



IRENE.T – Social Enterprises European Network for Training

Final

Public Part

Project information

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Executive Summary

The IRENE.T Project aims to create a network of social enterprises and training institutions working in various areas within the Third Sector, taking shape as a place for discussions and debates on specific topics affecting the Third Sector itself. The goal is to create a “virtual friend”, a useful tool to find information, training practices and research concerning the third sector and the social capital, strengthening dialogue and relations within the network.

The IRENE.T project partnership is composed by 14 organizations each of them with specific competencies in training for the Third Sector as well as in the field of Social Economy. It is not a case that the partnership comprises training agencies, research institutions, experienced social enterprises, communication companies, institutional bodies operating in the Third Sector (see 4. Partnership).

The Consortium has reached as many as 142 bodies/associations/communication companies, through the actions set out during the IRENE.T project lifetime. Actually there are, as affiliates members, 37 new companies operating in the Partners' Countries (UK, Italy, Greece, Slovenia, Poland, Germany, Denmark, Spain) and 2 from other Countries not involved in the project since the beginning: SYFO Company from Finland and one Ixmucané – IT, from Spain, operating in Guatemala mainly for women and children (see “Affiliate members” at the address <http://www.irenetwork.eu/index.php?idPage=111&lang=en>).

The project aims to start and stimulate sectoral co-operation through the use of tools able to facilitate co-operative work, comparison and exchange of Best/Good Practices among all the education and third sector actors.

The Vision behind the IRENE.T Project and the forthcoming Network is a European Third Sector open to a widespread lifelong learning policy. We see a European Vocational Education and Training sector interested in the implementation of training policies. Working for the interaction between EU Social Enterprises and Training Entities we wish a Third Sector implemented in its entrepreneurial skills, able to dialog and share information among its actors on a European basis, strong enough to offer appropriate quality services to its clients, motivated in fulfilling its social aim with highly trained human resources and an inspired management structure, aware of representing even a great source of job opportunities for Europe.

The difficulty to identify what third sector is at European level on an homogenous notion, the strong differences among EU countries concerning the third sector legal frameworks and the respective areas of intervention do not allow third sector to refer to a common European vision for training. Furthermore, the lack of contacts and exchanges between the Third Sector and the Vocational Education and Training sector in Europe prevents the latter from providing Third Sector with a dedicated high-quality training offer. Thence, one of the main specific challenges claimed by both EU Third Sector and Vocational Education and Training is to know and better understand the reciprocal needs and perspectives.

The IRENE.T distinctive mission is to offer – first time in Europe – to EU social enterprises, vocational education and training EU Organizations and individuals a European virtual and physical platform where properly interact about contents, good practices, needs, specifically concerning training for social enterprises management. The long-term aim is to tailor appropriate Vocational Education and Training actions

on the current European third sector body, taking into account the latter's weaknesses and needs.

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1. Project Objectives

The IRENE.T Social Enterprises European Network for Training is the first Europe wide Network that brings together, in a dynamic partnership, public Institutions, Educational and Research Agencies and social enterprises belonging to many European countries. The study and research activities from the Network aim to provide organisations of the European Third Sector (TS) with high-quality approaches and tools to help them analyse their organisations and encourage the exchange of good practice and innovative ways of training all stakeholders.

The IRENE.T Network strives to meet the following needs:

- a. To improve the quality and increase the volume of co-operation in the field of vocational training for the Third Sector;
- b. To facilitate the development of innovative good practices in the field of vocational training in the Third Sector;
- c. To promote and support dialogue among social enterprises and educational and training organisations across Europe.

The aim of the partnership is to improve the quality of training for the Third Sector, developing and adapting training pathways to meet the real (current and projected) needs of social enterprises in Europe, promoting dialogue and co-operation at every opportunity.

The main IRENE.T project's goal is to build, strengthen and promote the Network during the project's *iter* and to guarantee its sustainability and activity trying to involve in its network:

- European Social Economy legal entities;
- Local, regional and National Institutions, schools, universities;
- Vocational Education and Training (VET) institutions;
- Individuals: voluntaries, employees, operators, social policies;
- Experts, sociologists, psychologists, trainees, trainers, etc.

and every organisations belonging to the Third Sector or to the social economy (with special attention to those already involved on the education/training in the Third Sector).

So, it is foreseen a two level membership, the first as organisation (legal body) the other as individual.

Only through the enlargement of the network it will be possible:

- to improve the quality and push up the volume of cooperation in the Vocational Education and Training for the third sector;
- to facilitate the good practices' development in the field of Third Sector's professional education;
- to promote and sustain the dialog among all the stakeholders at International Level.

In this framework it is foreseen the involvement of public institutions and "Not for profit" representatives.

The IRENE.T programme has 10 work packages, some of them specifically dedicated to the attainment of the objectives and others focused on the results' diffusion.

The objective of the whole project is to realise a "participated" development, through the involvement of partners, Third Sector organisations, Vocational Education and Training agencies.

The practical IRENE.T Network's (thus, the result of the IRENE.T Project) objective includes:

- Access to an easy-accessible and usable IRENE.T Web platform with all products and services available;
- Information and contacts exchange among Third Sector Organization, Public Institutions, Vocational Education And Training Organizations and private people belonging to the Network;
- Sharing good practices regarding Training experiences towards Third Sector;
- Facilitation for building or strengthening European partnerships for Training into the Third Sector;
- Direct involvement and participation in the trans-national members meetings to be held;
- Researches about third sector in Europe, good practices and case studies:
- access and use of the 3 IRENE.T Services: METI, MATS and DiaCo4, so to implement Third Sector knowledge, know-how, competencies and skills;
- being part of a highly qualified, multi-actors, pro-active European Network.
- receive updates and news concerning Third Sector and Training in Europe, project financing opportunities, etc;
- the involvement in European based projects on Third Sector and Training issues.

The IRENE.T project and its pillar product, the IRENE.T Network finally get 37 requests of subscription by VET Agencies, social cooperatives from all over Europe. This involvement was mainly due to the interest of Third Sector and Vocational Education and Training Actors in widening local perspectives towards a more European perspective, in implementing their own skills and competencies. Third Sector and Vocational Education and Training Actors have been involved even thanks to 8 local seminars held in 7 different countries, 3 transnational conferences, 5 newsletters, 4 press releases, the leaflet into each partner's local language, about 2.000 emails contacts. These were the occasion where to introduce the Network idea, show results, convince them and get new subscriptions.

Third Sector and Vocational Education and Training Areas are usually very weak in mutual communication and info-sharing, out of being strongly tight at the local dimension of their area of intervention.

Thanks to the IRENE.T Project and its Network, about 50 European actors accessed IRENE.T results, services and products. The invitation to relational contacts among different actors from different countries is a very heavy added value, too. Services (available only if member of the IRENE.T Network) provide these organisations with tools for better and easily implement their quality of intervention, for quickly comparing two or more country's contexts, for transferring/receiving good practices into this field.

2. Project Approach

The IRENE.T operational methodology foresees for each WP the proposal and discussion of a working plan, the preparation of shared Guide lines and the set up of research operative tools (such as questionnaires and surveys), wherever the WP's foresees investigations in specific areas. The internal communication has been done mainly through a continuous contact *via* e-mail and *via* "Skype".

To reach the goals, the project foresees, as first step, the set – up of a shared vocabulary both on the lexical side and on the contents side, where the partnership worked on the definition of what does it mean Third System and Third Sector at European level like at National level.

The work, based on the compilation by the partnership, of a structured interview, took us to the realisation of a research document: "Third System in Europe", where it is marked how the terms "Third Sector" and "Social Economy" are the ones mainly used in the Partner Countries (IT-SV-ES-DK-UK), while the term "Third System" is mainly used in comparison with the E.U. dimension.

The tool through which the third sector deploys its services is the Social Enterprise. Of course the differences in the social enterprises at European level, reflect the differences of all the social – economic contexts.

Following our investigation it is clear how, for example in UK, the S.E. is marked with a strong "entrepreneurial" characteristic (also because they have a historic reality more consolidated than the our), and how it is managed like every other enterprise, so that the social entrepreneur is seen like any other manager. In Sweden, instead it seems, that there is not a particular attention by institutions to such reality, while in Italy the prevailing tendency sees as head of social enterprise a subject with a long experience in the "social" that decides to work for himself at a certain point. The general trend in the last 5 years is to try to conjugate, in a balanced way, management competencies (typical of the enterprise), with relational, social and communicative competencies with a strong attention to the related community, with a bottom-up approach. We say that, as a rule, the Third Sector, in the last years has suffered a real explosion, in the greater part of the European Countries, contributing to the development of a new type of entrepreneurship, dressing an important role not only for the social implications but also for the economic and occupational relapses.

The affirmation of such a reality, the need for services furniture is due to the change happened in the last years on the concept of "care", no more prerogative pending on families, but collective problem that different European States took into account because of the changing in family model and its roles inside of it. A large contribution came from social enterprises. Starting from the 70's, the latter have known how to mark a strong pressure on the Welfare toward the enlargement of the social citizenship to stretch also to social groups considered "marginal" until then (like the "otherwise skilled" or the "toxics").

Moreover we have seen also an increase and a "diversification" of several types of uneasiness transformed in the years in concomitance with the muted social and economical conditions. Because of this the third sector, over the ability to contain social solidarity experiences, must be continuously able "to innovate itself". So, which are the tools able to understand and study the "Third Sector requirements" related to the technological and organisational innovation needs?

It is sure that the innovative and organisational need connects itself to the presence, in this sector, of:

- an excessive fragmentation of social professions;
- an inadequate service's organisation;
- a lack of organic laws and rules

both at National like at International level.

Furthermore the needs of citizen/users are continuously transforming and modifying, reducing or increasing the real and the "percept" disease. Here we can analyze the bottom-up change: the needs change to the imperceptible variation of "given condition".

For example an unexpected increasing of immigrants, assumes a rebuilding of all reception services, exactly like an unexpected reduction of the employment rate, where it is important that correct policies must be addressed to working access activities.

The Social Sector, perhaps, is the one which more than others, feels this change in the social-economic-environmental condition. By this we know that to better operate, all the Institutional and non Institutional bodies have to work through a lifelong learning education able to transform itself into the capacity to act to remove these social difficulties (i.e. mediators, person who helps immigrants with integration into society, must refresh their knowledge and their cultural/professional background, continuously to better face the new challenges).

The social sector feels the effects of (perhaps more than others) some economic, social and environmental changes. By this to operate with effectiveness, the Institutional and non Institutional bodies have to favour a Life-long-learning formation able to transform itself into the ability to act with effectiveness for the removal of social difficulties, enriching the *panorama* of the social professions with new professional profiles. It is needed a refreshing and a specialization of those already existing and favouring a permanent dialogue between the third sector and the formation / education (basic objective of the IRENE.T project).

This is what the third sector scenario shaped, even though with some differences, at European level in our first investigation.

It is not a case that the second product, [Report on EU Vocational Education and Training Scenario](#) come out of the IRENE.T project has concerned the Vocational Education and Training. The used methodology has been the same, i.e. it has been prepared a structured interview given to the Partners and aiming to rebuild the National scenario in the single Countries and bringing to the realization of a final report on the Vocational Education And Training. We do not notice evident differences, the compulsory education period varies between the 16 and the 18 years, the Vocational Education and Training agencies are divided into public and private and in all the European Countries there is the need for a clear border for the social professional profiles, always recognizable and recognized at European level.

The following step has seen, coherently with the project objectives, the need to identify the Partners' "points of strength", excellences (i.e. best experiences), "good practices", not necessarily to intend related to the formation of the professional profiles but also to the best project experiences. In fact, the most complex projects are those to be considered like a "micro-reality", a "micro-system" where the different aspects appear.

The methodology, in this case, has been a little different, meaning that we set up a tool able to notice the Good Practices, defining, therefore, fixed parameters, reporting us to the European Guidelines.

The work on the Good Practice's picked up some important project experiences to solve problems with a social matrix, inhaling to the identification of "models" to be able to share, initially with the partnership and subsequently with the whole network.

But what is a Good Practice?

The concept of Good Practice itself has been referred to a project or to a valid methodology, comparing to a problematic situation, or to a goal to reach, and so transferable in different contexts. The method of these Good Practice assumes, so, an identification of models so that they could be shared in the partnership.

In fact the transferability and the replying in other area, represents the main characteristic that a Good Practice must possess to be defined a Good Practice.

For this purpose, a card has been given to the Partners and a pilot study has come. The used parameters:

- Transferability in other areas/compartments;
- Reproducibility in similar contexts/in different Countries;
- Sustainability or the continuity of the benefits achieved also at the end of the project;
- Innovation, effectiveness of new and original strategies / methods.

The key concept is the innovation, connecting and resuming the other one on the creativeness, or the ability to put on field innovative educational tools. Two more important aspects concern the context, i.e. if the emerged innovation is related just to the context of action of elements deployable in other situations, too.

The innovation is linked to the concept of need. The needs in the Third Sector are a large number and a correct needs analysis has to pursue a double way:

- on one side the consideration of the needs under the point of view of the local welfare actors and structures, acting in the interventions' planning and management;
- on the other side, the social enterprises operators' "needs for the education", also analyzing the system.

This operation has to be done taking into account that this work on the needs analysis must face with the necessity coming from the bottom (final users) connecting with other structural social economic and cultural elements.

These elements cannot be changed and are the elements we have to take continuously into account.

Another basic objective for IRENE.T project is:

- the identification of social enterprises and Vocational Education and Training agencies' needs;
- the realization of a Good Practices catalogue and aboard with the competences to well identify the key competencies, skills and abilities to be possessed by managers, workers, volunteers in the Third Sector and how they are gathered.

There are, in fact, some guide lines for the work-package on these questions, and there are two different types of questionnaires:

- one to detect the internal needs in our organization;
- the other, to detect and collect the case studies and the Good Practice's of every organizations / enterprises interviewed, to have a clear situation on the requested competencies in the social profession, to under-

stand the type of dialogue and cooperation that these Social Enterprises and Vocational Education and Training agencies set up with the internal / external stakeholders.

Those questionnaires were given to 81 Vocational Education and Training agencies / Social Enterprises in Europe and this investigation can be considered the origin of some links among other organisation working in the Third Sector, also verifying the chance to the part of the network.

Basically all the surveys and investigations represent a patrimony in term of knowledge for the network's final user and contribute to enforce the working cooperation internal to the partnership, contributed to enforce the central *nucleus* of the network, essential element to enlarge the IRENE.T network and then to enlarge it to other bodies / associations.

The IRENE.T portal is a virtual friend always able to suggest solutions, it will constitute an attempt to use the digital instrument to reach the Europe.

The **dissemination's activity** crosscuts the whole IRENE.T project actions and has the aim to publish every IRENE.T activity throughout the life span of the project. The main activities consist of:

- 1) Periodic meetings with stakeholders;
- 2) Conferences in each country;
- 3) Conference in the event of project's meetings;
- 4) Local Seminars;
- 5) Newsletter;
- 6) Invitations to visit www.irenetwork.eu;
- 7) Action of dissemination/awareness (media contacts with local, regional and National audience);
- 8) Links to other web-sites involved in Third Sector and in Vocational Education and Training.

For almost each activity it is planned to compile a report in order to have a visible trace of the dissemination actions, useful for the purpose of quality control and monitoring.

The dissemination activities includes three main objectives:

- 1) to involve the final beneficiaries of the project activities (in this case social enterprises, mainly; then Vocational Education And Training agencies and individuals);
- 2) to engage institutional bodies;
- 3) and to verify the sustainability of project actions lifelong.

The IRENE.T Project's activities are substantiated by outputs divided into a) products and 2) services. It is through the dissemination and the exploitation of these products and services that the Partnership can focus on the actions for its **sustainability** i.e.:

- 1) Network development;
- 2) Search for new funding;
- 3) Results Exploitation and valorisation.

The adopted methodology to set-up the IRENE.T Sustainability Plan is:

- 1) **Desk survey** (study of the concept, process implemented by other projects)

- 2) **Analysis of products and services.** How can they be useful for any stakeholders who want be part of the network? (innovation, quality)
- 3) Comparison between our and other experiences
- 4) Collective discussion of what forms and structures the consortium could assume to turn into “a structure of stable cooperative relationship”
- 5) The first decision to try to set-up a E.E.I.G (transforming in Memorandum of Understanding – MOU -)
- 6) The development of an IDEA, a WP for easy management of IRENE. T site and platform.

The tools by which the dissemination works, are the portal of the project IRENE.T and the products and services available in it. Static tools: Training needs analysis for the Third Sector in Europe; Good Practices Database; Report on good practices in the Third Sector in Europe. Dynamic tools are: MATS (Map of Third Sector), MeTI (Methods for TS Implementation), DiaCo4 (Dialogue and Cooperation) and the Newsletter.

The project's starting idea has been to implement a stable structure. In a first phase the Consortium wanted to establish an European Economic Interest Group (E.E.I.G.), but due to its hard involvement for the Partners at all the levels (mainly because of the very different National legislations), it was decided in a second phase to choose a compromise by adopting the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), called TESEO.

In this MOU were put Consortium aims and goals for the next period, to guarantee the sustainability of IRENE.T even after the project lifetime.

The approach used was to consider Sustainability as strictly linked to the dissemination and exploitation of some static and dynamic products realized in the project.

Sustainability as by the IRENE.T vision depends, in large part, on the utility, innovation and quality of services provided by IRENE.T (MeTI – Methods for TS Implementation; MATS - Map of Third Sector; DiaCO4 - Dialogue and cooperation). These assumptions focus on the “how” and the “way” in which these products could be useful for potential external, Third Sector, public and private stakeholders i.e. what benefits would a person or organisation working in the Third Sector gain from joining the IRENE.T network? One clear benefit is that belonging to the IRENE.T network, an important virtual scenario of the Third Sector in Europe, any member of the network would be able to access up to date and relevant resources and information on good practice and initiatives.

Because of the large meaning to make these products highly useful, innovative and qualitative, the Consortium decided to use a participative methodology on the evaluation of the dynamic services to improve them before the availability on the web.

The evaluation of the services foresees a participative approach both internal and external.

In fact the Partnership worked on the methodology and on the meaning on the concept of “evaluation”. Through a virtual brainstorming it has been rebuilt the meaning of evaluation, through a “conceptual map”. This action gave us useful elements to set-up the questionnaires (one for MATI, one for MATS, one for DiaCo4 and one general, collecting in “open questions” the suggestions to improve the 3 services.

The **evaluation process** was composed by two phases:

- 1) one, internal, realized in Milan by the IRENE.T Partners and some external stakeholders (Institutional Representatives), who tested the services and filled the 4 questionnaires;
- 2) another, external, including potential IRENE.T Network members, realised after the first services' update.

At the end of the first phase, to be held in the Milan Meeting (on 10, May), an Analysis report was produced, to enable the updates/modification of the services, in the light of feedback.

The evaluation of IRENE.T services was finalized to improve their efficiency, before being presented to the potential clients, adopting an approach focused to the participation of all partners in a transparent way.

The first updating of the services was set-up after the Milan evaluation phase. These participants feedback very important suggestions to improve/refine services and showed interests to network services.

The main goal in the evaluation was to improve the services on graphics and contents, making them closer to the bottom-up needs of the involved companies/social enterprises.

The evaluation produced a report discussed in the final meeting.

Methodology Network enlargement

The second phase in the evaluation has been implemented contemporarily to the network enlargement and used the following methodology:

- 1) Setting up of a database with external organisations participating in Conferences (in Barcelona, Manchester, Napoli), local seminars and Workshops;
- 2) E-mail and/or telephone of those organisations (every Country must produce this list), to check their desire to:
 - a) Be part of IRENE.T network as affiliate (each partner must involve at least one new organisation);
 - b) Participate in the evaluation of the IRENE.T services;
- 3) Setting up of a data base with external organisations previously contacted for the Survey on Good Practices, Needs Analysis to check their availability to:
 - a) Be part of IRENE.T network as affiliate;
 - b) Participate to evaluation of the IRENE.T services;
- 4) Final Report "Services evaluation";
- 5) Products and services updating, after the results;
- 6) Implementation of the services on the IRENE.T web portal.

The participative methodology regarded the phase more strictly linked to the establishment of a Consortium, at the end of the IRENE.T project's lifetime, initially imaged as an E.E.I.G. and then, as said, decide as a *Memorandum of Understanding* (MOU), after the constructive debate with the whole partnership in the Naples meeting.

The IRENE.T dissemination and exploitation activities produced a multiplier effect, clearly seen in an high number of companies and social enterprises, now in touch, while the aims of *Memorandum of Understanding* (MOU) is to develop a mainstream effect.

The same participative methodology was used even for the set-up of the *Memorandum of Understanding* (MOU) official document (mainly due to the action and initiative of the Applicant and some Partners), presented and discussed during the final meeting, deciding unanimously to take one more month to analyze it with the legal Representatives of the Partnership before the decision to adhere.

The main goal of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to work towards:

- a) Promoting the co-operation and the exchange among Partners to initiate, plan and realise complex and / or innovative projects, paying particular attention to the actions promoted by the European Union;
- b) Taking part to calls, proposals, initiatives promoted by Third Sector, private and public bodies which are interesting for the Partners supporting the links between all three sectors;
- c) Promoting the exchange of experiences among Partners in different areas aiming at the creation of complex services, the design of pilot / prototype projects, the replication and dissemination of good / best practices;
- d) Promoting and managing activities focused on research, influencing social policy, individual and organisational development, education and training, in the areas of the Partners' interest;
- e) Setting up on behalf of the Partners, procedures and all the necessary activities to enable them to be part of invitations to tender.

The name adopted for this stable net is **T.E.S.E.O. (Training in Europe for Social Economy Opportunities)** resumes the main approach of the IRENE.T Network i.e. the one to work on the Education in Europe to guarantee the participation to the opportunities offered by the social economy, entering innovative aspects of participation and social inclusion, elements guaranteeing the democracy (it is not a case that the ancient Greek TESEO is considered one of the European democracy fathers).

Project Outcomes & Results

The main products realised in the period of reference are:

1. *The IRENE.T website;*

- This product (then migrated into a web portal: point 4.) has led to the achievement/strengthening of the following results:

The website www.irenetwork.eu laid the foundations for the creation of a place for virtual exchange and dialogue between the actors of the third sector and training for the third sector in Europe. Thanks to the website visibility to the project has been given and the first products by the project has been advertised. Within the restricted area reserved for project partners (at least temporarily) you can share projects, use chat, upload photos or advertise events about training for Third Sector. Using attractive graphics, although "light" and highly usable, the project has been brought towards a wider European audience.

The site provider was also a social cooperative formed mainly by people with disabilities. This cooperative deals with "accessible" and "emancipator" communication and graphics around Naples (Italy). Even this element, in our view, represented an added value and stimulates the dialogue and exchange of experiences in the field of so-called "social enterprise".

- This result (though still partial) stimulates achieving the following project goals:

a. Support and foster the outcomes of new needs in terms of competencies and skills: as the IRENE.T website will be the main source of information for Network members on training needs of the Third Sector. Here the final report on needs of the third sector in Europe will be published.

b. Support and foster the exchange of best practices: the IRENE.T website will be the virtual source from which all members of the network will draw on knowledge, experiences, models from all over Europe. The chat services, guestbook, stimulate or at least simplify the file sharing and encourage exchange. The website, in its virtuality, overcomes the physical barriers and enables the Third Sector to share, finally, on a European dimension.

c. Stimulate and support a better communication and Experiences sharing within the Third Sector and among Third Sector and Vocational Education and Training Actors. The IRENE.T website facilitates communication within a sector, the third sector, very reticent to share and exchange information, and often unwilling to "Europeanization". In our view, the strong link with the area of intervention, characteristic of these organizations is only enhanced and enriched by the knowledge and "contextualization" of new realities. Thanks to the website training organizations for the Third Sector and Third Sector actors finally begin to dialogue.

- This product related to the result above has the following impact on target groups:

a. Awareness on the importance of opening the Third Sector to EU;

b. Encourages the dialogue between training institutions and actors of the Third Sector who receive training;

c. The site was visited over 1800 times in its first six months of activity, presumably (as a site of a sector network for expert) from subjects very close (if not matching) to the target group of reference.

d. Great visibility of the project and the Network

- This product can be tracked/reconstructed by the following means:

a. www.irenetwork.eu

b. www.adam-europe.eu

2. The Stakeholder Analysis Matrix;

- This product has led to the achievement / strengthening of the following result: The Stakeholders Analysis Matrix marked the watershed between the mere collection of data and their structure for defining the IRENE.T services. This product facilitates the understanding of the legal and socio-cultural framework of reference within each partner country as regards to the Third Sector and training. It is therefore the starting point for future research project.

- This result is linked to the achievement of the following objectives for the following reasons:

a. Support and foster the outcomes of new needs in terms of competencies and skills: only by knowing its own context of reference and the others' contexts of reference (Europe) is possible to identify their training needs.

b. Support and foster the exchange of Best Practices;

Awareness of differences on national and, above all, on European basis, help understand the peculiarities of each country involved, and to connect, then in the future, a good practice with a special need in that area.

- This product related to the result above has the following impact on target groups:

a. Facilitates the understanding of European contexts to Vocational Education and Training/Third Sector actors.

b. Encourages discussion and comparisons;

c. Leads to differentiation and contextualization;

d. Stimulates new ideas for projects within the membership based on diachronic criteria.

- This product can be tracked by the following means:

a. www.irenetwork.eu

b. www.adam-europe.eu

3. The 1st Conference of the external project IRENE.T (Barcelona, Spain, November 5th, 2009)

- This product has led to the achievement / strengthening of the following result: The 1st external conference of the IRENE.T project allowed to experiment for the first time a structured dissemination of first results of the project and the project implementation in the medium-long term. Spanish speakers from social cooperation, training institutions for Third Sector and Public Institutions (mainly local / regional) sensitive to the issue has given their contribution. The variety of speakers allowed to discuss critically and constructively the need for a Network as IRENE.T in "Euro-local" landscape".

- This result is primarily related to achieve the objective: "Support and Stimulate a better communication and Experiences sharing / Stimulate the Dialogue and Cooperation of the Third Sector' actors with particular attention to the bottom-side Organizations / professionals", for the following reasons:

a. The project partners (coming from 9 European Countries) were compared with their Spanish counterparts, they have interacted and laid the foundations for a European training platform for the Third Sector;

b. The dialogue (formal and informal) was created peer to peer, providing a Social Enterprise - Social Enterprise discussion, as well as vertically by mean of a Social Enterprise and vertical / Public Institution / Body Training relation. The European dimension within a local context (Barcelona - Cataluña) has been the essential glue.

c. For the occasion mainly small / medium business realities of the Third Sector has been invited and were present. This confirms the interest of the project to involve "hidden" or not "great" actors.

- This product related to the result above has the following impact on target groups:

a. Increased cooperation between stakeholders in the Third Sector and vocational training for the third sector on a local (Spain) and European dimension.

b. Opening the debate on the need for a European training for the Third Sector, European and local at the same time.

c. Involvement of Public Bodies in the specialist debate.

- This product can be tracked / reconstructed by the following means:

a. www.irenetwork.eu

b. www.adam-europe.eu

4. The IRENE.T Web – Portal

The basic IRENE.T web-site above mentioned (1.) needed – as by project - to migrate to a Web portal. Thanks to received feedbacks from users and partners the IRENE.T web portal moved towards the concept of: good-looking layout; AAA vision system; easy-accessibility and usability; info/doc-sharing systems; reserved area implementation.

The IRENE.T Web portal hosts all main products and the pillar services of the project. They are easily identifiable and usable, with guidelines and/or short

summary, if needed. There is a section dedicated to dissemination tools and materials.

- This product is the main product of the IRENE.T Project. This result is linked to the achievement of the following objectives for the following reasons:

a. To improve the quality and increase the volume of co-operation in the field of vocational training for the Third Sector;

The IRENE.T web portal involved many Vocational Education and Training actors for the first time approaching the Third Sector "World". The idea the web site made pass is that event Third Sector can represent a very good and high source of income.

b. To facilitate the development of innovative good practices in the field of vocational training in the Third Sector;

The IRENE.T Web portal is the frame where good practices in the field of vocational training for the Third Sector found their own space in terms of re-organization and visibility.

c. To promote and support dialogue among social enterprises and educational and training organisations across Europe.

The IRENE.T web portal stimulated contacts, relations among several actors from the same or different field of interest and intervention.

- This product related to the result above has the following impact on target groups:

1. Encourage knowledge transfer, good practice exchange among members.

2. About 50 actors from Vocational Education and Training and Third Sector are members.

- This product can be tracked / reconstructed by the following means:

a. www.irenetwork.eu

b. www.adam-europe.eu

5. The Milan Workshop – May 2011

VITA Comunicazione hosted the international IRENE.T workshop in Milan: "Networking Third Sector through Training: the European challenge of IRENE.T Services". Two days where 8 participating bodies linked to the Third Sector have been involved: Public institutions, VET agencies, NGOs, social enterprises. It was the time to analyse and discuss the new IRENE.T services. The goal was to collect suggestions for their implementation. On-line questionnaires had been prepared and provided to participants, giving them the chance to quickly see, use and evaluate service through individual laptops. This included a big work in terms of preparation of evaluation questionnaires and on-line/web transfer. The Milan workshop was the first time the IRENE.T Project dealt with opinions and feedbacks from external stakeholders. Thanks to a very high-qualified participation the IRENE.T Consortium received punctual, clever and proper suggestions from the audience, this facilitating the refinement process to be taken before the final Napoli Meeting (September 2011).

- This result is linked to the achievement of the following objectives for the following reasons:

a. To improve the quality and increase the volume of co-operation in the field of vocational training for the Third Sector;

c. To promote and support dialogue among social enterprises and educational and training organisations across Europe.

- This product related to the result above has the following impact on target groups:

a. Knowledge transfer, relations-building, physical good practice exchange among more than 20 EU organizations;

b. Involvement of 3 different participant typologies: Third Sector actors, Vocational Education and Training agencies, Regional/District and Local public Institutions.

c. High-qualified framework for services' refinement achieved.

- This product can be tracked / reconstructed by the following means:

a. www.irenetwork.eu

b. www.adam-europe.eu

6. METI – Methods for Third Sector Implementation

The realities of Third Sector often have not access to the tools ableing them to improve, especially in relation to the side of the professional competences' empowerment.

So on this stage grows the idea to create, to develop a Chart of competences, modified during the works in *Methods for Third Sector Implementation* - METI - (so that it better reflects its meaning), with the aim to offer a tool able to measure the existence of competences and skills, internal to the companies/association/VET agencies, and to understand which type of gap there is between the ones required to operate in some fields of Third sector and the ones existing inside our operative structure.

Data have been collected in a first document called "Chart of competences", than it has been requested to the Partners to indicate some useful tools, organised and presented on-line, to carry out a need analysis.

In order to ensure the development of methods and techniques to enable analysis of organisational needs, METI is a tool that seeks to empower Third Sector organisations. The Chart, which is dynamic and navigable, offers IRENE.T members the opportunity to access a carefully selected set of tools for effective VET needs analysis. Using these tools members can more easily identify the training and professional roles needed in a modern social enterprise to achieve the high quality standards required at the national and EU levels.

This result is linked to the achievement of the following objectives for the following reasons:

a. To facilitate the development of innovative good practices in the field of vocational training in the Third Sector;

- This product related to the result above has the following impact on target groups:

- a. Implementation of the quality of intervention by Third Sector actors;
- b. Dissemination of more than 30 good experiences, in Europe, analysed and processed.

- This product can be tracked / reconstructed by the following mean (subscription to IRENE.T Network is needed to access it):

- a. www.irenetwork.eu
- b. www.adam-europe.eu

7. MATS – Map of the Third Sector

The MATS service (Map of Third Sector) aims to describe the Third sector characters in every Partners' Country and at European level, highlighting the complexity of the system, its various areas of action and the segmentation of the professional profiles. This tool includes a Map, navigable and dynamic, with fields of action, job profiles and training in the Third Sector of countries involved in its development. It represents the result of data collection, desk research and co-operation which has tried to include supporting information, "essential" contents and graphics, so that it is easily accessible and viewable.

- This result is linked to the achievement of the following objectives for the following reasons:

- a. To promote and support dialogue among social enterprises and educational and training organisations across Europe.

- This product related to the result above has the following impact on target groups:

- a. Implementation of the quality of knowledge by Third Sector and Vocational Education and Training actors;
- b. 7 EU country's profiles available.

- This product can be tracked / reconstructed by the following mean

- a. www.irenetwork.eu (subscription to IRENE.T Network is needed to access it):
- b. www.adam-europe.eu

8. DiaCo4 – Dialogue and Co-operation for the Third Sector

Communication is a pillar activity for good practice sharing, in the field of training for the Third Sector, two fields with few chances to be in contact one another.

This is a research tool that explores communication methods, tools and activities (both formal and informal) as well as of the development of tools and methods to support communication, dialogue and cooperation between the Third Sector and European VET organisations. The guidelines offer helpful suggestions on how to create and/or improve dialogue and cooperation between VET and the TS world. In just a few clicks, you can get useful information for your social enterprise/VET agency.

- This result is linked to the achievement of the following objectives for the following reasons:

- a. To improve the quality and increase the volume of co-operation in the field of vocational training for the Third Sector;
- b. To facilitate the development of innovative good practices in the field of vocational training in the Third Sector;

- This product related to the result above has the following impact on target groups:

- a. Implementation of quality and quantity of dialogue, interaction and mutual knowledge among Third Sector and Vocational Education and Training actors.
- b. More than 30 good experiences analysed and processed.

- This product can be tracked / reconstructed by the following mean:

- a. www.irenetwork.eu (subscription to IRENE.T Network is needed to access it);
- b. www.adam-europe.eu

9. Final Conference

The final conference of the IRENE.T Project took place in Naples – IT on September 29th 2011. It was titled “The IRENE.T Network. Training for Third Sector in EU: skills implementation through networking”. During the discussion – involving IRENE.T Network founding members, academics and Italian representatives from the Third Sector - the differences among the various social systems in Europe clearly emerged. However, they were viewed in the context as life-giving stimuli as a common response to the global crisis and the Third Sector, in particular. The interventions and the involvement of so many Campania’s realities really helped to emphasise the value of IRENE.T as a place of growth and meeting in a European and international dimension. The Conference gave the chance of presenting the 3-years project results, too.

At the speakers' table: Gennaro Avallone, Professor of Urban Sociology at the University of Salerno (moderator); Ornella Scognamiglio, President Consortium Proodos, Naples; Gianpaolo Gaudino, President Consortium Co.Re, Naples; Donato Cataldo, President of Alta Irpinia Social services Consortium, Giovanni Perito, ACLI Terra (abs. agricultural vocational ACLI).

- This result is linked to the achievement of the following objectives for the following reasons:

- a. To improve the quality and increase the volume of co-operation in the field of vocational training for the Third Sector;
- b. To facilitate the development (and share) of innovative good practices in the field of vocational training in the Third Sector;
- c. To promote and support dialogue among social enterprises and educational and training organisations across Europe.

- This product related to the result above has the following impact on target groups:

- a. Implementation of quality and quantity of dialogue, interaction and mutual knowledge among Third Sector and Vocational Education and Training actors.
- b. More than 20 EU actors participating at the Conference.

- This product can be tracked/reconstructed by the following mean:

a. www.irenetwork.eu

b. www.adam-europe.eu

10. Local seminars

8 local seminars in 7 different EU countries took place in the project life-time. Each local seminar had a particular issue to discuss about according to hosting Country/Partner characteristics and to the project scheduled work-plan.

Here it is the calendar:

	PARTNER	PLACE/COUNTRY	DATE	Topic
1.	Amledo	Stockholm/Sweden	24 April 2010	Training for employees in the social economy
2.	Consorzio Alta Irpinia	Lioni (AV)/Italy	17 March 2010	Good practices in third sector training on local basis
3.	CEBS	Wroclaw/Poland	15 April 2010	The contribution of Training to the Polish Third Sector
4.	VHS	Taunusstein/Germany	28 October 2010	Vocational education in Europe - numerous ways, one aim
5.	HOU	Athens/Greece	1 st November 2010	The Chart of Competencies in TS enterprises
6.	DRUSTVO	Ljubljana/Slovenja	27 January 2011	State of dialogue and cooperation in the Third Sector in Slovenia
7.	Casa Caritat	Valls (Catalunya)/Spain	16 June 2011	Corporate Social Responsibility, Social Networking and Training.
8.	APOPSI	Greece	22 September 2011	The future of social enterprises

- This result is linked to the achievement of the following objectives for the following reasons:

- a. To improve the quality and increase the volume of co-operation in the field of vocational training for the Third Sector;
- b. To facilitate the development (and share) of innovative good practices in the field of vocational training in the Third Sector;
- c. To promote and support dialogue among social enterprises and educational and training organisations across Europe.

- This product related to the result above has the following impact on target groups:

- a. Implementation of quality and quantity of dialogue, interaction and mutual knowledge among Third Sector and Vocational Education and Training actors.
- b. More than 70 EU actors participating at the Local Seminars.

- This product can be tracked / reconstructed by the following mean:

- a. www.irenetwork.eu
- b. www.adam-europe.eu

11. IRENE.T Consortium Charter (so called Memorandum of Understanding “TESEO”)

The final result of the IRENE.T Project, out of the constitution of the European Network was the TESEO Memorandum of Understanding. TESEO stands for “Training in Europe for Social Economy Opportunities”. It includes 9 out of 14 IRENE.T partners, so far. It represent an agreement about collaborating/participating – within a not binding and “light” framework – at future calls for proposals mainly related to Third Sector and Training at the EU level. Its aspiration is to build-up the basis for the constitution of a Economic European Interest Group (E.E.I.G.)

- This result is linked to the achievement of the following objectives for the following reasons:

- a. To improve the quality and increase the volume of co-operation in the field of vocational training for the Third Sector;
- b. To facilitate the development (and share) of innovative good practices in the field of vocational training in the Third Sector;
- c. To promote and support dialogue among social enterprises and educational and training organisations across Europe.

- This product related to the result above has the following impact on target groups:

- a. Implementation of quality and quantity of dialogue, interaction and mutual knowledge among Third Sector and Vocational Education and Training actors.
- b. 9 EU actors participating at the MOU, ready to collaborate and to think “European” in their own field of intervention (being Vocational Education and Training or Third Sector).
- c. Creation of potential new economic opportunities, funds gathering.
- d. Skills and competences’ improvement of the staff involved.

- This product can be tracked / reconstructed by the following mean:

- a. www.irenetwork.eu
- b. www.adam-europe.eu

3. Partnerships

ADDED VALUE OF THE MULTI-COUNTRY PARTNERS IN THE PROJECT EXECUTING (geographical coverage, too);

The IRENE.T project has a very numerous and varied partnership. Numerous as there are 14 partners. Varied both in its geographical origin (9 different countries from Spain to Poland, from Sweden to Italy) and experiences (some partners had their first experience in European projects, others were addressing issues in the third sector for the first time) as well as for areas of intervention (social enterprises, training institutions, public agencies, research institutes, consulting enterprises for communication).

Since the IRENE.T Network online platform is operational 36 new affiliates from 10 different countries subscribed. You can find Vocational Education and Training or Third Sector actors (mainly social cooperative). We can currently count on 51 EU organizations in total.

This diversity - although sometimes not easy to manage / coordinate - led to an extraordinary mutual enrichment. In fact, it is going to achieve, in a smaller shape, what the IRENE.T project would like to see in few years on a bigger scale: a micro-universe of the European Third Sector, open to a dialogue internally and with training institutions, where public institutions are the megaphone and mediator of their needs. What the European Third Sector currently lacks is the international dimension, the "*glocalization*" of Social issues. The third sector, by its nature closely linked to the territory does not have the skills and open-mindedness to put it-self in an extra-local and European perspective. Training institutions for the Third Sector suffer an inability to define training goals at European level.

The competencies put in place, from different nature, quality and geographical origin allowed the project to provide a frank, sincere and realistic situation of training for third sector in Europe, which is evident in the projects products and services. The added value of a multicultural European partnership lies in sharing and learning opportunities coming from a diverse cultural/social/operational/emotional background which first of all improves the quality of services provided.

EXPERIENCE OF WORKING TOGETHER IN A EUROPEAN PARTNERSHIP; It 's fascinating to try to win a challenge. Working in a European partnership poses many issues. In the IRENE.T partnership, so varied, the communication was often lacking. The kick-off meeting (Avellino, January / February 2009) has not fully met the attendees who have returned home with many doubts and few certainties about the contents and planning of project activities. However, it seems to be an almost physiological dynamics for European projects with many partners and a duration of 36 months. In preparation for and during the second transnational meeting in Barcelona (Spain - November 2009) the management / coordination used strategies to share and positively manage conflicts. The results were satisfactory, given also the feedback from participants and the EACEA project Manager, present at the venue. Further transnational meetings (Manchester – may 2010, Copenhagen –November 2010, Milan – May 2011, Naples – September 2011) went smoothly, without conflict issues to be solved and in a frank and collaborative environment. Almost 95% of final

internal evaluations about last meetings and the overall project confirmed a highly positive feedback average.

So, although communication problems (language), difficulty and slowness in identifying fully shared solutions to problems have been detected, working with and among European partners is a wonderful challenge that can not be put aside.

BENEFITS ESTABLISHED WITH GROUPS OUTSIDE OF THE DIRECT PROJECT CONSORTIUM;

Through dissemination activities at local level, for example, ASFORIN P1 and ASIS P2 have known and twisted relationships with Third Sector organisations in a "unexplored" geographic area of Campania Region. This could lead to future collaborations.

Thanks to the provision of two questionnaires (linked to Work Package 7) to 81 among Third Sector and vocational Training actors for the third sector in Europe, we laid the foundations for new relationships and collaborations, external to the mere project partnerships.

Thanks to the dissemination activities of the IRENE.T project, for example, an interesting relationship with another LLP project (Top + Grundtvig <http://www.trainingolderpeople.eu/>) has been created. An IRENE.T delegate (Chris Cooper, the Cooperative College P15) was invited to the final closure conference of the project in Brussels. Following that conference we have received five applications for membership in the IRENE.T Network. It is not impossible that we can set an action plan in the next future that would combine the third sector in Europe to the problems of adult education.

Local Seminars (8 in 7 in EU countries) empowered local relations between external local participants and hosting partners.

In the last year of the IRENE.T project we received about 37 new requests for subscription to the Network. These organizations were either internal to the partners' contacts portfolio either totally external.

4. Plans for the Future

PLANS DESCRIPTION TO CARRY OUT THE REMAINING WORK TO ACHIEVE THE PROJECT OBJECTIVES

At the time of preparing the progress report we are to progress Workpackage 7, related to “collection and data analysis”. The design phase involves collecting data on: the methods for identifying good practices; the context (job profiles, requirements, weaknesses) of the Third Sector in the European Countries involved, the methods of communication within the third sector and between the third sector and the professional training institutions targeting the third sector. This phase includes the construction of two deliverables: a Catalogue of training experiences for the Third Sector in Europe; a final report on the analysis methods for identifying good practices, the needs of the Third Sector in Europe and needs/methods of communication between Third sector and Training institutions. These two deliverables will be completed and presented during the 3rd Transnational meeting/ 2nd IRENE.T Conference in Manchester (19-21 May 2010).

Based on the data obtained and analyzed, the IRENE.T project will pass therefore, within the timeframe of the project, in its crucial phase (WP8 – a Development-based work-package) that will provides for the creation (with different timing) of:

1. The Chart of Services: this provides all the services the IRENE.T Network will provide its members with;
2. The Portal Website: this will allow members to share material, chat, discussion forum, advertise events, receive information, collect and store records for project management, share photos and tips.
3. The Guidelines about best practices: an analytical and agreed framework that will provide the membership with the essential criteria to define, identify and evaluate a good practice in Training for the Third Sector.
4. Map of the structure and professional profiles of the Third Sector: this will provide a territorial / national framework (even by means of graphic support) of the Third Sector in Europe, its essential features, the most requested and innovative professional profiles.
5. The "Chart of Competences" of Social Enterprises: this is a tool for social enterprises to identify and track their needs starting from their skills.
6. Guidelines about the Communication Strategies in the Vocational Education and Training Sector and the Third Sector world: this will - starting with an analysis of data - suggest methodological and operational ways for a better and fruitful communication between the Third Sector and vocational training one. All the above deliverables will be agreed in their contents within the partnerships at the 3rd transnational meeting, partly later on. The last three deliverables (indicated here with n° 4, 5, 6) will be subjected to redefinition in contents after 10 months from the first version.

With the start of the Work Package 8 the project moves towards a very delicate phase: the Exploitation (Work Package 9 - Deployment and Exploitation). This stage - partly overlapping with the previous WP7 - is aimed at exploiting the project results achieved. In this sense, specific tests to evaluate the effectiveness of services will be constructed and used. Local Seminars held during this period will address the same

services which - open to criticism from outsiders, internal/external stakeholders - will be redefined and finally validated. All the activities of exploitation and suggestions for redefinition will be collected in the only deliverable foreseen for the Work Package 9: Exploitation Feedback Survey of exploitation steps and feedback received. The last Work Package 10 "Validation and closing reports" marks the end of the project. The "IRENE.T Evolution and Sustainability Plan" will be realized; this will include a series of suggestions for extending the IRENE.T project action to other similar issues, or to new geographic areas of the EU. Finally, the Partnership will agree on a sort of Statute of the future IRENE.T Consortium (the Consortium IRENE.T Chart) that will include access rules to the Network and the Network business/management plan following the project conclusion.

For the IRENE.T future there are two actions:

- 1) the first, to go on with the activities on the web-platform onto which we actually have 14 Partners plus 37 external members;
- 2) the second is to implement the activities has by the Memorandum of Understanding TESEO;
specifically:
 - a) Promoting the co-operation and the exchange among Partners to initiate, plan and realise complex and / or innovative projects, paying particular attention to the actions promoted by the European Union;
 - b) Taking part to calls, proposals, initiatives promoted by Third Sector, private and public bodies which are interesting for the Partners supporting the links between all three sectors;
 - c) Promoting the exchange of experiences among Partners in different areas aiming at the creation of complex services, the design of pilot / prototype projects, the replication and dissemination of good / best practices;
 - d) Promoting and managing activities focused on research, influencing social policy, individual and organisational development, education and training, in the areas of the Partners' interest;
 - e) Setting up on behalf of the Partners, procedures and all the necessary activities to enable them to be part of invitations to tender.

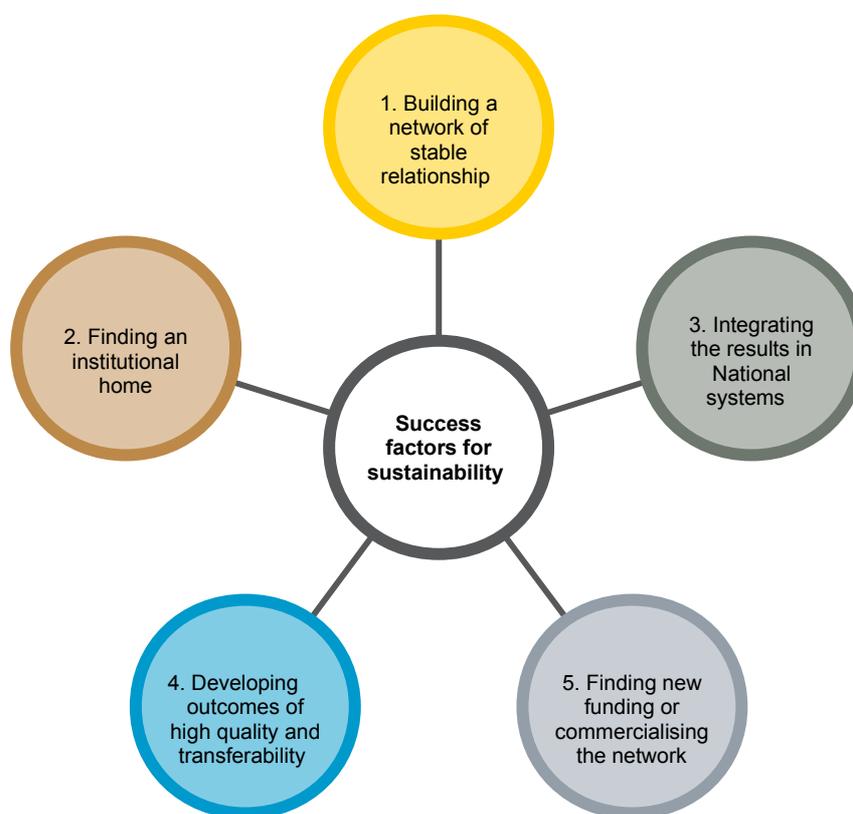
The MOU may involve:

- Promoting a Learning Culture,
- Raising aspirations, expectations and outcomes;
- Developing new and flexible ways of learning which will support either employment, training or education;
- Increasing opportunity and access to education and quality vocational learning, development and training;
- Supporting community cohesion by working to create a broad and imaginative range of additional learning opportunities and experiences
- Regularly reviewing, evaluating and assessing the functioning of the MOU and Partnership.

At the moment the adhesion to the Memorandum of Understanding are 9:

- ✓ 7 of the original IRENET project Partners;
- ✓ 2 new Partners (whose Representatives were already involved in the IRENE.T network).

The sustainability plan took inspiration from the work of Guy Tilkin, project coordinator and co-author of the book “Art of Networking” who, together with his team, developed a series of “guide questions” with the aim of understanding if the results of EU financed projects, can be sustainable, by identifying the main sustainability factors, resumed in the diagram:



In our vision **transferability** is a key moment of the projects because it makes possible the adaptation of products, activities, methods and approaches for use in other contexts, for this reason we asked to ourselves:

- ü Does the project develop generic or replicable models?
- ü Are there any other sectors, target groups or Countries where the results could be used?
- ü Is it possible to regularly control and update the results?

The project developed replicable and generic models, this represents a clear point of strength. The sharing of good practices within Training for Third Sector is a “key moment” of significant importance for the sector. It could represent an inner element of sustainability. Different target groups and/or Countries could use IRENE.T project results, especially looking at the improvement of VET (Vocation and Educational training) and Third Sector research developed within the Partnership (www.irenetwork.eu). In fact, the research shows the main characteristics of the educational systems and of the Third Sector in the EU country partners involved. This research fills a gap in overall EU studies on the issue. The most welcoming sector for IRENE.T project results is the “social” sector and additional work needs to be done with more commercial enterprises. A cornerstone for sustainability is the updating

process of research and other outcomes regarding Vocation Educational Training and Third Sector, due to the continuous changes experienced in the sector. As conclusions we strongly believe that the network is first of all a place where to find relational resources, where to drag in “social capital” (see Jacobs, 1964; Coleman, 1990). This is for us the cornerstone of sustainability for IRENE.T, a place where people meet, share and transfer knowledge, skills and competences about Third Sector at European Level.

5. Contribution to EU policies

The IRENE.T Contribution to EU policies is mainly related to the Lisbon strategy (2000) on a twofold basis:

a. Lisbon Education & Training Progress Indicators

The report “Progress toward the Lisbon Objectives and Training – Indicators and benchmarks 2007” examines performances and progresses in education and training systems in the EU under the Education and Training 2010 work programme. It adopted 16 core indicators for monitoring progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training.

IRENE.T Network complies with the following indicators:

8. Learning to learn skills
10. Professional development of teachers and trainers
13. Participation of adults in lifelong learning
14. Adults skills
15. Educational attainment of the population
16. Investment in education and training

Social enterprises strike a difficult balance between organisational goals, allocation of control rights, incentive structures and characteristics of markets in which they operate. While these elements allow social enterprises to adapt their internal organization to specific problems posed by the production of personal and collective services, they also make the social enterprise a fragile organizational model, extremely sensitive to changes in market conditions and public policies (Bacchiaga and Borzaga, 2001).

To answer this social objective the organizations of the Third Sector need highly prepared workers and volunteers with specific skills. To have the change it is essential to be aware of European good experiences in the sector, to be able to adapt them to their own reality and to invest in lifelong learning. The IRENE.T Network support the Third Sector in this hard mission.

b. Lisbon Key Competencies

To ensure good results in the Lisbon strategy in education and training the Education Council and the Commission endorsed a 10 years programme to be implemented through the open method and methodology. This document pretends three main objectives by 2010:

1. to improve the quality and effectiveness of EU education and training systems;
2. to ensure that they are accessible to all;
3. to open up education and training to the wider world.

IRENE.T Network has the objective to improve the key competencies, knowledge and skills for work and communication in the Third Sector. This objective complies with the key competencies for lifelong learning or Lisbon competences, thus to ensure that Europe’s citizens acquire the key competencies needed to enable them

to adapt at the flexible market. We mean competencies as a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to the context.

To seek good experiences in the Third Sector can be easy, but to know if they can be used in another country it is not easy. For this reason IRENE.T created some tools, e.g. the IRENE.T “Identity card” of Best Practices and the “Chart of competencies”, helping the organizations to find comparable cases.

IRENE.T Network contributes mainly to improve three of the key competencies identified in the Lisbon Programme: ICT competencies, learning to learn and sense of initiative and entrepreneurship.

c. The Europe 2020 Strategies

The **Europe 2020 Strategy**, follow-up to the former Lisbon-Strategy, focuses on a trio of priorities which are linked and will reinforce each other:

- Smart growth: developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation.
- Sustainable growth: promoting a more resource efficient, greener and more competitive economy.
- Inclusive growth: fostering a high-employment economy delivering social and territorial cohesion.

The IRENE.T Network – with its policies, services and actions - contributes mainly to inclusive and sustainable growth, being strictly linked to Third Sector empowerment, to skills and competences able to improve social and sustainable impact on communities.

The IRENE.T Network/Project operated in the same direction of the brand new **Education and Training 2020 (ET 2020) strategy**.

Notably, the Strategic objective 2: Improving the quality and efficiency of education and training fits perfectly with the role played by the Network in Third Sector’s training empowerment/implementation, “developing the excellence and attractiveness at all levels of education and training that will allow Europe to retain a strong global role”.

Moreover, the IRENE.T Network – thanks to social values addressed, to involvement of social actors together with Vocational Education and Training agencies - complies with the Strategic objective 3: “Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship” to extent that Education should promote intercultural competences, democratic values and respect for fundamental rights and the environment, as well as combat all forms of discrimination, equipping all young people to interact positively with their peers from diverse backgrounds”.