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**Interim External Evaluation Report of the**

**POOLS-T**

**Producing Open Learning System Tools**

**Project**

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## Introduction

### A. Purpose of the report:

Evaluation and monitoring of the European Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme's project "POOLS-T" (Producing Open Learning System Tools)

### B. The main areas to be evaluated will be:

- The progress made towards the contractual outcomes and respect of the contractual workplan
- The manner in which the partnership performs as a transnational collaboration (cross-cultural understanding, sharing of activities, effectiveness of communication, meeting deadlines, etc.,)
- The quality of the outcomes and products
- The extent of the inclusion of the target group (teachers at secondary schools and less directly, teachers in other subject areas) in project planning and activities
- The effectiveness and impact of dissemination activities and the extent to which the project has employed models of best practice from related projects
- The quality of the ODL and ICT elements of the project activities
- The extent to which a strategy for sustaining the project activities beyond the programme funding has been applied within the project
- Advice and guidance on the financial and administrative progress of the project

The project external evaluator will participate in a minimum of two project meetings scheduled in the project.

### C. Evaluation outcomes:

- i) Initial evaluation report – 3 months after project start (already submitted March 2009).
- ii) *Interim evaluation report – due 1 month before the contractual Progress Report (this document).***
- iii) Final evaluation report – due 2 months before project's close
- iv) Quarterly reviews of project progress in line with tabular evaluation plan (see contractual evaluation strategy)

## 1. Sources of Information, Methods and Tools used for the External Evaluation

The assessment of the POOLS-T achievements in the Year 1 of the project's duration is based on the data gathering and analysis of the sources of information concerning the outcomes of the project and partners' contribution to their development, testing or dissemination, on the direct observations of project's activities, work-progress and partners' actions and on the external evaluators' participation to the project meeting and workshop in Brussels in September 2009.

The present External Evaluation Report uses the exhaustive sources of information made available by the project, such as: POOLS-T original work-plan, the Project Management and monitoring procedures, internal evaluation procedures including Quarterly evaluation reports by each partner, calendar, communication between the partners and with the external audiences, project's workshops and meetings' results and evaluation, coordinator's work-progress reports, the questionnaires and the testing results with the end-users groups, including feedback on the beta version of tools, the website of the project, etc.

A series of and tools and indicators, based on the European Framework for Quality Management (EFQM), have being used by the partnership from the beginning to assess the work progress and the quality of the outcomes.

The external evaluators' team proposed in the 1<sup>st</sup> External Evaluation Report the inclusion or the development of several other project indicators that would allow evaluating the project's intermediary and final results, from other perspectives. This was particularly important to allow the assessment of the educational and pedagogical aspects of the tools developed, and the relevance of the tools for the VET teachers and students. The recommendation was taken on board and several new indicators, qualitative and quantitative, were used or developed and highlight the achievements or the improvements to be made in year two of activity.

**The methods used** for the external evaluation were combined to allow the analysis of the results from a quantitative and qualitative point of view.

The evaluators' team **tested the intermediary results and software tools**, such as:

- the availability of interfaces, the development of users' support guides in target languages as in contract (EN, DK, NL, GR)
- the availability of on-line training materials ( Ready to use learning materials in different languages, Tools WordLink and TextBlender in beta version )
- the eventual progress regarding the Tools' usability, based on users' feedback after the tools testing in DK, NL and CH
- the quality of the Manual for TextBlender available in version 1.

In order to provide the project with additional expertise and insight for achieving with success the objectives and outcomes, **the following methods were used by the evaluators:**

- **Benchmarking with other similar ICT-based tools (on-line dictionaries or free translating websites)**
- **Analysis of the value of the outcomes in progress and of the project, for LLP and Vocational Education and Training**
- **Identifying possible challenges for year 2, strengths and weaknesses of the project**
- **Making recommendations for improvement.**

**The 2<sup>nd</sup> External Evaluation Report includes the following:**

- ✓ A detailed evaluation of the project implementation in the first year of activity.
- ✓ Analysis of the achievements and challenges of the main project phases and Work Packages:
  - A- Project Management and Quality Management: (WP 1 & WP 2)
  - B- Development of tools (WP 6, WP 7, WP 8, WP 9)
  - C- Development, Dissemination and Exploitation of Website (WP3)
  - Exploitation and impact of results (WP4)
- ✓ Analysis and evaluation of the different types of participants and of their contributions
- ✓ Observed changes or additional results and their impact on the project.

## 2. POOLS-T Evaluation

- a) **The progress made towards the contractual outcomes and respect of the contractual workplan**
- i) The project is on course to meet its objectives and **is in fact ahead of schedule** in several areas, especially in terms of the numbers of students and teachers engaged and in terms of examples of added value (additional partners, new languages, new curriculum areas, organizations offering access to support materials, etc) which will be highlighted in more detail later.
- ii) The promoter presented an update at the recent Brussels meeting (the third meeting, end of September) of activities since the previous initial evaluation report (March to September 2009):
- production of a new version of the TextBlender (July) adapted from the previous versions after detailed and sophisticated feedback from the Swiss partner.
  - the testing of this new version of the TextBlender with two classes of students
  - the production of two further project newsletters
  - updates made to the web-site
  - monitoring the work being done with the Wordlink feature to run in tandem with the TextBlender
  - the compilation of the first version of the TextBlender Manual
- iii) The project has also carefully prepared for the next phase of activities to ensure that it remains focused and on course in its second and final year. There was a clear schedule presented for the preparation of the Progress Report, with a draft version planned for 15<sup>th</sup> October. As part of this process, this evaluation report will be sent to the promoter in the first week of October to assist in the preparation of the draft.
- iv) A third version of the TextBlender is being prepared. **It is very positive that numerous refinements are being made in direct response to both learner**

**feedback** and technical issues. One of the key areas under review for the third version is to attempt to resolve the problems presented by the Greek language characters.

v) The project blog is well-populated in terms of comments, both in terms of volume of posts and contributors. The project acknowledged that there have been problems in accessing it via Internet Explorer but as with all the technical challenges they are being actively addressed by the technical partners and promoter.

- It is positive that the blog is a long-established one with a genuine and diverse community of practice. However, as with some aspects of the web-site, the evaluators feel that a challenging **balance has to be achieved between continuity and community-building and establishing a clear and discrete presence for POOLS-T from POOLS**. From “within” the project it is clear to see the delineation, but it is important that is also seen from the outside – especially in terms of the Progress and Final Report assessments.

- The project has indicated that one planned remedy for the Internet Explorer issue is one that will provide a more “separate” presence for the POOLS-T blog.

- The statistical analysis of the use of the blog records the countries from which the visits have come and the search engines used. This will also allow specific collation of data for POOLS-T and the project is advised to record this and present it at both the Progress and Final Report stages.

**b) The manner in which the partnership performs as a transnational collaboration (cross-cultural understanding, sharing of activities, effectiveness of communication, meeting deadlines, etc.,)**

- i) The partnership appears to be performing well and the process of communication generally (using email, the project blog, active participation at meetings, etc) is clearly positive and indicates a well-motivated partnership clear in its individual tasks and expectations of its role as a Lifelong Learning Programme project.
  
- ii) The EACEA-appointed assessors of the project proposal highlighted that the initial partnership was not as extensively “multi-actor” as it might have been and therefore this was one of the areas of specific interest to the external evaluators. Whilst there were originally academic partners included in the consortium, there was a fear from the evaluator’s perspective that due to the strong (and state-of-the-art) technical expertise of key actors in the consortium, there was the potential for the technical elements to dominate at the expense of, for example, the pedagogical approaches. This does not appear to have been the case so far and the partnership should be praised for this. **What is also evident is that the addition of the Swiss partner SUPSI (the University of Applied Sciences of Southern Switzerland) has been “added value” in several ways.** In addition to a new country and the multilingual extra dimension they can offer, there is a very strong pedagogical dimension added. This is clear from the very valuable learner feedback processes they have provided (including a video of student interviews that were intelligently delivered, objective and constructively critical and which will be posted on the web-site) and from the contributions made by the participants at the September meeting, which reflected both an incisive understanding of the main issues and a very impressive balance of the pedagogical with the technical. It is one of the best project performances to-date by a “non-contractual” partner in a project that the evaluation team has witnessed.
  
- iii) During the third project meeting, there was effective cross-partnership discussion of the newest version of the TextBlender, especially with regard to the user interface in the light of the target group feedback received so far. Many of the suggestions were employed immediately during the meeting and aside from some minor delays caused by the limited broadband access available, this process worked well and illustrated the transnational team working effectively as a single unit.



**c) The quality of the outcomes and products. POOLS-T planned the following outputs / products / results in the original application:**

- A CopyLeft software tool which can convert texts into html documents where all words are hyperlinked to free on-line dictionaries covering many combinations of European languages. The application will have support for audio, video and graphics to enrich / support the text content.
- On-line interface and support guides in 4 languages: Danish, Dutch, Greek, and English
- The tool will enable CLIL teachers to easily create supported on-line materials with all words have instant access to on-line dictionaries, enabling and ensuring language learning through CLIL.
- Develop a software version with functionality like “Babelfish” where the resulting web page are linked word by word to on-line dictionaries and not just translated.
- Documented and commented open source scripts that show the algorithm behind the produced software and enables portability and further development.
- Online instruction videos and training materials with subtitles in Danish, Dutch, Greek, and English. The DVD produced in the POOLS project will be updated with videos demonstrating the new tool.
- A methodology guide in Danish, Dutch, Greek, and English to show pedagogical considerations for CLIL application of the software and its outputs.
- Exemplary CLIL materials in the project languages produced with the tool.
- The enhancement of the existing website with the POOLS-T tools, resources and four new languages.

## i) Overall Progress on the Tools and Website

- The evaluators compared the planned work-plan activities for the period October 2008 to September 2009 and the activities actually carried out during this period. The comparisons, the analysis of the main developments, the internal evaluation results and the tools' testing by the evaluators, showed that **all the outcomes and activities are in-line with the original planning.**
- **The period after the 1<sup>st</sup> External Evaluation Report, from January to September 2009 was of an increased momentum in the project.** Several important developments from alpha to beta versions of the tools were achieved, while extensive testing at each stage by the main two groups of end-users, teachers and students, were performed in three countries.
- One important element of the project in this period was the enlargement of the partnership with a new academic partner from Switzerland: the University of Applied Sciences of Southern Switzerland (SUPSI). Their main contribution has been to the testing activities and to the internal evaluation of the tools. These activities brought an additional insight about the educational and pedagogic value of the POOLS-T tools for the VET areas, for students and teachers and useful feedback for further development. **The new partner contributes also to the increase of the available languages in which the POOLS-T tools and on-line materials will be available, by planning to develop CLIL resources in Italian and German.**
- Progress in the completion of products and outcomes in on course. The number of students and teachers has exceeded the initial targets before the Progress Report Stage. 50+ examples of materials have been incorporated so far and so the project is on target to meet its own target (100) set at the previous meeting in March.

- As has been mentioned under the section of working with the target groups, the quality of the outcomes so far has very much been influenced by the positive use of user feedback. Particular emphasis has been placed on the user-friendliness of the tools and they are achieving a 4.25 (out of 5) score at the moment but the project wants to increase this and is actively pursuing measures to do so. The project is recording a history line of its improvements based on feedback and it is certainly recommended by the evaluators that this is presented somehow in both the Progress and Final Reports.

**d) The extent of the inclusion of the target group (teachers at secondary schools and less directly, teachers in other subject areas) in project planning and activities**

i) To-date **200-300 students have been involved** in the tools testing (more exact figures will be available for the Progress Report).

ii) There is a clear indication at the mid-way stage of the project, **that the feedback from users has been a very important element** and whilst many projects adopt questionnaire and survey processes once or twice in a project, the POOLS-T project appears to be adopting a very clear and ongoing approach to such work AND features a very important strategy of a transparent response to such feedback. Several of these instances are identified and discussed elsewhere in this report and so they appear here in a brief form:

- In DK, the testing of the tools with the classes at EUC-Lillebaelt and the testing of the tools with 8 teachers at Vejke
- In NL, the clear and objective feedback from the users, which indicated that the early version of the TextBlender was difficult to use, the use of EN made it hard for non-EN speakers and the quality of some of the dictionaries was not great. These have been specifically addressed in version 2 and will continue to be in version 3.

- The NL testing featured two separate sets of tools and the “rateability” of the second collated feedback was higher than that of the first. An additional (and “added value”) element to this is that the tests involved an application in a particular vocational context – in this instance Marketing – which also reinforces the suitability of the project to the Leonardo action.
  
- In Switzerland, as above, it was positive that the scope of the test groups was broad across curriculum areas. The feedback scores were high on the whole but there were concerns about the suitability of the draft tools at a lower level of language learning, which could be key if it is for an immediate and short-term specific need in a vocations (and / or business) context. 15 teachers have been involved in the tests across a variety of curriculum areas (Teaching Nursery Nursing, General Healthcare). The scores for the WordLink element of the tools were a little lower than for the TextBlender itself and so this will be addressed in the new versions. **The video log of the student feedback is valuable on several levels; it shows the diversity of the students involved (curriculum), there were several critical comments made which illustrate the survey’s objective approach, the comments made were insightful and the whole record is one that shows how effective an open survey process can be.**
  
- e) **The effectiveness and impact of dissemination activities and the extent to which the project has employed models of best practice from related projects**
  - i) The overall dissemination activities appear to be going very well. This opinion is based on a review of the activities presented on the web-site and information gleaned from participation by the external evaluators at the project meeting in Brussels.
  - ii) An update on the dissemination activities undertaken was provided at the end of September project meeting in Brussels:

- a class from EUC-Lillebaelt (DK) tested the tools and provided feedback on them
- the project (POOLS and POOLS-T) received a silver award in Prague at the Innovation and Creativity in the Lifelong Learning Programme conference in the category of “innovative outstanding European projects or actions which will serve as a good motivating example to the wide public.”. This is described in more detail in Newsletter number 22.
- in August, the project tools were demonstrated to 8 teachers in Vejke (DK)
- in September, the project was presented as part of a paper at the EUROCALL conference
- in September, the project and its products were a significant part of discussions during a meeting with the Danish Ministry of Education and external exam auditors (more on this will be described later in terms of the recommendations for the project’s exploitation strategy).
- in September, the project was presented as part of the keynote speech given by the project promoter at the European Day of Languages Conference (26<sup>th</sup> September).

**iii) There was also presented at the meeting a clear plan for additional activities in the near future:**

- October 7<sup>th</sup> there will be a regional meeting with teachers in Denmark
- From October 21<sup>st</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup>, the project will feature as part of the EfVET conference (EfVET is the network partner engaged in dissemination activities).

**iv) There is extensive evidence with synergies with other project being established also.**

- the NL partner has established reciprocal links with the Comenius “Automobility” project and with the Leonardo Partnership “EUCINMOVE” initiative.
  - The UK approach has been based on the collective impact POOLS-T has had in combination with the POOLS project and an ESF initiative “Island Voices”. This approach has emphasized the need for a strong impact at what is a unique local level (geographical remoteness) and can be contrasted with the exhaustive international work being undertaken by the project promoter. **It is important to have impact at both local and international levels and the project appears on course to achieve this.**
  - Also at the UK partner, there was a recent HMI audit during which the POOL and Island Voices initiatives were highlighted as “Sector-leading” practices and that the HMI site will promote the activities and provide links to the sites – **this is very positive in terms of independent Government recognition and can be viewed alongside the meetings with the Ministry of Education in Denmark.**
- v) The partner from the NL presented during the third meeting a very impressive development concerning **contact made with a CLIL specialist in NL**. The NL partner had visited the GR partner in May 2009 to examine CLIL and its use in the current field. This process had been more complicated than had been originally envisaged due to the complexity and range of us especially in terms of where working in another language to learn about a curriculum area outside of that language was concerned. As a result of this, contact was made with a CLIL specialist in the NL for advice - Onno van Wilgenburg, the Senior Projects Officer at the European Platform. He was able to recommend key sites and practices and further to this, invited the NL partner to a meeting and important information was learned concerning the fact that whilst there is considerable focus within the primary and secondary sectors, the VET field is relatively under-exploited in terms of CLIL and this provides a valuable opportunity for the project to lead. He also confirmed the

extent to which CLIL attracts students increasingly in the multicultural environments and how parents in particular are keen to exploit this approach as they feel it gives their children a considerable advantage. The CLIL specialist has invited the project to present at its next annual meeting in February 2010. This appears a very good example of how dissemination can develop into a definite and tangible exploitation and mainstreaming strategy.

vi) It can be clearly seen that the project has several examples of how dissemination activities have developed into **exploitation activities**:

- **New languages** have been used beyond those of the partnership (the offer of materials in Luxembourgish highlighted in the first report being only one example)
- **New countries** being involved (the Swiss partner again being one example)
- Personal and professional development (the contact made with the CLIL specialist, the contribution to the project of two CLIL experts from the Catholic University of Leuven)
- **New curriculum areas** (beyond languages) for continued testing, identified as Healthcare, Nursing Procedure and Civil Engineering in Switzerland, ICT and Media / Music study in the UK, Electrical Engineering in DK and Marketing in the NL. There will be an additional area supplied by the GR partner, but unfortunately due to an accident, they were not able to participate in the third meeting where these additional areas were identified.

f) **The quality of the ODL and ICT elements of the project activities. This section overviews the main ICT and ODL developments in the project POOLS-T, from an external point of view, between the beginning of the project in October 2008 and the third project meeting in September 2009.**

i) **The project's main aims in these areas** are the development of software and open online learning system tools to provide user-friendly and access-free web-

based resources and tools that help CLIL teachers to easily create supported on-line materials and enable students working individually to convert text documents through instant dictionary access and thus achieve easier comprehension of the content.

The **Work Phases** that correspond to these aims are the following: Phase B Development of tools that consists from WP 6, WP7, WP8 and WP9, and Phase C Development, Dissemination and Exploitation of Website (WP3). The main ICT tools developed by POOLS-T in during the first part of the project's duration are:

- The **TextBlender**, planned more as a teacher tool, which makes possible to convert texts to web pages where all words are linked to online dictionaries, providing support for video and audio files
- **WordLink**, a tool planned more for students' use, for converting texts to web pages with all words linked to dictionaries, allowing for many combinations of languages; the user can convert web pages to pages that appear like the original, but with all words linked to an online dictionary.
- Best-practices example of CLIL units created with the TextBlender.

ii) **The key milestones for the development were respected:**

- 2008 November: documentation of scripts and algorithm available online to be used for the development of the tools.
- 2009 February: delivery of summary of needed improvements and recommendations for the software tools (the alpha versions) based on piloting and evaluating the tools with teachers and students.
- 2009 March: compilation of the first beta version of the desktop and web based tools, based on the test summary and recommendations for added features.



- 2009 August: delivery of summary of needed improvements and recommendations for the software tools (the first beta versions) based on piloting and evaluating the tools with teachers and students.
  - 2009 September: compilation of the second beta version of the desktop tool and the web-based tool, based on the test summary and recommendations for added features.
- iii) The progress towards the achievement of tools' development objectives continues to be intense and based on the results and recommendations of the extensive testing by the target-users groups. In addition, there is **clear evidence that the enlarged consortium brings additional results and increased capacity to deliver effectively the outcomes with an added-value for VET and LLP, and in two more languages than originally planned.**
- iv) **Evidence from the project**
- **The Website Quality Assessment:**  
**The POOLS-T part of the website [www.languages.dk](http://www.languages.dk) continues to be an outcome with a very good quality from the point of view of presentation, navigation, free easy access and transparency to the information, the number of languages in which there are available the tools and the resources.**
  - The website is constantly monitored to identify not only the numbers of unique visitors but also their needs and interests when searching the website, as well as their countries and/or languages. **The website is continuously uploaded** with all the information about the work in progress, users' evaluations and feedback, with the new versions of the tools being developed and the updated versions of the guide or manual on how to use the POOLS-T tools.
  - Only the POOLS-T's blog <http://www.weblogs.uhi.ac.uk/pools/> had encountered problems of access by the main search engines. The decision was taken to solve this problem in October 2009.

- The monitoring of usage and accessibility shows very good achievement at Interim time for this product. The indicators used by the project and the evaluators to assess these aspects are the main search engines that have the site on first result pages when searching for relevant combinations of ‘tools, methods, and languages teaching’ and the number of unique visitors. The project is therefore on the right track to achieve its ambitious goal to attain a number of visitors of +90.000 over the two year period.
- **It is recommended that a better distinction is made between the tools, outcomes and work in progress of the project POOLS-T and the previous results of the project POOLS.** The logo of POOLS-T should be used for every web-page that present information or products developed in the current project.

v) **The Assessment of the Quality of the Tools**

- The **TextBlender and WordLink** are now available in beta versions.  
**The very good collaboration between the Danish coordinator and the UK partner to the development of the two NTIC has continued in the last part of Year 1.** The technical development was enhanced by the involvement of the Dutch, Greek and Swiss partners in the organization of testing and the evaluation of tools by students and/or teachers and in the evaluation of the feedback.
- Among the strengths of the development activities concerning the tools are the increased evaluation and survey by the target-groups. In addition the project has developed and used qualitative and quantitative indicators for assessing the participation and impact on target-users:
  - **the success regarding the end-users’ participation:** Students’ participation: minimum of participants is 100 students, a **GOOD ACHIEVEMENT** is if the number of students users during the two-year

duration of the POOLS-T is 200 students, GREAT ACHIEVEMENT: the number of students using the tools is 300+;

- Teachers' use of the tools: minimum 18, GOOD participation 30 teachers, GREAT 50 teachers.

- **Based on the results available at the POOLS-T workshop in September 2009, it can be seen that only in Year 1, POOLS-T has already achieved good success regarding user participation:**
  - **Approximately 200 students used and tested in Year 1 in NL, DK and CH** the two tools in development and many of them gave detailed feedback;
  - **Approximately 15 teachers used the tools** and some of them gave specific feedback.
  
- The CH, GR and NL partners, but also the DK and UK partners, provided useful analysis of the educational value or the value for diverse VET sectors from the testing of alpha and beta versions of the tools by the end-users.
  
- The Swiss partner developed valuable indicators that take in account both the usability and the adaptability of the ICT-based platform and the potential impact of the tools for learning and teaching.
  
- The survey of the teachers using the tools in beta versions focused on aspects as value of POOLS-T tools for the Learning Strategy, Teaching strategy, Learner autonomy, Vocabulary, etc.
  
- The survey of the students asked feedback about the WordLink and TextBlender tools' usability, value for text comprehension, reading speed, how helpful as vocabulary tool, the problems encountered and possible solutions.
  
- The results of the surveys at the University of Applied Sciences of Southern Switzerland, using these criteria of evaluation for the tools, are very encouraging, especially taking in account that the tools are / were only in beta version. The

survey results were available as synthesis and also as video with some of the students. The surveys were completed by 59 students and 5 teachers. The students are from 4 different areas: Health, Architecture & design, Innovation Technologies and Economics. The languages tested were Italian and German, at level B1 and B2. The dictionaries tested were Wordreference and Interglot.

- The main results of the **TextBlender survey** are showing that the ease of use was around **3.8 on a scale 1 to 5**. The usefulness of the tool for the language learning was very high, **4.25**, while the feedback clearly pointed out the strengths of the tool for specialized studies but not so useful for language learning at lower levels.
- The main results of the **WordLink survey** are showing that the ease of use was **3.4** on the scale 1 to 5. The usefulness of the tool for the language learning was **3.7**, because of the difficult way to select the target languages and on-line dictionaries.
- **The main criticism was therefore the way the dictionaries page** was presented in WordLink. **The most important and positive results in our view are the students' interest in the tools and the demand for the future versions of the tools.**
- We noted as a very positive aspect, the fact that during the Brussels' workshop in September 2009, the developers' team already worked to implement the users' suggestions. They improved the dictionary selection and presentation of the results in target languages and tested the new versions with the partners present at the POOLS-T meeting.

#### **vi) Suggestion to increase the usability of tools**

- One of the members of the evaluator team would like to make a suggestion for improvement concerning the choice of dictionaries made available to the users,

based on her experience as a translator. It is based also on the surveys' results that the tools are better for specialized studies/research/translation than for learning languages at first levels and on the personal opinion of the evaluator that also tested the tools.

- **In the current version**, there are many dictionaries that are presented as possible options, for many pairs of source-target languages, and this long list is intended to be further enriched. This might create confusion for the user with regard to which dictionary would be better to use and eventually make her/him reluctant to use the tools.
- **The suggestion is the following**: decide on the choice of one GENERAL dictionary for a target language. Then add SPECIALIZED dictionaries for several domains such as Economics, Sciences, Health, Law, EU Affairs, etc.

#### **vii) Conclusions of the qualitative evaluation of the ICT and ODL tools**

- The main strengths of development phases and activities in Year1 are **the active involvement of end-users, teachers and students, in test and evaluations of the tools**. The surveys were performed in several countries with a very quick inclusion of the users' feedback and recommendations in the new versions of the tools.

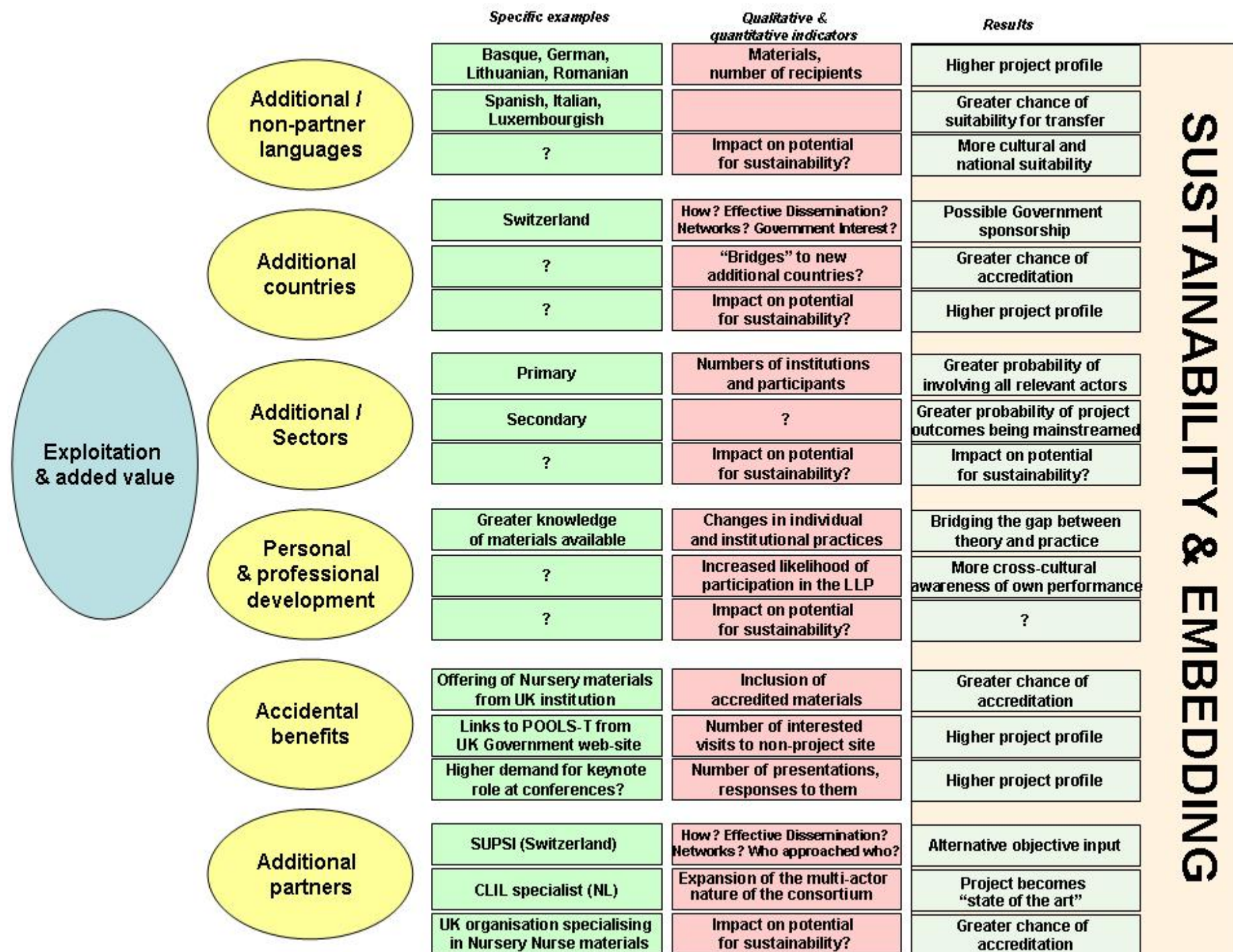
- g) The extent to which a strategy for sustaining the project activities beyond the programme funding has been applied within the project**

#### **Exploitation**

In line with the comments made above especially with regard to dissemination and working with the target groups, the evaluators recommend formulating a transparent exploitation and added value for the project to ensure that the very good work is performing in this area is completely transparent and recognisable.

Therefore, they have devised a model to show the processes from initial project activity, through areas of added value, through specific examples of them, through the qualitative and quantitative indicators used to record and measure them, to their longer term impact in terms of sustainability, mainstreaming and embedding. This is included as fig.1.

Fig.1



## **h) Advice and guidance on the financial and administrative progress of the project**

This aspect of the external evaluation process has to-date not been required by the project, although it is of course intended that the Initial Evaluation Report and this Interim Evaluation report contain advice and recommendations useful for the projects Progress and Final report activities.

### **3. Recommendations**

- i) The project should continue the process of constant review and revision of its practices and tools based on the strong networks of user feedback it features.
- ii) The project should record the linear process of its testing, feedback and response to feedback clearly for the Progress and Final Report as it could serve as a model of best practice.
- ii) The project should continue its very effective approach to establishing added value (additional partners, new languages, new curriculum areas, organizations offering access to support materials) but should balance this with ensuring a focus is maintained on the maximum achievement of the original contractual outcomes.
- iii) The project should continue to seek to improve the user and technical interfaces of the Textblender and WordLink, but as in ii) above, should do so whilst being aware of the finite nature of the project's end date. Constant improvements are possible, but a final version needs to be identified by the project's conclusion – even if as part of the sustainability and exploitation plans further reviews are planned.
- iv) Whilst exploiting continuity and the established community of practice, the project should ensure that there is a clear discernable separation between POOLS and POOLS-T as discrete projects in their own right.
- v) The project should ensure that it very clearly presents its achievements in dissemination and especially in the exploitation work achieved so far. There was some initial lack of clarity



over its exploitation plans in the assessment of the application, but this has been remedied very effectively and needs to be made transparent.

- vi) The new (non-contractual) and associated organisations involved in the project should have their contributions very clearly presented, as they provide a very broad multi-actor and geographically diverse dimension to what was initially a relatively small partnership.
- vii) The links between POOLS-T and CLIL should be recorded in detail in the second year of the project as this appears to be a very positive example of a gateway to cross-curricular expansion and an opportunity for significant professional development for the project participants and their target groups.
- viii) At the Interim time, there is evidence of the continuation very good collaboration and involvement of all the partners to tools development and testing, except the partner in charge with the dissemination.
- ix) With regard to the dictionaries used, the suggestion is the following: decide on the choice of one GENERAL dictionary for a target language. Then add SPECIALIZED dictionaries for several domains such as Economics, Sciences, Health, Law, EU Affairs, etc.

Signed

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