

EPIC 2013-1-PL1-LEO05- 37888
EPIC - Enhancing and Promoting International Business Communication

EPIC
Enhancing and Promoting International Business Communication
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Feasibility and Implementation Plan

Centro per lo Sviluppo Creativo Danilo Dolci

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1. Market Needs/rational for Scheme

1.1 Market Needs (Business climate of the country and region)

Italy's economy, the 8th largest economy in the world (IMF, 2014), is fully diversified and dominated by small and medium-sized firms (SMEs). This represents the most straightforward rationale for the Language Communication Audit (LCA) scheme.

Italy is an original member of the 15 nation Eurozone. Germany, France, and the U.S. are Italy's most important export markets. Tourism is an important source of external revenue, representing 28% of the country's exports and 8.6% of the country's GDP. Italy lags behind many industrialized nations as a recipient of direct foreign investment. According to the UN Conference on Trade and Investment, Italy has bilateral investment treaties with 96 nations. Italy has made a number of improvements in policy affecting business but it faces stiff competition as a location for corporate headquarters from neighbouring economies.

With a population of almost 60 million, Italy is one of the largest and most affluent markets in the European Union. Given its size, there are significant opportunities for economies of scale. Its business environment is also extremely sophisticated, producing goods high on the value chain.

In recent years, the strengthening of domestic legislation has led to improvements in Italian policy toward private companies, while the implementation of EU directives has helped to open up markets in retail trade, energy and transport. The World Bank reports that Italy has made some advances in streamlining its processes by enhancing its online registration system. Opening a business in Italy is estimated to take only six days.

But while it boasts one of the largest and most affluent markets in Europe, Italy faces stiff competition from many of its European neighbours for attracting corporate headquarters operations. Some of the downsides often cited include political instability, complexities of the legal and regulatory systems, a relatively high tax burden and inadequate infrastructure, as well as relatively high labour costs. In the recent World Economic Forum (WEF) Global Competitiveness Index for 2010-11, Italy ranked 48th, which is lower than any other G7 member country.

According to the WEF, Italy's institutional weaknesses include high levels of corruption, organized crime and a perceived lack of independence in the judicial system, all of which

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increase business costs and undermine investor confidence. There are also structural weaknesses in the labour market, which hinder both job creation and efficiency. Italy's low levels of mobility make it one of the most rigid labour markets in the European Union. In the WEF Global Competitiveness Index for 2010-11, Italy ranked 118th for labour efficiency. The strength of Italy's infrastructure is rather mixed, and varies from region to region. In the more developed northern and central regions, it is generally good, whereas in the underdeveloped south, it is often less effective. This inequality is further exacerbated by budget constraints between the regions, which will continue to limit public investment over the coming years.

Istat (National Institute of Statistics) presented preliminary data on Italy's foreign trade with non-EU countries in June 2012. In June 2012, exports to non-EU countries increased by 12.4% and imports decreased by 7.1% compared with the same month of the previous year. The trade balance showed a surplus of 1,519 million euro compared with a 1,389 million euro deficit in the same month of 2011.

In the first half of 2012 exports to non-EU countries increased by 9.9% and imports decreased by 3.8% compared with the same period of 2011. The trade balance registered a deficit of 5,216 million euro compared to the deficit of 16,767 million euro in the same period of 2011. Excluding energy, the trade balance presented a surplus of 26,963 million euro compared with a 13,256 million euro surplus in January-June 2011.

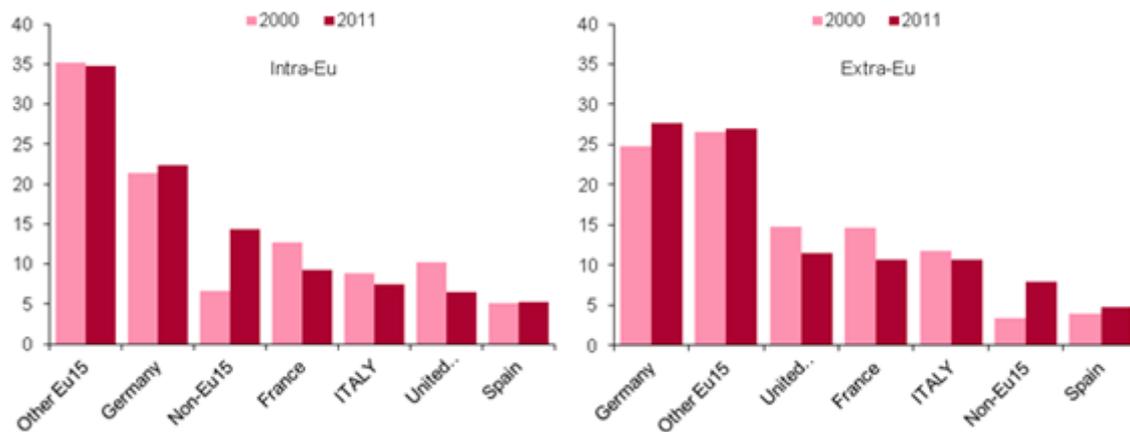
Trade between countries represents one of the most important aspects of the globalisation process in the world economy. As a consequence, an analysis of export trends constitutes a key factor when monitoring a country's competitive capacity. Over the last few decades, world trade has been characterised by the growing role of emerging economies, in particular China, while many more developed countries have lost market share. In this context Italy's share of global exports has fallen progressively, from 3.9 % in 2002 to 2.9 % in 2011.

ITALY WITHIN THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT

Exports of EU countries by market area Year 2000 and 2011 (market share)

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The degree of trade integration between EU28 countries is extremely high: approximately two thirds of these countries' exports are to other EU countries. A tendency to favour trade within the European Union is relatively more pronounced among the smaller countries, and most of all in newly accessing countries. Italy, together with the biggest EU economies (with the exception of Spain) gives a larger contribute to EU28 exports to extra-EU countries. Specifically, in 2011 Italy accounted for 7.5 % of intra-EU export flows and 10.6 % of EU countries' exports to the rest of the world (extra-EU). Both shares have fallen since 2000, above all the intra-EU one. Of the major European economies, only Germany and Spain have strengthened their position both within and outside the EU, while the United Kingdom and France have performed worse Italy. By contrast, the group of countries that joined the EU after 2002 have progressively strengthened their relative position, coming to contribute 14.4 % of intra-EU exports in 2011.

In 2011, 27.7% of Italian exports came from the region of Lombardia. The North area as a whole accounted for 71.2 % of domestic export flows. The South and Islands area was equal to 11.5 %, stable when compared with the previous year. The degree of openness of individual areas confirms this regional heterogeneity in terms of export performance. North-eastern regions showed the highest export propensity, followed by North-western regions.

In particular regions such as Lombardia, Veneto, Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Emilia-Romagna were the most active in international markets. The South and Islands area continues to be characterized by a reduced capacity to sell products in the international markets. Molise, Campania and Calabria showed a particularly low tendency to export, also when compared to the Southern average. Energetic products contribute significantly to the export of Sicilia and Sardegna. In the 2006-2011 period, northern geographical areas registered an increase of sales on external markets lower than the Country's average, while increase in export was relevant in the regions of the Centre, South and Islands area. In the 2000-2011 period regions in the North-east and South and Islands area registered a moderate increase of their share to national export.

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Regional business environment: an outlook on Sicily

Thanks to the regular growth of the last years, Sicily is the eighth richest region in Italy in terms of total GDP. A series of reforms and investments on agriculture such as the introduction of modern irrigation systems have made competitive this important industry. In the 1970s there was a growth of the industrial sector through the creation of some factories. In recent years, the importance of the service industry has grown for the opening of several shopping malls and for a modest growth of financial and telecommunication activities. Tourism is an important source of wealth for the island thanks to its natural and historical heritage. Today Sicily is investing largely in structures of the hospital industry, in order to make tourism more competitive. However, Sicily continues to have a GDP per capita below the Italian average and higher unemployment rate than the rest of Italy. This difference is mostly caused by the negative influence of criminality that is still active in some areas although it is much weaker than in the past.

The expectations on turnover of Sicilian companies for the next six months (Jul-Dec 2012)

Turnover in the market

	Strong decrease	Diminution	Stable	Increase	Strong increase	n.r.
Italian	33%	31 %	15 %	16 %	3 %	2%
Foreign sales	12 %	10 %	17%	19 %	4 %	38%

Nearly two -thirds of companies expect a decrease in sales in the Italian market and one third even a strong contraction. Only 20% of firms have positive expectations. Among the companies that operate abroad, there is a gap in the two sets of similar proportions, consisting of those with negative expectations (22% of total sample) and those with positive expectations (23% of total sample). The proportion of firms that expected reduction in foreign sales is still significantly less than that relating to the companies that it expects a decrease in sales in Italy. By contrast, the proportion of businesses that plan to increase foreign sales is greater than that of firms planning to increase sales in the Italian market.

1.2 Potential target

In Sicily there is significant room for growth for tourism businesses. Agriculture remains an important sector, even if subjected to rationalization. In Sicily there is the need to encourage the development of joint-stock companies. Sicily needs to encourage a recovery in profitability and capital accumulation.

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Economic activity	GDP (mil. €)	% sector (Sicily)	% sector (Italy)
Agriculture, farming, fishing	2,923.3	3.52%	1.84%
Industry	7,712.9	9.30%	18.30%
Constructions	4,582.1	5.52%	5.41%
Commerce, hotels and restaurants, transport, services and (tele)communications	15,159.7	18.28%	20.54%
Financial activity and real estate	17,656.1	21.29%	24.17%
Other economic activities	24,011.5	28.95%	18.97%
VAT and other forms of taxes	10,893.1	13.13%	10.76%
GDP of Sicily	82,938.6		

These negative expectations had a particularly severe impact on the industrial production as the region of Sicily remains focused on the internal market and cannot significantly differentiate its supply. Most of Sicilian businesses suffer a negative expectation on the performance of turnover and the "tightness" of the margin. The low and decreasing profitability of firms implies a poor ability to accumulation of capital. This, together with the modest average size and an already high level of indebtedness, greatly reduces the ability of investment and then development. Only a small proportion of Sicilian businesses is involved in strategy internationalization and / or innovation which, as noted, are the main areas the competitive development of our companies.

1.3 Support from other agencies

The data on the expectations of Sicilian businesses in the next six months were obtained

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from a survey conducted by Unioncamere Sicily on a sample of 200 companies operating in the region built with the criteria of statistical significance. The sample was stratified by province and production sector, on the basis of distribution of the universe of Sicilian businesses compared to these variables. In particular, productive sectors considered were: agriculture and related sciences; manufacturing, construction and mining, construction, trade, tourism, services businesses, personal services and other services. The survey was conducted in the month of April 2012 through a written questionnaire sent to firms in the sample submitted by mail or through telephone interview conducted by Unioncamere Sicily.

Enterprise Europe Network



The network offers integrated services in support of business and innovation in Italy, thus contributing to the competitiveness and innovative capacity of the Community with particular attention to the Italian SMEs needs.

Working through local business organisations, the Network can help SMEs to develop business in new markets, to facilitate market access and transnational collaboration/partnership building, stimulates innovations (building innovation capacity, promotes EU policies and programmes and connects companies in particular SMEs to EU policy making, builds and promotes an integrated Network excellence through the professional provision of integrated services, exchange of best practices, branding.

The Enterprise Europe Network is present in 54 countries (28 EU; 26 non-EU) and is made up by almost 600 organizations in which work 4000 professionals experts of services to enterprises; these different organizations (Chambers of Commerce, Entrepreneurial Associations, Regional Development Agencies, Technological University Centres, etc.) work daily for enterprises and as members of Enterprise Europe Network cooperate between them with the aim to provide integrated and complementary services to enterprises.

The network fully exploits the synergies between all support services and helpdesks aimed at European businesses. The “one-stop shop” service is accompanied by a “no wrong door” policy: an entrepreneur or business actor can enter the network through any contact point, and will then be assisted and personally directed to the relevant service or organisation.

In Italy there are 5 consortiums member of the network.

- [ALPS](#) for the Liguria, Piemonte, Valle d’Aosta Regions;
- [CINEMA](#) for the Lazio, Marche, Sardegna, Toscana, Umbria Regions;

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- [FRIENDEurope](#) for the Friuli Venezia Giulia, Trentino Alto Adige, Veneto Regions;
- [SIMPLER](#) for the Emilia Romagna, Lombardia Regions.

Enterprise Europe Network is part of the European Union [“Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme \(CIP\)”](#).

BRIDG€conomies

In Italy there are 5 network consortia; one is Consortium BRIDG€conomies. It is made up by 16 different organisations, covering the region: Abruzzo, Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Molise, Puglia and Sicilia.

The Consortium **BRIDG€conomies** has the following objectives:

- to create a patent and innovation services market;
- to lead enterprises toward a stronger competitiveness and a wider European and international dimension;
- to ensure the proximity of the offered services;
- to ensure homogeneous and diffused services;
- to increase the participation of enterprises in the EU decisions;
- to ensure the exchange of knowledge between the different actors who support enterprises.

Confindustria Sicilia

Confindustria Sicilia was founded in 1944, the first regional federation of Confindustria, the leading national organization representing the manufacturing and service industries in Italy.

Confindustria Sicilia is present in all nine provinces in Sicily with its industrial associations. Centro per lo Sviluppo Creativo collaborates with Confindustria Sicilia in several projects.

There are no LCA training schemes available at the moment in Sicily. Thus, this project is particularly suitable for the local conditions in order to help SMEs overcome linguistic barriers in their export activities.

2. Overall objectives of the Scheme

2.1 Overall objectives of the Scheme

The general and most important objective of the LCA Scheme is to:

- 1 Help Sicilian Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) by providing feasible consultancy services on the area of business communications;

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- 2 Increase effectiveness and market competitiveness of SMEs by helping them to identify their export communication barriers, their weaknesses and market advantages in communication and by providing them solutions for their identified problems.

2.2 Objectives of the Italian partner

- Implement a training programme with an e-learning component for language auditors in Sicily
- Transfer theoretical materials for use in the Sicilian LCA scheme
- Transfer and develop practical materials adapted to Sicilian business culture
- Select and train up to 10 future auditors in Palermo, capital city of Sicily
- Pilot the LCA in up to 20 SMEs
- Produce reports as part of the WPs
- Validate and disseminate the project and its outcomes
- Disseminate project information on our official website
- Prepare for the permanence of the audit scheme in Italy

In Sicily and in Italy in general, Centro per lo Sviluppo Creativo Danilo Dolci will be directly involved in the scheme, together with our partner organization, CESIE. We will involve our local partners that work with SMEs like Confindustria Sicilia (also running like us the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme), Unioncamere, the Chamber of Commerce in Palermo, University of Palermo - Department of Economics. The active participation of all our local partners in the project will ensure sustainability of the scheme in Sicily and in Italy.

3. Scheme Management

3.1 Management of Scheme

Tasks of Centro per lo Sviluppo Creativo Danilo Dolci will be the following:

- Attend international meetings of Project Team and host one meeting (in Palermo, Sicily);
- Conduct initial feasibility study for a SME Export Communications Review scheme in Sicily;
- Review any existing language audit processes for Sicily and map against the European Protocol model;
- Identify key national players and agencies for the Language Communication Audit (LCA);
- Review available materials/resources for Sicily and adapt/develop for on-line retrieval;
- Identify “missing” resources and develop them as appropriate;
- Review, adapt and localise the Protocol training materials, audit framework and model training scheme;

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- Produce scheme handbook and training pack for consultants;
- Contribute to user needs analysis for on-line tools;
- Adapt tool for Italian and proof/edit/adapt as required;
- Adapt Scheme Management training materials for the Italian market and evaluate training;
- Implement an operational LCA scheme in Italy offering LCA consultants to international SMEs;
- Identify potential consultants in Sicily and Italy for training;
- Train 10 potential consultants;
- Conduct a minimum of 20 reviews of SMEs over 2 years;
- Prepare validation plan and set-up user panels for external validation of products;
- Carry out and record internal and external validation according to plan;
- Prepare a dissemination plan for promoting the Scheme and the Training Programme;
- Contribute to the setting up of Italian webpages with news of developments and summaries of the work undertaken;
- Set up 2 seminars for dissemination of project outcomes to business advisers and consultants and exchange of knowledge between partner countries;
- Print hardcopy guides to promote the audit service;
- Disseminate results and information to training providers and companies by using: webpages, business and providers' seminars, articles and reports;
- Publish articles in press and trade magazines;
- Incorporate process into own vocational training plans.

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3.2 Infrastructure, Qualification, Resources

CSC was founded in 1952, and is born from the experience and work of Danilo Dolci in Sicily. It is a non-profit organization that works successfully with different profiles of target groups from young people to businesses and older people. It has operated for more than ten years in the educational sector in collaboration with schools, universities, institutions, associations and social groups both at local and at international level. Goals include:

- Work towards inclusion of disadvantaged groups;
- Promote inclusion; Innovate education;
- Promote the territory development through grassroots activities;
- Encourage the intercultural dialogue;
- Development of innovative educational methods;
- Managing EU and local initiatives focusing on active citizenship, social inclusion and innovation in society.

Centro per lo Sviluppo Creativo is a core-partner and it will:

- Attend all partnership meetings and host one
- Implement a training programme with an e-learning component for language auditors in Sicily
- Transfer theoretical materials for use in the Sicilian LCA scheme
- Transfer and develop practical materials adapted to Sicilian business culture
- Select and train up to 10 future auditors in Sicily
- Pilot the LCA in up to 20 SMEs
- Produce reports as part of the WPs
- Validate and disseminate the project and its outcomes
- Disseminate project information on the organisation website
- Prepare for the permanence of the audit scheme in Sicily

3.3 Marketing and Promotion of the Scheme

The objective of marketing and promotion of the LCA scheme is to inform Sicilian SMEs about the consultancy service. In order to reach publicity for the scheme, we plan the following marketing and promotional activities:

1. Members of Unioncamere and Confindustria Sicilia will receive information about the project through:

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- Newsletters sent by Centro per lo Sviluppo Creativo;
 - Advertising the project in Enterprise Europe Network Italy homepage.
2. SMEs in the region and countrywide will gain information about the project through
- Advertising the project in the Centro per lo Sviluppo Creativo Danilo Dolci homepage - <http://danilodolci.org/>;
 - Advertising the project in the Centro per lo Sviluppo Creativo Danilo Dolci page on Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/CSCDaniloDolci?fref=ts>;
 - Constant emails;
 - Personal contacts of project members;
 - National chambers and companies will gain information through regular newsletters from Centro per lo Sviluppo Creativo Danilo Dolci;
 - Advertising the project in all Centro per lo Sviluppo Creativo Danilo Dolci web 2.0 tools (YouTube channel, Twitter);
 - Participation to meetings and seminars all around Europe.

4. Financing of the Scheme

In the beginning the financial support is provided by the European Union Leonardo da Vinci program. The Scheme budget will be the basis of the budget signed in the contract. It is planned that when the program is over, Centro per lo Sviluppo Creativo Danilo Dolci will provide the services to the members of Unioncamere and Confindustria Sicilia.

5. Scheme Operational Structure

Name	Position	Classifications of Occupation	Number of days	Roles & Responsibilities
Dario Ferrante	Project manager	ISCO 1	75	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General responsibility over the project • General operational management (activities and finances) • Attending meetings • Writing implementation plan • Writing articles to

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Name	Position	Classifications of Occupation	Number of days	Roles & Responsibilities
				<p>newspapers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect information from SME's • Participating in the forming of the consultancy concept • Contribution in defying curriculum and exam requirements • Collecting 10 auditors • Participation in testing and evaluation of the LCA process • Participation in organising dissemination • Writing final reports
Daniele La Rocca	Researcher	ISCO 2	65	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow accreditation framework/standard European quality procedures for conducting LCAs • Monitor standard of reviews and Review impact – evaluation • Prepare validation plan for project • Review market in country and ensure all channels for dissemination have been identified • Participation in testing and evaluation of the LCA process • Attending meetings
En Dolci	Technician	ISCO 3	35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor standard of reviews and Review impact – evaluation • Publish information and results on webpage with links to relevant sites throughout Europe.

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Name	Position	Classifications of Occupation	Number of days	Roles & Responsibilities
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informing companies and stakeholders about the result of the project Participation in the organisation of local meetings and workshops
Cristina Conde	Administrative officer	ISCO 4	80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General administrative management of the project Communication with SME's participating in the project Handling data about target groups Organising documentation of the project

6. Training Plan for Auditors

6.1 Auditors Training

The process of the auditors' training will consist of the following steps:

- Setting up criteria for LCA auditors
 - Education: University degree
 - Language competence: Fluent English
 - Professional experience: 1-2 years as an internal or external employee at an exporting company
 - Fulfilment of ethical requirements
 - Some marketing, communication experience in business life
 - Good communication skills;
- Selection of auditors based on criteria, provided CVs and interviews
- Selected auditors participate in adaptation of the LCA concept
- Selected auditors collect information about the communication barriers of some exporting SMEs
- Auditors' training handbook is enhanced
- Auditors are trained by Hungarian trainers
- Auditors regularly report their activities
- Each auditor reviews two companies, collects information about communication

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- barriers, analyses data and writes a report to the stakeholders of the two companies
9. Auditors' reports and activity reports, together with the customer feedback are evaluated

Potential auditors will be selected according to the criteria. Our objective is to recruit auditors from the stakeholder organisations (Unioncamere, Confindustria Sicilia, local enterprises, University of Palermo, other training centres, communication agencies).

6.2 Main points for Evaluators

- 1 Training handbook is well structured
- 2 2 case studies are experience oriented
- 3 Selection of consultants take place by measurable criteria
- 4 Consultant training efficiency is measured by a questionnaire filled out by participants
- 5 Trainer report is made about the activity and acquired competences by the participants
- 6 Review report is evaluated by specific indicators
- 7 Customers' feedback is collected by questionnaires (Post-Audit Questionnaire)
- 8 The quality of reports made by consultants about selected companies

6.3 Evaluation and Quality Control

Centro per lo Sviluppo Creativo Danilo Dolci will be implementing the monitoring and assessment of the EPIC project as follows:

- The monitoring of the project will be done every month in the Centro per lo Sviluppo Creativo Danilo Dolci coordination group according to the information provided by the person in charge of the EPIC project.
- Scheme manager (project manager) is responsible for quality assurance of the project. The Scheme manager is responsible for the quality control and monitoring the project. His responsibility is selecting the auditors, representing our centre in consortium meetings, helping auditors and evaluating them.
- Scheme manager reports monthly to the project owner. He reports activities, problems and dissemination activities. There is a separate manager for financial reporting.
- Scheme (project) manager is responsible for setting up and adaptation of selection criteria for auditors, setting up measurable indicators for the auditors training programme, collecting and analysing questionnaires, filled out by participants and customers of the scheme. The Scheme manager is also responsible for evaluating and improving the work of the auditors by giving advice to both the auditors and company representatives. He is also responsible for conflict handling.

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7. Available Resources/Materials for use by auditors

Potential auditors will be tested and evaluated. Basic requirements are: fluency in English, and one more European language, ability to understand client needs, ability to determine company's communicational strengths and weaknesses, ability to present solutions to client problems. According to the recent research, there are at least 10 potential LCA consultant applicants in Sicily. All of them will be able to speak English, are in connection with exporting companies and have some consultancy background. They have the necessary communication skills to present solutions to clients.

In the adaptation process, potential auditors and target companies will be involved. Potential auditors may develop their own material based on the sample. After auditors' visit to companies, special needs might be discovered. The development of the auditing material must be improved step by step, according to the new needs.

- 1 User needs analysis
- 2 Auditor's Training Syllabus
- 3 Resources document
- 4 Auditor training packs
- 5 Auditors training workshop content
- 6 Scheme manager's handbook
- 7 Company Audit Reports