



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme



**HERITAGE & NATURAL RESOURCES FOR GREEN
ENTREPRENEURSHIP (HENGE) PROJECT
PROJECT NUMBER 2011-1-ESI-LE005-35905**

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT



September 2013

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Heritage and Natural Resources for Green Entrepreneurship (HENGE) Project has sought to provide support to individuals living in rural areas that are interested in exploring self-employment as a viable career option. Led by Lawton School and funded under the EU Leonardo da Vinci funding programme, the Project has developed a virtual training programme that will allow individuals to make an assessment as to whether they could start a business making use of the heritage and green resources in their immediate area.
- 1.2 A Quality Plan has been developed to oversee the HENGE project. This Plan identified the need to employ an independent external evaluator to support the role of the Project Coordinator and Internal Evaluator in managing and quality assuring the work of the Project. Brian Stratford & Associates were appointed to carry out this work.
- 1.3 The role and responsibilities of the external evaluator have been as follows:
- Liaise with relevant key personnel from each of the partner organisations.
 - Design and analyse tailored questionnaires circulated throughout the period of the project.
 - Attendance at one transnational meeting in Edinburgh.
 - Review of documentation relevant to the project.
 - Review of secondary material relating to the project including internal monitoring and evaluation material of the participating partner organisations.
 - Production of an Interim External Evaluation at the 12-month stage.
 - Production of a Final External Evaluation at the end of the project.
 - To support the Internal Evaluator throughout the Project.
- 1.4 This report presents a final external evaluation report for the two-year operation of the Project up to the end of September 2013. Where possible, the report will attempt to avoid duplication with the interim reports produced by the Project Coordinator and Internal Evaluator.
- 1.5 Having provided some background to the Project and what it had hoped to achieve, the report will consider the extent to which the quantitative targets have been met and any issues in relation to these. This will be followed by some qualitative analysis of how the Project has operated.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 HENGE is a Transnational European Union project delivered by a multidisciplinary group of 8 partner organisations from 6 countries. The Project has received support from the Leonardo da Vinci funding programme that focuses on vocational education and training and seeks to address the learning and teaching needs of individuals across Europe.
- 2.2 Building on the previous success of the Panorama Grundtvig Project, HENGE has sought to adapt and transfer an innovative methodology and curriculum for natural and cultural heritage resource evaluation and rural entrepreneurship, and to transfer this from Spain and the UK to new geographic markets in Lithuania, Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey.
- 2.3 The Europe 2020 strategy identified the need for training to be provided in basic green enterprise skills. HENGE has created a virtual training programme that encourages individuals living in rural areas to maximise their built, natural and cultural heritage resources through entrepreneurship. Users will receive training on sustainable rural enterprise opportunities and 'green enterprise skills' allowing participants to consider setting up a micro-company or agri-tourism business as an option. Hosting the resources on an e-learning platform ensures the training modules are accessible beyond the funding period for the project. In particular, the Project seeks to provide support to disadvantaged groups in the labour market, including young people, women, older people and the disabled.
- 2.4 The HENGE project addresses a number of General and Operational Leonardo Programme objectives as follows:
- To support participants in training and further training activities in the acquisition and the use of knowledge, skills and qualifications to facilitate personal development, employability and participation in the European labour market;
 - To improve the quality and to increase the volume of co-operation between institutions or organisations providing learning opportunities, enterprises, social partners and other relevant bodies throughout Europe;
 - To facilitate the development of innovative practices in the field of vocational education and training other than at tertiary level, and their transfer, including one participating country to others;
 - To encourage the learning of modern foreign languages; and

- To support the development of innovative ICT-based content, services, pedagogies and practice for lifelong learning.

In addition, the Programme addresses the national priority of addressing the regional imbalance between supply and demand for jobs by providing training with the potential to create jobs, arrest the migration of skilled labour and address chronic high unemployment in rural areas across the EU.

2.5 The Project Partners established the following objectives:

- To transfer the results of the root project Panorama in order to significantly improve the situation of the labour market and employment policy in the innovation-importing countries;
- To raise awareness of local heritage and natural resources and how they may be used in the context of rural entrepreneurship;
- To develop a virtual training platform and training programme;
- To deliver an information campaign to reach training institutions;
- To bridge the gap of regional disparities in employment performance; and
- To create conditions for applying the principles of Sustainable Development throughout local rural business proposals.

2.6 As a result of the successful delivery of the Project, it was hoped that the following outcomes would be achieved:

- The development of a training programme which will assist dwellers in rural communities to consider self-employment and set up their own green business;
- Provision of a tool to review processes and look for ways to use heritage and natural resources more effectively which can help rural businesses reduce their environmental impacts;
- Provision of a trans-sectoral approach to vocational education and training and to the labour market;
- Transfer of the materials to an e-learning management system;
- Translation of the results (training modules, user manual, and information material) into the languages of the innovation-importing partner countries;
- Testing the training solution in target markets;
- Production of dissemination materials;
- Production of a project website; and

- Development of an on line modular course in 6 languages.
- 2.7 As a result of the Project and the support provided, it is intended that the resources developed continue to be available following the lifespan of the project. The Partners envisage mainstreaming and multiplication of the training programme into the national arena of each partner country and will transfer the materials to an e-learning management system ensuring access post September 2013.

2.8 Project Delivery

The delivery of the Project has been divided into eight Work Packages as follows:

Work Package	Activity	Led by
1	Project Management	Lawton School
2	Quality Management	CEL (now Inspire)
3	Research and Needs Analysis	CCIBN
4	Adaptation and Transfer: Development of Training Framework	Oatridge (now SRUC)
5	Pilot Testing	CCIT
6	Dissemination, Valorisation and Promotion	Assist Net
7	Transfer of Materials Developed to LMS	Lawton School
8	Implementation	Alytus

The quantitative outputs through the work packages will be considered in the next Section. Detailed feedback on the documentation produced will have been provided directly to each partner at the time of production and so will not be covered again in this report.

3. REVIEW OF PROJECT OUTPUTS

3.1 The following provides an overview of the quantitative outputs achieved during the two years of project delivery. These have been organised into the work package they form a part of. Some comment will be made on each based on the observations of the external evaluator. Where applicable, the views of the other partners as gathered in the consultation interviews will be presented in the next Section of this report.

3.2 Work Package 1 – Project Management

Outputs: 5 partner meetings held (Gijon, Edinburgh, Tarsus, Sofia, and Bistrita) with minutes taken;
Financial and administrative systems/documentation put in place, including legal and IPR declarations, case study consent form and tasks and deadlines document;
Project website created; and
Coordinator Interim and Final reports prepared for National Agency.

As Project Co-ordinator, Lawton School has had overall responsibility for this work package, although with many of the activities being delivered at a national level, all of the partners have had responsibilities in this area. Overall, the project has run smoothly with no major delays in the activities to be delivered. This can largely be attributed to the professional project management displayed by Lawton School. The finance and administrative systems created were fit for purpose and show the lead partners' past experience of working on EU programmes.

A Tasks and Deadlines document was created documenting all of the activities to be undertaken by project partners as listed in the original application, the deadline for their completion and any explanation if there has been a variance from the target set. This is an excellent way of ensuring that partners are aware of what it is that they have to do whilst also assisting with the monitoring of progress across the work packages. This document could have been updated and circulated more regularly, perhaps monthly, as a reminder to all partners about their responsibilities and to ensure that all partners are aware of what is happening in all work packages at that time.

The completion of the Declaration of Intellectual Property Rights can be considered good practice in ensuring that the use of the materials produced by the Project are clear, both during and following its completion. This has been an issue on a number of other EU funded projects and it is good that this was resolved at an early stage.

The Project website (www.henge-rural.eu) has been professionally produced and reflects well on the project. The site is colourful and appealing to look at, contains all the key information required on the project but is not too 'text heavy'. It is easy to navigate and the training materials are easy to use. The website has also been updated regularly, an area that has proved to be a significant drawback in other EU Projects.

Project planning and management will be considered again in the next section of this report to consider the responses from project partners. The final report by the Project Coordinator will also deal with project management issues.

3.3 Work Package 2 – Quality Management

Outputs: Quality Assurance and Evaluation Plan;
 3 Internal Quality reports; and
 Interim and Final External Quality reports

A Quality Assurance and Evaluation Plan was established in January 2012 setting out the ways in which Project progress would be monitored in terms of both processes and products. A report was produced by the internal evaluator following the project meetings in Edinburgh, Tarsus and Sofia as well as an interim report on the first year of the projects operation focussing on the outcomes achieved to date. The external evaluator has provided a report at the halfway point in October 2012 and on completion of project delivery.

The Plan provided for both the internal and external evaluator to produce reports after each meeting. This was considered to be excessive for a project of this size. Instead, the internal evaluator has produced a short report following each project meeting based on feedback gathered from the partners using a survey monkey questionnaire. Not all partners that attended meetings completed questionnaires in the timescale established and this contributed to delays in the internal evaluator being able to complete the reports. The external evaluator has assisted

in the reporting process where required. It would have been difficult for the external evaluator to produce a report on meetings at which he was not in attendance.

The evaluation process has made use of survey monkey as a tool for gathering information from project partners. This means that partners can be sent a link, complete the questions and submit the answers. The software collates the answers making it easier for these to be reported on, particularly where the answers are quantitative. Whilst this is not a particularly new method, it can be considered innovative when set against other EU Projects that persist in using paper-based questionnaires that require a lot more effort in collating and deciphering the information provided. This technique should be considered for use by all partners in future EU projects.

3.4 Work Package 3 – Research and Needs Analysis

Outputs: Guidelines and Methodology for Needs Analysis;
Questionnaire and Focus Group templates; and
Needs Analysis Report produced.

The production of the Needs Analysis report provides an important foundation for the delivery of the remainder of the Project by identifying key issues for the target group to be considered when creating delivery materials. A questionnaire survey was carried out with the potential target audience with focus groups held to further discuss the information gathered. The results of this process were fed into CCIBN as the partner responsible for this work package and a detailed Needs Analysis report produced in May and agreed with the Project Coordinator in July 2012. The bulk of this process was complete by the time the external evaluator was appointed so it was not possible to contribute to many of the activities as they happened.

It is very important when carrying out an analysis such as this that the Report produced is used to inform the materials that will be developed at a later stage in the Project. With this Project being the next stage in the development of the Panorama project, further consideration could have been given to the way in which the information was gathered and reported to make it easier to draw a direct correlation between the findings and the training resources being produced.

If time had permitted, it would have been beneficial for the questionnaire information to have been submitted, collated and reported on before the focus groups took place. The focus groups could then have been used to discuss the overall findings from the 6 partner countries as opposed to focussing on the individual findings for their own country.

3.5 Work Package 4 – Adaptation and transfer: Development of training framework

Output: Curriculum Framework produced;
8 Training Modules, Tutor Guide and Profile produced; and
General Course Instructions and Help with Navigation and
Exercises documents produced (and linked through e-learning
platform).

A Curriculum Framework was produced and discussed at the Edinburgh meeting providing an overview of the topics that would be included in the Modules. The Framework provided a balance of subjects combining general business skills with the specific topics in relation to heritage, conservation and the environment. The final course content is quite different to what had originally been envisaged which reflects the typical changes that are made to content as it is being developed.

The training course was split into 8 modules:

- 1 Evaluation of Resources – Part 1
- 2 Evaluation of Resources – Part 2
- 3 Heritage Conservation
- 4 Conservation, Resources & Sustainable Development
- 5 Green Skills for Rural Business
- 6 Planning your Rural Business
- 7 Finance and Marketing
- 8 Legislation and Liability

The external evaluator provided feedback on the individual modules as these were produced with changes made accordingly. The modules as available through the website look excellent. The structure is easy to understand with care having been taken to ensure that there is not an assumption of previous understanding from the individual that the materials are targeted at. The language used was intended to be more straightforward than other existing

business materials that exist and the training course has achieved this well. The exercises allow the participant to apply the learning in practice in a user-friendly way.

Whilst the end product is excellent, there are several points to be considered in the process to develop the materials. As the main output from the project, feedback should have been provided on the quality and content of the modules by all partners in the project but this was not the case. There is a danger that partners focus only on the work package that they are responsible for as opposed to the main outputs from the project overall.

The modules were developed by one partner, though more than one member of staff from the partner organisation was involved in the development process. This could be seen in the modules developed with some inconsistency in the language and layout used. Where possible (and it is recognised that this may not be possible) one person should be responsible for developing all of the materials on any future project.

Finally, the original modules produced were considered to be too wordy given the limited budget for translation and the need to translate the contents into 5 languages other than English. Considerable work had to be undertaken by the Project Coordinator to re-write the contents in English and to reduce down the words used before these could be translated. The final product did therefore not contain all of the content that had originally been created.

3.6 Work Package 5 – Pilot Testing

Output: Delivery of test runs in 4 transfer countries; and
Report produced on the results of the pilot testing.

Pilot testing took place in each of the importing countries, Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania and Lithuania in May 2013. Each centre tested 3 modules each, all Centres testing modules 1 and 2 with one of modules 5-8. In total, 49 individuals participated, 75% of these in a tutor-supported centre and the remainder undertaking unsupported online self-learning. 61% of the participants were female with a mix of age ranges and educational backgrounds attending.

Feedback was sought from both participants and the tutors that supported the classes and this has been reported on by CCIT as the partner responsible.

Highlights from this report would include:

- 90% of participants replied excellent or good when asked if the training had met their needs;
- All participants rated the content as excellent or good and considered the web platform to be accessible, user-friendly and visually appealing;
- The main difficulty experienced was the volume of information for some (though not all) of the participants and they may perhaps require more time to go through this in future;
- 37% of participants were more likely to start a business now than before undertaking the training with 94% likely to revisit the platform again and to use the information to gather their ideas;
- Lack of money (62%) was the main reason given preventing participants from starting a business; and
- 98% would recommend the training platform to others.

Feedback from the trainers was also very positive with the course being considered as having met the participants' needs. Some issues raised for consideration would include:

- The need for basic computer skills for the participants to use the resources;
- The fact that this course cannot be used in isolation on starting a business but as a 'pre-enterprise' starting point before further support is sourced; and
- This course is about assessing your environment, how to do this and exploiting it not simply about starting a rural business.

The findings of the pilot test resulted in some minor changes to the materials but in general were very successful in validating the contents.

3.7 Work Package 6 – Dissemination, Valorisation and Promotion

Outputs: Dissemination Strategy Manual;
HENGE Project Logo and Leaflet produced;
Facebook page created;
5 Newsletters;
Press conference / local dissemination events;
Mailing lists of key contacts in each partner country; and
Final Conference delivered.

The aim of this work package is to ensure that the results and outcomes of the project are promoted and exploited over its 2-year duration. This has included putting a comprehensive plan in place, identification of key stakeholders at a national level, recording of dissemination activities in each partner country and the production of Newsletters to disseminate the project. As such, the dissemination and exploitation activities are the key to the overall success of the project as without making others aware of the work, the impact and reach of the project would be negligible. A separate report as an analysis of the dissemination activities has been produced for this work package.

It is clear from the level of organisation and the quality of the materials produced that the partner responsible for these work packages has considerable expertise and knowledge in this area. The newsletters are succinct but clearly convey the message to be related. The project has also benefited from being registered with the ENTER network allowing for promotion of the project across Europe and beyond the partner countries.

A rota for supplying relevant articles to the Facebook page was created with each partner sending articles relevant to the overall project subject matter. This worked well as a tool for promoting the work whilst also identifying key issues that could impact on those that would consider using the materials. This information will remain available now that the project has been completed.

Some partners were slow in supplying the details on their dissemination activities to the relevant partner and this caused delays on the reporting of information.

The final conference entitled 'Embracing Heritage in Green Rural Entrepreneurship' was held in Bistrita on 26th September and attended by more

than 90 individuals. Speeches were made by dignitaries from the host region, a presentation by the lead partner on the project activities and an interactive workshop to engage participants in the subject matter.

3.8 Work Package 7 – Transfer of the materials developed to the LMS

Output: E-learning platform identified and course materials linked; and Website hosting.

The outputs of this work package have been considered already when discussing the website and training modules. The e-learning platform is easily accessed from the website using a ‘pop-up’ and to the end user the link appears seamless. The platform will be hosted for 2 years by Lawton School.

3.9 Work Package 8 – Implementation

Outputs: Implementation and Exploitation of Project Results Strategy and Report produced.

An Implementation Strategy was produced setting out the way in which the project results and learning would be exploited beyond the funding period of the project in each of the partner countries. The Strategy sets out a range of general valorisation actions as well as specific activities to be undertaken by each partner as established through a questionnaire completed. The Strategy also identified the key training centres to be targeted in the import countries. A report on the success of the implementation activities will be prepared by the relevant partner.

3.10 Summary

The review of the work packages for the HENGE project has shown that the partners have been very successful in achieving the outputs set out in the original application. Whilst there were some delays in the delivery of activities, these did not have a detrimental effect overall on the successful completion of the Project in the timescale available. Responsibilities for each work package were clear from the outset and input was provided by partners when required.

The next Section of this report will consider some of the key themes emerging from the HENGE Project as drawn from the qualitative responses to the consultation questionnaires completed by project partners and from observations made by the external evaluator throughout the course of delivery of the Project.

4. QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

4.1 The following provides a qualitative overview of the operation of the HENGE project and attempts to draw out some of the themes emerging.

4.2 Project Delivery

4.2.1 Hoped HENGE project would achieve at the outset

Consultees were asked what they hoped that the project would achieve. Answers included:

- To build on the success of the Panorama project through the development of high quality outputs;
- To add to the existing portfolio of resources available to the organisation;
- To transfer the good practice learning to other countries;
- To develop resources with the potential to be commercially viable;
- To develop the skills and experience of staff involved in the project;
- To improve the reputation and visibility of the organisation;
- To provide a better understanding of EU cultures; and
- To create additional employment opportunities in rural areas.

4.2.2 Success in achieving what was proposed

Partners have indicated that all of the proposed achievements have been realised. The project has developed high quality outputs that have been successfully transferred to the importing countries with the potential for this to be utilised in the future. Both staff and organisations have developed as a result of involvement in the project. It will require a longer period of time to establish if employment increases in rural areas as a result of this project. When rating the project, partners scores averaged 1.4 (with 1 - very good and 2 - good).

4.2.3 Key reasons for the success of the work

Consultees were asked what they believed to be the key reasons for the relative success of this project. Responses included:

- **Quality of the training modules** – the modules were considered to be of a high quality, easy to use and would remain relevant and accessible to the target audience for the foreseeable future;
- **Timing of the project** – the project has been timely in terms of the issue of green entrepreneurship that have been addressed and to address issues that have arisen in importing countries;

- **Strength of the source materials** – having the Panorama training manual as a source was considered to be a strength as this provided the basis upon which to build the e-learning modules around;
- **Suitability of the transfer strategy** – partners considered this to be successful and would be effective in the importing countries;
- **Uniqueness of the materials** – one consultee stated that they were unaware of another course that was available that was dedicated towards entrepreneurship in rural areas;
- **Relevance of the outputs to the partners** – all of the partners have indicated that they plan to use the materials developed in the future and that they will enhance the existing offering that is available;
- **Project partnership** – the range of partners and types of organisations represented, combined with the individual expertise of the staff in both training delivery and on EU projects, was considered to be a key contributing factor to the success overall; and
- **Project Management** – very well organised when compared against some other EU funded projects worked on.

4.2.4 Unanticipated Benefits from the Project

Consultees identified a number of benefits that they had not anticipated at the outset of the project:

- The interest shown by young people in the project concept;
- Participants gaining a new perspective upon heritage;
- The knowledge acquired by partners from developing and delivering the project and the exchange of good practice;
- More detailed understanding of specific issues faced by rural communities and those at a disadvantage in the labour market across all of the partners states;
- What was proposed to be delivered was an online platform however this was able to be produced as an offline CD-Rom training platform. This is important as many of the target group do not have access to an internet connection;
- The opportunity to collaborate on future projects; and
- Increased visibility of the organisation at a national level.

4.2.5 Do differently if delivered again in future

Consultees identified a number of elements that they believe should be done differently if a project such as this was to be delivered again in the future:

- **Work Package workload** – some changes could be made to the work packages, including the organisation carrying out the e-learning platform being included as a partner not a sub-contractor and managing the workload associated with translation with a limited budget;
- **Word Count for Materials** – establishing the word count required for the materials early in the process would have reduced the overall size of the task and ensured that all relevant content developed was included;
- **Meeting Deadlines** – several work package leaders expressed some frustration at other partners not meeting deadlines that had been agreed or regularly reporting back on the activities they had undertaken. Consultees rated the ability of partners to meet deadlines as 2.1 on average (2 – good and 3 – adequate);
- **Agreement on Subject matter** – the project would have benefited from additional time spent early on in agreeing what the subject matter of the modules would be as opposed to simply seeking agreement on a definition of green entrepreneurship; and
- **Smart phone application** – with the growth in use of smart phones, particularly amongst young people, consideration could be given to developing resources that would be compatible with a smart phone.

4.3 Project Planning

In general, the project has been well planned and structured, reflecting the clear understanding that the Project Coordinator had for what was to be achieved. This was in some part due to past experience of delivering on EU Projects that involved the development of resources and applying the learning gained from these. Soft planning had been undertaken by the Coordinator prior to the first meeting and this allowed for delivery to begin on time.

When putting together the work packages for this project, Lawton School have clearly thought through the demarcation of the activities to ensure that there are no unnecessary overlaps in areas of responsibility. In the survey following the first meeting, all partners indicated that they were clear as to their responsibilities within their work package. This has been an issue on a number of EU Projects in

the past. There have also not been many tasks arising that were not anticipated in the original planning process, with additional activities taken on as required by the relevant partner.

As was mentioned earlier, the list of activities to be carried out that is produced following each project shaping meeting is an excellent way to plan and monitor the project as it progresses and makes it easy for all partners to see what they need to do and the timescale for completion. The project would have benefited with this document being updated and circulated more regularly to ensure all partners were aware of their ongoing requirements.

One consultee mentioned the potential for more interactions prior to the first actual meeting, perhaps through an online discussion, to establish a wider understanding of what the project would involve. Whilst this would potentially be a good idea, in practical terms it is unlikely to be possible, especially given that for some partners this was the first time they had engaged with this partnership.

4.4 Project Management

4.4.1 Role of the Coordinator

In a project with 8 partners, the role of the Project Coordinator in managing the progression of the project is very important. The role of the Coordinator should include:

- Acting as the Chairperson and taking minutes at project meetings;
- Taking the final decision on issues arising once the other partners have had the opportunity to have their say;
- Setting timescales for completion and ensuring where possible these are adhered to;
- Verifying the quality of the work produced under each work package, in conjunction with the internal and, where applicable, external evaluator; and
- Managing the correspondence between project meetings to ensure partners are kept informed and that issues are resolved as they arise.

When asked to assess the role of the Coordinator, all but one partner considered them to be very good with the other partner answering good. Several consultees mentioned that the overall management was much better than on previous EU projects they had worked on.

4.4.2 Project Meetings

Project meetings can be considered to be successful, with all partners rating them very good or good. This backs up the findings of the internal evaluator reporting on the individual meetings. Having only attended the meeting in Edinburgh it is difficult to comment further on the meetings overall.

For the future, it would be beneficial if all documentation that is to be discussed at meetings is circulated to all partners in advance (preferably 2-3 days) to allow for this to be read and feedback prepared by partners as required.

4.4.3 Communication

Overall communication has been good in this project with all partners rating this to be very good or good. There have been a number of issues in relation to communication within the project thus far. Without looking at the individual incidents, a number of overall principles can be applied:

- When a request for information is sent from one partner to another, the Project Coordinator should be copied in so that they are aware of what has been requested. If the information is required from only one partner, then all partners do not need to be included in this.
- When a request for information is received by email, the recipient should acknowledge the email so that the sender knows it has arrived. Where possible, the recipient should give an indication as to when the information will be available, if the requested information cannot be supplied at that time.
- Where information has not been received within the requested or agreed timescale, a follow up email should be sent by the partner, and copied to the Project Coordinator, as required.
- Consideration should be given to establishing a generic mailing list at the outset with all key staff from partner organisations having their email addresses added to this. This has worked well on other EU projects and ensures that all staff have been made aware of key issues arising and copied in on all correspondence. Whilst this has led to staff receiving emails that they may not have needed to see, staff have not missed out on information by not being included on email lists – a problem that has existed on many other transnational EU projects.

There will be occasions where information cannot be delivered within the agreed timescale but this in itself should not be a problem. The problem exists where the

partner does not communicate that there will be a delay thus holding up the overall delivery of the project.

4.4.4 Project Partnership

The partner organisations bring together a wealth of experience from a wide range of different backgrounds to the HENGE project. In most instances, partners were well suited to the particular role that they have been assigned to in the project as evidenced by the high standard of the outputs outlined in Section 3 above. In one instance, a report had to be re-written as the standard was not of the required quality but this was an isolated instance and perhaps reflected a capacity issue on the part of that partner.

4.5 Project Evaluation

The external evaluator was appointed in March with the initiation meeting taking place in April 2012. Where possible, the external evaluator should be involved in the Project at the earliest possible stage so that they can inform and advise on the processes followed as required. This Project was already well underway by the time the external evaluator was appointed thus reducing the opportunity to play a part in the formative stages. Ideally, the evaluator should have been appointed following the first project meeting and in position before the end of 2011.

The external evaluator was in attendance at only one partner meeting, the second to take place in Edinburgh. This is not ideal and the evaluator should attend at least two meetings if the budget is available. Ideally, the evaluator would carry out interviews with partners and, if possible, participants at the final meeting. In addition, where possible the evaluator would attend some of the project delivery if this is taking place in their resident country. This would not have been possible on the HENGE project.

4.6 Impact of the Project

With the project having only recently been completed and the materials made available, it is considered to be premature to attempt to definitively measure the impact of the HENGGE project at this stage. The following are the suggested outcomes put forward by the project partners.

4.6.1 Added value to Project Partners

Partners were asked about the added value that the project has brought for their organisations, all of which relate to the training modules or e-learning platform:

- Providing a tool to engage with individuals, particularly young people, in rural and urban areas to develop an understanding of heritage and the issues encountered in rural areas;
- A means of helping to raise awareness of some issues surrounding rural community development;
- Adapt materials to support those clients who are actively interested in farm diversification or rural business;
- Diversify the training offered to unemployed people with disabilities in rural areas;
- Increased awareness of the issues facing rural areas, including depopulation, and that this is being considered on a pan-European scale;
- Improve our training on entrepreneurial skills and try to provide our first distance learning course; and
- The development of the e-learning platform, using Moodle instead of Dokeos, was a huge learning curve which will come to our stead in the development of future online courses.

4.6.2 Target geographical areas

Partners were asked to identify the impact that the project has had on the target geographical areas in their countries:

- In Spain, the course has been sent to 21 regional development authorities and 10 VET training centres specifically involved in rural training, with an invitation to use the course with a positive response from 3 of these thus far.
- In Scotland, 9 staff from SRUC, 20 local/regional enterprises and 80 students have been directly engaged with HENGGE, with the free online content available through a link on the SRUC website.

4.6.3 National VET systems

Consultees were asked about the impact that the project is likely to have on the VET systems in their countries:

- In Spain, it is intended to look into validation of the course for transversal training for a Professional Certificate in the Ministry of Employment;
- In Scotland, SRUC is the national institution for land-based education which has enabled HENGE to reach a national audience and will be used in supporting vocational land-based Access courses delivered across the organisation at its 6 campuses;
- In Northern Ireland, 10 Local Enterprise Agencies based in rural areas have been identified as having the potential to utilise the resources working in conjunction with local Councils and Local Action Groups;
- In Bulgaria, the training has been introduced to the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training and the project products can be registered for discussion and approval by NAVET for nation-wide use by all Bulgarian VET centres; and
- In Romania, the training modules are ready to be used by 10 training centres.

4.6.4 Individuals that will benefit

In terms of individuals that will benefit from the project in 12 months time, partners identified a number of potential groupings:

- **Young people** – several partners have identified that young people have expressed a particular interest in the modules developed. In Scotland, it is anticipated that there will be 50 students to benefit through rural skills programmes targeted at individuals Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET's).
- **Women and Older People** – there is the potential to target women and older people who are not in employment to consider maximising the resources available to them to generate an income alongside their existing commitments.
- **Unemployed** – the HENGE modules can be utilised in skills-based training used to encourage unemployed people back to work or into self-employment.
- **Redundancy** – with the economic situation at present, there is the potential to include elements of the HENGE modules in courses targeted at individuals that have been made redundant in rural areas.

- **Potential Entrepreneurs** – the training modules will be used with those that are interested in starting a business in a rural area, for example in Northern Ireland they will form a part of the existing Exploring Enterprise pre-enterprise programme.
- **People with Disabilities** – the modules will be used by several partners when working with individuals with disabilities to allow them to consider options for generating income in their local area.

Partners were asked to estimate the total number of individuals they believe would benefit in the next 12 months in their target area. As each partner used different criteria to calculate this amount, with some using more conservative estimates than others, it is not possible to come up with a definitive figure but is likely to be more than 800 individuals in total.

4.7 Future Delivery

Finally, partners were asked about future delivery beyond the funding period. All partners expressed an interest in working together again in the future if the opportunity was available to do so.

4.7.1 Use / Maintenance of Project Outputs

Consultees were asked how the resources would be used and maintained:

- In Spain, the course will be included on the Lawton School suite of online courses and resources will be put aside to finance hosting the platform;
- In Scotland, modules will be used by SRUC staff in the provision and delivery of training and access maintained through SRUC website;
- In NI, a dedicated area is being created on the Inspire website to highlight European programmes. Funding will be sought to further exploit the use of the modules;
- In Bulgaria, online course will be offered by Assist Net to disabled people trying to find employment in rural areas;
- In Romania, training will be provided and ESF funding sought for this;
- In Turkey, elements of HENGE will be used in existing entrepreneurship training delivery; and
- In Lithuania, new distance-learning courses and seminars in rural areas.

4.7.2 Other organisations interested in using materials

Partners identified other organisations that are interested in using the HENGE materials in the future.

- In Spain, the Carreño Council plans to include the course in its offer of financed courses and the Mancomunidad de Cabo Peñas has expressed interest in the course. In Castilla and Leon AFACI- Asociación de Formadores/as profesionales para el Aprendizaje Compartido y la Innovación have been interested in the course from the outset of the project;
- In Scotland, interest has been shown from private training providers, Local Authorities, Community Interest Company and other social enterprises, wildlife and conservation charities;
- In NI, 10 LEA's which are best placed and have identifiable links with rural communities;
- In Bulgaria, 15, public and private bodies in the field of adult education for the disabled and primarily for the deaf and hard-of-hearing have volunteered to present the results of HENGE in their institutions, with the results also offered for delivery to 10 VET centres in the area;
- In Romania, the Local Occupation service, Other Chambers of Commerce and 10 other organisations;
- In Turkey, Tarsus Public Education Centre and Tarsus Agriculture Chamber; and
- In Lithuania, rural communities: Luksnenai, Miklusenai, Varena, Lazdijai, Alytus region labour market.

4.7.3 Commercialisation

Partners were asked if they planned to use the training modules on a commercial basis or to provide them free of charge. In Scotland, Northern Ireland and Turkey the modules would be available free of charge. In Spain, Bulgaria and Lithuania, the modules would be free when used for self-learning but would be charged for where tutor-supported. In Romania, ESF funding would be sought to allow the modules to be provided free of charge but the intention would be to provide these commercially in the longer-term.

4.7.4 Continued relevance of Outputs

Finally, partners were asked about the factors that would have an influence on the HENGE outputs:

- The sustainable use of natural and heritage resources is a topic which is increasingly predominant. It is the key to the future of the countryside. The HENGE project is among the pioneers in this field. Therefore we consider that the product of the HENGE project will grow in importance as it becomes more widely available.
- The National, European and International drive/direction in relation to rural development.
- The online nature of the programme will require weblinks to be checked and updated as time goes on.
- Continued funding in supporting rural community development.
- Changes in the numbers of people accessing formal education and leaving with formal qualifications.
- The level and rate of depopulation of rural areas and the accessibility of an internet connection and IT equipment.
- The training materials and platform in isolation are not adequate enough within the context of Northern Ireland. Experience has shown us that starting a business is isolating and people need to be supported with help and advice throughout the process.
- If the HENGE course is endorsed by NAVET and becomes an official part of the list of professions in Bulgaria, then its results' popularity and implementation will increase.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The HENGE project has been successfully delivered over the past two years. The work has seen the transfer of a Training Manual into the creation of an innovative 8-module training programme hosted on an e-learning platform providing high quality information in 6 languages for those interested in setting up a micro-business or agri-tourism in a rural area. The resources created are accessible and presented in a user-friendly format.
- 5.2 The partnership formed to deliver the project has been successful and well-managed. All of the outputs have been achieved with only minimal delays in the delivery and the final conference to launch the materials was considered a success. Partners have co-operated well in general and there is scope for them to build on this partnership again in the future.
- 5.3 It will be in the period following the project that the real benefit of the project may be seen. The partners and their stakeholders have the opportunity to utilise the materials to address some of the issues faced by rural areas, including unemployment, lack of skills and qualifications, migration and regional imbalances in the demand and supply of jobs. This report has shown that there is potential in each of the partner countries to disseminate the results further and encourage their use in a range of institutions. There also remains the potential in several states for the resources to be adopted and mainstreamed into the education curriculum.