



**THE LIFELONG LEARNING PROGRAMME 2007-13:  
EARLALL POSITION PAPER ON THE TRANSVERSAL STRAND**

**Background**

1. On 14 July 2004 the European Commission published its proposals for the next generation of programmes in the field of education and training running from 2007-13. This new lifelong learning programme will comprise of four sub-programmes (Comenius for school education, Erasmus for higher education, Leonardo da Vinci for vocational training, Grundtvig for adult education) and a series of transversal measures, covering Information Technology, language learning, policy development as well as the dissemination and exploitation of results.
2. The European Parliament has adopted its opinion at first reading at the end of October 2005 with Education Ministers agreeing a “partial political agreement” on 15 November.
3. EARLALL adopted a position paper setting out the association’s views on the Integrated Lifelong Learning Programme at the Gothenburg General Assembly on 8-9 September 2004.
4. At the Mainz General Assembly on 29 September 2005, EARLALL members agreed that the association should make a further response to programme focusing on the dissemination and exploitation of results dimension of the “transversal strand”. The aim of the paper will be to feed into the ongoing stakeholder consultations on the implementation of the Integrated Lifelong Learning Programme post 2006 and the development of a broad strategy for the dissemination and exploitation of results across all the European funding streams within the mandate of the Commission’s Directorate for education and culture. This said, many of the points in the paper would be applicable for a strategy covering all European funding programmes.
5. This document, adopted by the Board at its meeting on 15 December 2005, represents the collective view of the European Association of Regional and Local Authorities for Lifelong Learning, which comprises of 20 regional and local authorities from 10 countries across the European Union. It also includes the key recommendations made at the UK Presidency *Mobilising Experience* conference held in Cardiff on 29-30 November 2005.
6. With regard to the Lifelong Learning programme in general, the Association feels that:
  - particular emphasis should be given to the development of the Grundtvig sub programme and to the language learning dimension of the transversal strand;
  - provision for the Leonardo da Vinci sub-programme should be maintained in line with the breakdown proposed by the Commission in view of the fact that vocational education and training is vital to the attainment of the Lisbon goals
  - the dissemination and exploitation of results is particularly important in supporting the Leonardo and Grundtvig sub programmes.



## Introduction

7. EARLALL members are responsible for promoting lifelong learning in their regions and localities, and have been actively involved in the dissemination and exploitation of results strand within the current Leonardo programme. Moreover, experts from EARLALL member regions are involved in the valorisation expert group and representatives from EARLALL sit on the valorisation stakeholder group.
8. The Association feels that there is a lot of scope for further joint working to promote the exchange and transfer of good policies and practices between regions in the European Union. While there is increasing understanding of what dissemination and exploitation of results means, there remain many questions as to how to deliver it in practice.
9. Member regions support this work for several reasons. Firstly, no region has all the answers and learning from high quality, innovative EC funded projects can help regional governments in terms of policy development. Secondly, because optimising resources makes economic sense and is part of good governance. Thirdly, because regional governments are closer to grassroots practitioners, they can be a vehicle to promote the take-up of programme and project results in their regions. Fourthly, their proximity to practitioners means that regional governments can more easily transfer project outcomes to mainstream practice and policy development.
10. EARLALL is therefore pleased that the dissemination and exploitation of results<sup>1</sup> is to be given much more prominence and priority in the new Lifelong Learning programme through the following measures:
  - Encouraging the best use of results, innovative products and processes and the exchange of good practice as they are identified as one of the specific objectives of the new programme
  - The new sub-strand “key action 4” within the transversal measures strand of the programme to disseminate and exploit results (Commission proposes allocating EUR 98 million over 7 years for this strand)
  - The elements within the Comenius, Erasmus and Grundtvig sub-programmes aimed at promoting the dissemination and transfer of innovation and best practice
  - The objective of developing multi-lateral projects in Leonardo to improve training systems by focusing on the transfer of innovation involving the linguistic, cultural and legal adaptation to national needs of innovative products and processes developed in different contexts



## Recommendations

11. In terms of taking this work forward, while there is no single blueprint for success given that each sector, programme and country are different and that dissemination and exploitation should be adapted accordingly, the Association feels that the following actions should be prioritised:

### *Matching supply and demand*

- The Commission, the national agencies and other stakeholders should work to change the mindset of promoters, winning their hearts and minds, so that they systematically identify (through market research); consider and involve the end user in their projects from the outset
- The Commission and National Agencies guidance notes could give concrete examples of how to practically implement dissemination and exploitation, for example looking at case studies of how to involve end users in product design
- The European Commission should establish virtual or physical networks (via contact and thematic seminars, study visits, other networking opportunities) to bring together supply and demand

### *Making best practice "next practice"*

- Further development of criteria to help select the best, most interesting or useful results from the programmes
- The current Leonardo rating system, which assesses final results/products, could be extended to the post 2006 Lifelong Learning programme where relevant;
- The provision of clear guidance on commercialisation and issues around intellectual property, an important point given the multi-lateral and transnational dimension of the projects;
- The promotion, to the extent possible, of a standard approach to reporting results across all EC funded programmes (DG EAC, DG EMPL, DG INFO-SOC etc) to allow more and better cross-fertilisation between programmes;
- A single reference point should be established at national level (or sub-national level where appropriate) to inform potential promoters of the results of previously supported projects thereby transposing results across practitioner and trainer communities
- Recognise and optimise the role of EU level networks and Associations like EARLALL in making best practice next practice
- Integrating a dissemination/exploitation requirement to all EC funded projects where feasible, as is the case with the current Leonardo programme, and considering how the Commission, the Member States and National Agencies can provide financial – bonus payments, prizes or higher % of EC funding – and other incentives to encourage and support valorisation;



- Working to raise awareness among promoters that they must be flexible when transferring results to other geographical, cultural or social contexts as the original project will often need to be radically adapted

#### *Accessing information on projects*

- Persuading promoters of the benefits of disseminating and exploiting results so that there is “buy-in” from their part to keeping their web-sites live for three years after the lifetime of the project and entering information about their projects onto a database (actions which should be written into contracts, with further encouragement to be provided through financial and/or other incentives as noted above);
- Use of major IT providers to produce single, multi-lingual, user-friendly portal to search for project results across EC funded projects based on standardised reporting forms and the quality controlled, integrated databases
- Development of Commission wide web-site aimed at disseminating and exploiting project results with “project of the day” highlighted on the Commission’s daily news service

#### *Providing Incentives to disseminate and exploit*

- Applying the current EQUAL model, whereby the last year of the project is dedicated to the dissemination and exploitation of results, to LLP projects where appropriate
- Considering EC financing rates of 80% under key action 4 or where valorisation activities are new (e.g. with regard to mobility) to encourage participation, particularly from small operators in the not for profit, community and voluntary sector who may need particular help to build-capacity and develop contacts with policy makers

#### *Support for smaller organisations*

- Exploring the possibility of funding networking/project development activities under Key Action 4 of the lifelong learning programme in line with the Grundtvig sub-programme
- Further consider the needs of smaller organisations and their ability to cope with any new demands arising from the drive to further disseminate and exploit results e.g. the challenge of EU level mainstreaming etc

#### *Mainstreaming*

- With a view to mainstreaming projects results, the Association recognises the importance of networking with policy makers in order to inform them of project results and feels that advice should be available to promoters on effective methods of communicating with decision-makers



12. As regards targeting under key action 4, the emphasis must be on funding fewer quality projects – allowing promoters more lead in time and support to properly prepare their projects. That said, it will be important to ensure a good spread of projects that cover connecting practice to policy development (with national and regional governments the key actors) and mobility, together with practitioner to practitioner projects. It is also important that priority is given to projects which attract partners from different parts of Europe. Moreover, there should be no overly prescriptive definition of themes/priorities other than the over-arching Lisbon/Maastricht/Copenhagen agendas.
13. In addition, EARLALL believes that in presenting the future calls for proposal the by-word should be maximum flexibility for the promoters. Given the stages involved in valorisation (identification of need, selection of relevant project results, transfer, adaptation, testing, refinement..), the duration of projects should generally be up to three years.

***EARLALL: contribution of the Association***

14. As the Association representing regional governments and local authorities with policy responsibility for lifelong learning, EARLALL believes it has a central role to play in the new generation of European funding programmes notably the Lifelong Learning programme and the European Social Fund, as well as in “making best practice next practice”. With regard to the transversal strand (key action 4) of the Lifelong Learning Programme, the association could, for example:
  - work to promote involvement where participation has generally been low for example mobility actions in Leonardo
  - organise a regional platform bringing together promoters from member regions to exchange ideas and practices thereby promoting transfer
  - use the Association to make good/interesting results visible and bring them to the attention of decision-makers at local, national, EU and sectoral level so as to promote EU level mainstreaming
  - work with the Committee of the Regions and the European Commission to develop a quality label rewarding the best examples of dissemination and exploitation of results.

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