly begun to develop them. We do not therefore intend to consult directly with the ‘public’. Apart from the fact that this would involve an enormous amount of work, we do not believe that it would produce much additional useful information. We have therefore decided to rely on the key actors in the field and on their view of the public demand and need in this area.

This direct approach will be supplemented by a review of the specialist/professional press and reference to conference proceedings and seminars on relevant themes, that take place in each country during the period of the project.

Step 2: Analysis of the data

Each team of researchers will conduct an analysis of the data they have collected [Team of researchers].

The analysis will include :

- Identification of the obstacles and the resistance to an integrated approach to the accumulation of differentiated learning
- Identification of the opportunities and constraints, the innovations that will be necessary, ...
- The conditions for feasibility of such an approach
- The stages and procedures that must be respected.

Step 3: Analysis of legislation

Each team of researchers will review the relevant legislation and regulations governing the field in each country and identify the probable points of difficulty or blocks to progress. [**Team of researchers**]

At the end of phase 2, each team of researchers will produce a monograph. These monographs will together form the materials for a second seminar in Lille, which will bring together invited groups of actors from the selected 5 and other European countries. [**EUCEN**] This seminar will have 3 purposes:

- To validate the work of the teams of researchers
- To enable other countries to locate themselves in the typologies presented
- To assess the work involved and the constraints to be taken into account in taking forward a new approach

Phase 3: Proposals for the future

Phase 3 will be undertaken by the **Project Group** and the detailed work will be undertaken by a small **sub-group of 2 or 3** people that will:

- Construct an architecture for the new integrated system
- Define the process by which it should be implemented
- Develop the tools and methods
- Design a specification for a call for pilot projects

This phase will be undertaken in close collaboration with representatives of the European Commission.

At the end of this phase the final report will be produced including tools, dossiers, specifications and recommendations.

A conference will be organised in Brno (CZ) to launch the dissemination of the results.

7. TIMETABLE AND MANAGEMENT

Phase 1 – 6 months – 30 April 2002 to 30 October 2002

A meeting of the Steering Group in March to prepare the project.

3 meetings each of 2 days of the **Project Group** (10 participants) are envisaged in phase 1 :

- April 2002 – review of project, preparation and organisation of the work of phase 1

- May 2002 – review of progress, identification of any adjustments necessary, preparation of the outline of the interim report
- August 2002 – agreement on the interim report, preparation of the seminar, preparation of phase 2 particularly the identification of the 6 countries for research

Seminar 1 – 2 days in at the end of Phase 1 in Lille, followed by a meeting of the Steering Group to prepare the second phase.

Phase 2 – 5 months – 1 November 2002 to 31 March 2003

1 meeting of the **Project Group** is envisaged in September 2002. This meeting will

- Validate the national reports from the Teams of Researchers
- Prepare the seminar in Vienna
- Prepare phase 3

Seminar 2 – 2 days in February 2003 in Lille, followed by a meeting of the Steering Group to prepare the third phase.

Phase 3 – 4 months – 1 April 2003 to 31 July 2003

1 meeting of the **Project Group** and the **sub-group** charged with writing the final specification and tools, is envisaged in January/February 2003. This meeting will be open to representatives of the European Commission. On the basis of this meeting the final report will be produced. Subsequent smaller meeting so the sub-group and the Commission may follow as necessary.

A conference in Brno (CZ) in May 2003 to launch the dissemination of the project.

8. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

1. The adoption of a common terminology across the formal, non-formal, informal sectors and the production of a glossary.
2. The specification of a new integrated approach, a methodology and a set of tools for experimentation
3. Awareness and understanding among decision makers and key players and the dissemination of a ‘culture’ of recognition of diverse forms of learning
4. Identification of the needs and expectations in relation to recognition and accreditation
5. Identification of the way forward and the obstacles that will be encountered.
6. Opportunities for excluded groups
7. Co-operation between networks operating in very different domains and experience of working together
8. Recommendations for extension of the approach
9. Opening up of new possibilities for current and future EU projects and programmes

INNOVATION AND DISSEMINATION

Innovative character

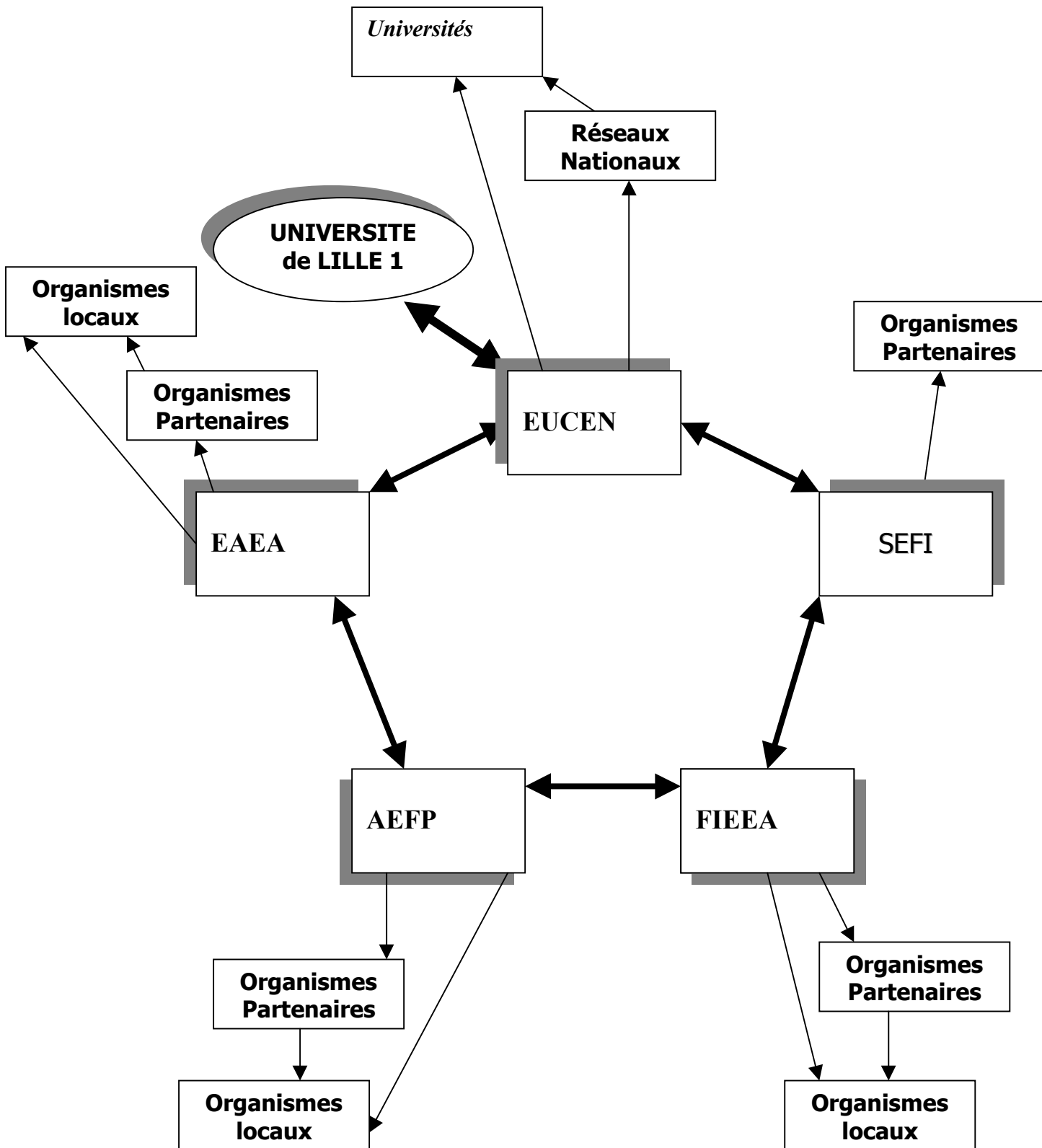
This proposal is innovative in a number of ways :

- The structure of the partnership – an inner circle of European networks covering formal, informal and non-formal learning ; and an outer circle of experts and stakeholders at national and European level. Together these provide access to most of the experience and expertise in Europe
- The scale and scope of the objectives and outcomes
- The range and quality of the expertise involved
- The range of methods and tools that will be mobilised to produce the outcomes of the project
- The interactive nature of the design which will involve all the key players and stakeholders in building a consensus for the final specification.

Dissemination

Dissemination will be embedded in the project from the beginning. All the key players at national and European level will be involved in collection of data in phase 1 and the interactive survey of needs in phase 2. Two seminars will be organised at focal points in the project (end of phase 1 and phase2) to disseminate interim findings and obtain feedback on ideas for the subsequent phases of the work. The third phase does not directly involve players beyond the partnership and the Commission, but it does constitute a preparatory phase for experimentation even generalisation. The product of this third phase will belong to the Commission and it will be for them to decide the future. However, the third phase will end with a conference in Brno (CZ) to launch the dissemination and the partnership is prepared to assist in further actions that the Commission might propose.

SCHEMA D'ORGANISATION DU PARTENARIAT EN RESEAU



SCHEMA DE RELATION

PARTENARIAT ELARGI

