



EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF CYFENTER 2 DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP 2005-2007

TRANSNATIONAL REPORT
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Preface

External evaluation was commissioned by the Cyfenter 2 Development Partnership, funded under Equal in September 2005 this transnational report builds on the work and reports that have been produced by Consultus and focuses on transnational activities in the period September 2005 to March 2007.

The perspective of the report is to evaluate Cyfenter 2 within a transnational partnership; it is not intended to be an evaluation of the transnational partners.

The external evaluators would like acknowledge and thank the transnational evaluators particularly Germany (*EXZEPT*) and Sweden (Entree for there contribution to the final Transnational evaluation. Consultus would also like to thank the Cyfenter 2 management and operational team, the DP members and the transnational co-ordinators for their time, support and co-operation in the work leading to this report.

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Executive Summary

The second phase of the Cyfenter Development Partnership (Cyfenter 2 DP) is part of round 2 of the EQUAL Community Initiative that *'Tests and promotes new ways of tackling all forms of discrimination and inequalities in the labour market, both for those in work and for those seeking work.'*

The Development Partnership is jointly funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) from July 2005 until June 2007.

An integral and vital dimension of Cyfenter 2 – and one of the EQUAL principles is Transnational partnership working. This has been given practical expression through the formation of the E2 Transnational Partnership in which Cyfenter is working with development partnerships from Germany (*EXZEPT*), Sweden (*Entree*) and Portugal (*OESTE EMPREENDEDOR*).

The four development partnerships contracted through a Transnational Cooperation Agreement (TCA) worked jointly through the period of 2005 to 2007 to deliver their expressed strategic aim of *"Developing a wider European perspective on the nature and forms of discrimination and inequality in business and entrepreneurial support and to identify and learn from existing good practice, which can be fed into the domestic programmes of delivery in each of the partner countries"*.

This report is one of the evaluation outputs of the Cyfenter 2 development partnership. It focuses specifically on the processes activities and emerging outcomes of the transnational work of the Cyfenter 2 initiative as expressed in the E2 partnership. The findings of this report are based on extensive evidence provided by documents and interviews. Observation has been through the evaluators' participation in transnational activities. This final evaluation account of Cyfenter 2 reaches the judgement that the transnational working partnership has achieved substantial outputs during its lifespan.

Achievements that warrant this judgement include

- Management of the transnational activities - ran as stated within the TCA work plan with little if any 'slippage'.
- The overwhelming consensus within the domestic development partnership that the Cyfenter Team had managed the process well – and positive references were made to timings of meetings, reporting, canvassing engagement and generally enabling the participation of Development Partner members.
- The Transnational work was given status – Cyfenter was represented by members from senior management roles with strategic remits.
- A series of transnational workshops and study visits took place where exchange of practice was the key focus – these workshops were well structured, well attended and documented.
- DP members became engaged in planning and/or delivering '*spin off*' transnational activity, which resulted in new project development.
- Working with transnational partners was an 'innovative' practice for many of the organisations involved in Cyfenter 2.
- Transnational working offered the Development Partners opportunities to learn and share practice - it also enabled the building of capacity amongst the Development Partnership. Developing know how of, and from, the formation, management and processes of transnational working practices.
- The emergence of common themes and interests enabled the partnership to '*gel*' for example the theme of incubators –Transnational partners expressed interest in the 'incubator' aspect and two partners suggested they might extend this to a more structured analysis.
- The Cyfenter Team brought together the four partner evaluators to discuss evaluation methodologies – which offered an opportunity to produce an academic paper by the Internal Evaluation for presentation at GB National Level. Additionally, the idea of bringing together the four evaluators has enabled this report to offer a '*snapshot*' from a Transnational partner perspective.

Observations and suggestions raised during the evaluation

- Communication of the broader Transnational agenda to the Development Partnership at the outset of the project, may have offered an earlier '*buy in*' to Transnational work by all domestic partners.
- The provision of financial support for example in the form of remuneration for staff 'cover' for Development Partners to participate in Transnational work and additional encouragement of joint working on comparative studies may have resulted in further partner participation.
- An involvement of politicians and policy makers at workshop seminars and a deeper understanding of the wider Cyfenter agenda may have raised the profile of the Transnational work and created a platform to appropriate policy links.
- Early links and strong interaction with GB EQUAL projects to maximise on thematic issues
- In preparation for mainstreaming and dissemination of domestic and Transnational activities, a caveat to be mindful of is flexibility to respond quickly to emerging policy and awareness of the external environment, thereby, minimising in loss of opportunities to raise the profile.
- Cyfenter may have missed an opportunity to maximise the use of expertise from the Development Partnership; for example to advise and lead on aspects of quality and equality.

Introduction

The Cyfenter 2 Development Partnership (DP) is supported by the European Social Fund (ESF) and is part of the round 2 EQUAL Community Initiative. Within this initiative Cyfenter contributes to Theme C (Entrepreneurship).

As with all similar EQUAL projects, the process leading to the Cyfenter 2 transnational partnership began at the practical level with reference to the Equal Cooperation Data Base (ECDB). This database offers project planners an opportunity to view the summary details of available partners, make contacts and ultimately engage in dialogue to determine a viable common working theme. During this process potential partners typically determine the value of the partnership and begin to assemble a viable work plan, which ultimately leads to the completion of a Transnational Cooperation Agreement (TCA) The resulting TCA becomes the working document of the partnership and includes a time frame with specified outputs, outcomes and products which are collectively known as 'deliverables'.

The early stages for Cyfenter 2 began during 2005 with exploratory involvement from Development Partnerships in England, Germany, Malta, Sweden and Wales. Although interactions with England and Malta did not progress as anticipated Germany, Sweden and Wales had successfully worked together in Cyfenter 1 and agreed to build on this working partnership by entering the next phase which was to be known as Cyfenter 2. This continued engagement of the Cyfenter 1 partnership was naturally seen to offer many benefits, not least an established trans-national relationship between known individuals and organisations and the opportunity to build on existing strengths and experiences.

At the same time the representatives involved sought to extend the range of the new partnership by engaging an accession country. At this point Portugal declared an interest and joined the process which eventually led to a formal Transnational Cooperation Agreement. This agreement was formally accepted by the Managing Authorities (MA's) from each of the four Member

States and Cyfenter duly became part of the E² Transnational Partnership along with the EXZEPT DP in Germany, the Oeste Empreendedor DP in Portugal and the Entree DP in Sweden.

2 Aims, Objectives and Management of the transnational partnership

2.1 Context and General Aims

The centrality of transnational working to the Community Initiative of which Cyfenter is a part is reflected in the description of EQUAL's strategic vision as *'Building Europe, and developing common European solutions to common European problems, means co-operating with people, organisations and institutions in other Member States, learning from each other and together developing new activities, practices and systems.'*

Against the background of current EU priorities, including those agreed in the Lisbon Accord, E2's ultimate aim of this transnational partnership working aspired *"To develop a wider European perspective on the nature and forms of discrimination and inequality in business and entrepreneurial support and to identify and learn from existing good practice, which can be fed into the domestic programmes of delivery in each of the partner countries"*.

Consistent with EQUAL' strategic policy context it is an expressed requirement that all projects funded under its themes are transnational and have engagement with at least one DP partner from a Member State.

The broad vision and aims of EQUAL have been translated into a set of operational objectives that are termed as the *'five levels of transnational working'*

**Five levels of Transnational working
as described by EQUAL**

Exchanging information and experiences

Exchanging trainees, trainers and staff

Developing innovative approaches with transnational partners

Importing, exporting or adopting new approaches

Developing a product or a system with transnational partners

All partnerships are expected to involve at least one level of cooperative activity in order to succeed in their funding bid – although it needs to be noted that the first level, ‘the exchange of information and experiences’, must be accompanied by other levels to justify funding.

E2 partners had identified a number of common issues to be explored for instance: *Sustaining and growing business of disadvantaged groups*
Gender, ethnic, age, disability, language, lone parents, mainstreaming and policy making on different levels (local, regional, national and European)
*Sustaining entrepreneurial support structures for underrepresented groups and enterprises in a changing environment post European Funding and Self-employment and diverse entrepreneurship as a regional development strategy (endogenous development)*¹.

In addressing these issues the four partners could each potentially contribute and share a wide range of relevant experience and knowledge arising from their Domestic Development Partnership activity.²

¹ The themes offered are those listed in the E2 Transnational Cooperation Agreement.

² The range of such experience is illustrated in the extracts from the TCA given in Appendix A.

It is also worthy of note here that from the outset of this partnership there was a strong will to influence policy at all levels that was shared amongst E2 partners as the following quotes will illustrate:

“.....aims at creating acceptance in politics and society and is thus highly interested in the development of common policy recommendations and activities at the national and European levels”. **OESTE EMPREENDEDOR**

“The activities and output of the trans-national partnership will feed into the national development partnership. In particular the developed policy recommendations will help to create acceptance for self-employment with politic and society, regional institutions, target groups and in the financial impact”. **EXZEPT**

*“The activities and output of the trans-national partnership will feed into the national development partnership. In particular the developed policy recommendations will help to create a knowledge regarding working with gender and ethnic mainstreaming in existing structures. In particular in the area of training for advisors in gender and ethnic equality the **ENTRÉE** partnership can benefit from its partner’s experience”.*

2.2 The deliverables of the E2 Transnational Partnership

Translated in terms of organisational and practical objectives the Transnational Cooperation Agreement listed the following ‘deliverables’

- *‘Study visits to provide practitioners with hand on experience.*
- *Workshops which are aimed to bring together key actors / target groups to ensure empowerment with the delivery of the activities.*
- *Opportunity for the advisors and trainers to meet other business advisors practices.*
- *Parallel collection and analysis of business support structures in the partner countries, including infrastructure, targets, success rates, quality assurance of trainers, etc. (sustainability).*

- *Parallel collection and analysis of data of individuals benefiting from business or entrepreneurial support within each of the countries to acquire new skills and competences to create or sustain their company.*
- *Presentations and discussions across all levels – horizontally and vertically – learning from each other to develop a better insight into the nature and forms of discrimination, inequality and ineffectiveness in existing mainstream enterprise support.*
- *Policy recommendations for entrepreneurial support on a regional and local level derived from the trans-national work*
- *Production of a number of specific papers (workshop reports and benchmarking results) with policy recommendations.*
- *An international symposium at the end of the project to disseminate the findings of the trans-national partnership to policy makers at European level.'*

These practical objectives of the TCA align themselves with each of the five levels of transnational working as expressed by EQUAL with a seemingly stronger focus on three of the five levels: exchanging information and experiences, exchanging trainees, trainers and staff and developing a product or a system with transnational partners.

The specified activities, products and outputs were underpinned by a work plan which the Transnational Partners (E2) proposed to follow and update as necessary.

2.3 Management of the transnational partnership

The E2 Transnational Partnership operated under the formal direction of a Management Committee composed of named representatives from each of the Transnational Development Partnership. The detailed, operational management tasks were shared across the Development Partnership. Accordingly, on visits and related activities the hosting country took responsibility for all such matters as the production of reports and minutes, the arrangement and distribution of workshop itineraries, domestic arrangements and the like.. After each meeting and an agreement by the Management

Committee, the hosting country would take responsibility for any update to the transnational work plan. In its operation the model that may best describe the management of the E2 partnership is akin to the Consortium Organisational Model of rotating or shared co-ordination³.

Of particular significance for this Transnational report, is the monitoring and evaluation process that was adopted by E2. The Domestic Development Partnerships were assigned individual responsibility for monitoring and evaluating their own domestic project. The E2 Management Committee had a joint responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the transnational project in its entirety.

In practice this latter transnational monitoring and evaluation activity has been aided by the use of a proforma/questionnaire administered at each Transnational meeting. This questionnaire was developed by members of the Cyfenter Development Partnership and was adopted by E2. By this means the partnership was monitoring such factors as the job role or position of the participant, the benefit or value of the visit, the experience of equal opportunities and there was also opportunity for more general feedback. An overview of some of the results of this monitoring is included later in this report.

3 External evaluation of the Cyfenter 2 transnational dimension

3.1 Background and evaluation aims

Consultus Ltd was commissioned to undertake the external evaluation of the Development Partnership with effect from September 2005. The evaluation was concerned with the Development Partnership as a whole, including its vital transnational activities and aimed to provide a range of outputs that would inform Cyfenter 2 and others during and at the end of the project.

These outputs⁴ were to include;

'A report of project effectiveness within the context of EQUAL requirements, including the transnational dimension

³ Equal Guide on Transnational Cooperation – operational models page 65

⁴ This list of outputs summarises those given in the pre-tender brief.

An identification of related elements of good practice, including those that are innovative or empower or have other positive impacts on those involved, including domestic DP members'

The evaluation had no direct remit to analyse or comment in any detail on the finances of the Development Partnership or on European Social Fund financial compliance.

This present and separate 'transnational' report was agreed within the terms and reference of external evaluation and was intended essentially to provide some interim, formative feedback focused specifically on the processes activities and emerging outcomes of this vital dimension of the Cyfenter 2 initiative. A report was provided in draft form for the Cyfenter Team in August 2006, it was agreed at this stage that as the evaluators' involvement was to continue until April 2007 it would make sense to revisit the draft report and add any further or emerging lessons to the draft, thereby offering a final Transnational report in April 2007. This report follows and where appropriate draws on all preceding reports to offer a final Transnational perspective

3.2 Evaluation activity

A brief overview of evidential base of the evaluation activity has been detailed here. (A broader list of actions has been presented as Annex B of this report).

Briefly, the evidential base consisted of:

- Documentation in the form of reports and the Transnational Cooperation Agreement all of which was provided by the Cyfenter Team.
- Attendance at Transnational workshop visits in Cardiff, Germany and Sweden, where there was an open invitation to participate in pre-arranged study visits and workshops.
- An opportunity (created by the Cyfenter 2 Team) to meet with E2 evaluators and engage in sharing practice of evaluation methodologies and practices. This sharing of practice was better realised when the Cyfenter evaluator offered the E2 evaluators an opportunity to contribute their Domestic Development Partnerships perspective on

Transnational work. This work materialised when the Cyfenter external evaluators' questionnaire was shared between E2 evaluators.

- A series of one to one interviews took place with both domestic and Transnational partners during the course of the evaluation.

The interviews undertaken over the evaluation period were focused on the views and experiences of Domestic partners from both an organisational and individual perspective. Where appropriate views have been explored about what lessons might be taken from these experiences. What has been good, useful, what might be done differently, better in the future and what the key message may be for future Transnational working practice.

3.3 Structure of the report

Drawing on the evaluation activities summarised above the following sections begin with a bullet point list of the Partnership's main activities and significant achievement to date. This is followed by a sample of views and experiences drawn from interviews, meetings and responses to the shared questionnaire with Cyfenter E2 transnational partners, with some analysis of the comments obtained from the partnership's own monitoring forms.

Transnational Partner observations are followed by a similar sample of reported opinions and experiences based on interviews with members of the domestic Cyfenter 2 Development Partnership.

The samples of both 'transnational' and 'domestic' partner views are provided as formative feedback and may, hopefully, provide some raw material for further discussion and development by the Development Partnership as a whole, including its core team. As a possible aid to further analysis it will be seen that the 'domestic' account has been structured under a number of thematic heading derived from the EQUAL guidance on good transnational practice.

The report refines this analysis further by summarising in tabular form what it sees as the main points raised in each thematic area.

A similar table then lists the EQUAL key principles of

- Innovation
- Empowerment
- Partnership working
- Transnational working
- Equal opportunities
- Mainstreaming and creating impact

.....and offers observations of practice related to each of the EQUAL principles.

In keeping with the formatting practice of all previous reports, direct quotations are shown in the following pages by the use of *italics* and 'quote' marks combined.

4 The E2 Transnational Partnership in practice

4.1 The activities and achievements of the TNP to date

Among the range of the Transnational Partners notable achievements have been the sharing of practice between Member States, facilitated through a wide range of study visits and Transnational workshops⁵ the following examples offered here authenticate the process and practice of the real direct and indirect value of Transnational work to the Cyfenter Development Partnership.

CARDIFF

A two day transnational conference organised and run in Cardiff attracted over sixty delegates and involved twelve Cyfenter Development Partnership organisations as well as engaging individual Development Partnership members as workshop presenters or facilitators.

⁵ Some of the noted achievements may have also been reported upon in the Final Evaluation Report, April 2007

This visit formed the basis and began a journey of shared practice between Cyfenter Domestic Partners and Transnational Domestic Partners, the following section offers reflects on how this practice was shared and what has materialised.

GERMANY

The workshop and study visit organised in Germany in May 2006 was attended by seven Cyfenter Development Partners and four members of the Cyfenter Team. The visit focused on sharing of practice and exchange of information through workshops entitled '***approaches to making business support sustainable***' and study visits. Such study visits enabled a member of the Cyfenter partnership to visit a rural working farm to share practice of rural businesses. A visit to KIZ AG which is a business start-up Centre (under construction at the time of visiting Germany) offered a different perspective to business incubator units and sparked great interest amongst the visiting Cyfenter members. In August 2006 the external evaluation reported that "*this may potentially lead to a further spin off between Wales and Germany in the future*" since the time of writing this there have been two items of progress to report: a Questionnaire for comparative analysis of start-up support centres has extended to a more structured analytical tool kit, and KIZ partners together with two Cyfenter Development Partners have developed a spin off project for the target group 50 plus. Although, it is not the KIZ model that is being replicated the relationship has enabled the development of a new project.

A further example was a study visit for exchange of ideas and practice in support of developing a Junior Chamber of Commerce in Wales:

From Germany to Newport, Wales A Junior Chamber of Commerce in progress

Background

Autografik Design is a multi-award winning graphic design company based in Newport, producing print and web based design. The company is run by Jon and Russell. As young dynamic entrepreneurs they were keen to join their local Chamber of Commerce in Newport. They spoke with a Business Advisor and attended a Chamber meeting, Russell recalls how the initial perception of the Chamber may be off putting for young entrepreneurs. He draws from the experiences of Shell Live Wire events which are geared towards the younger element of businesses and offers the view that this may not be necessarily aligned with age of individuals but could also be attributed to the age of the business. Both Jon and Russell are keen to express that new businesses require other new business to share knowledge and experiences, to support each other.

The learning experience

In May 2006 via a member of the Cyfenter partnership and the Dynamo Project Autografik were invited to take part in a study visit to Offenbach, Germany where a Junior Chamber of Commerce had been established. Russell recalls this as *“serendipity”* and explained that prior to the visit to Offenbach, the aspiration was to set up a young person’s business club but post this visit Russell expressed that it *“took us to a different level”*.... *“in Germany every business needs to be registered with their local Chamber. Autografik are Dynamo role models, we promote entrepreneurship to young people in school and we are paid for doing so. In Germany Business and Education go hand in hand-it’s an integrated part of every business”*.

What has happened since?

Autografik are championing the need for a Junior Chamber. Since the German experience they have developed a structured timeline of actions and have carried out surveys with young businesses. Jon and Russell are keen to generate interest and support from key people who can make the new chamber of commerce for young business a reality.

The aspiration is that the Junior Chamber (modelled on the German experience) will be joined with the Newport Chamber and ultimately the plan is to create a Pan Wales Network.

An example of reciprocal learning may be exemplified by the great interest demonstrated at this visit in Offenbach by the EXZEPT Transnational partners. EXZEPT were keen to understand the practice methodologies used by Prime Cymru (a development partner of Cyfenter) to engage the target group 50 plus to entrepreneurship. They openly offered the view that they had not had the successes that Prime Cymru could attribute to targeting and supporting the 50

+ target group. EXZEPT were keen to explore the experiences and know how of Prime Cymru.

This interest was explored with the Prime Cymru delegate at every opportunity in Germany and that keen interest may have been one of the contributory factors that led to a spin off project being created under Article 6.

The workshop delivery in Germany was a new practice for many of the participants:



An example of a new workshop delivery method '*the gold fish bowl*' introduced by in EXZEPT in Offenbach Germany

The inner circle seats the speakers the outer circle seats the delegates. Delegates are invited to ask questions – the process is that delegates stand behind the speaker they wish to address and ask their questions, once a response is offered by the speaker the delegate returns to their seat and the process starts again.

SWEDEN

The workshop and study visits to Sweden took place in November 2006; attended by five Cyfenter Development Partners, a research participant, four members of the Cyfenter Team and the External Evaluator. The workshop was entitled '*Gender mainstreaming in policy-making and practice*' with a range of break out groups and opportunities for discussion and sharing practice.

Partners attended a range of study visits and later expressed an overwhelming consensus of having learned and shared a wealth of experiences. Here is a short summary of the key learning points offered by the Cyfenter delegates:

One delegate offered the view *“Sweden is key to the work of Chwarae Teg it offered a perspective of gender duty impact on the public sector. Gender equality has high acknowledgment in Sweden, but society is changing, globalisation, low entrepreneurial activity, bureaucracy and eldercare are becoming and important topic, this may have a high profile in the future with childcare taking less of a profile”*.

The workshop was a natural fit with the work of Chwarae Teg and the delegate informed the partnership at a steering group meeting that the visit was of value stating that publications had been exchanged for wider circulation and that networks and contacts had been made that may result in future collaborative work.

Another delegate offered the view that Transnational work had been of *“tremendous value”* to their organisation. It had become apparent that the services offered by them in Wales were quite unique in other European Member States. The comment was validated by the following statement *“lots of organisations have asked us to work with them. We have developed two contracts for training delivery in Sweden and have been invited to attend a meeting in Germany, to work with them to develop a similar model and organisation to work with URG’s”*

For another Cyfenter delegate it was the high number of delegates present from all the participating E2 Member States that were running their own business or businesses that was offered as the *‘most striking and heartening aspect of the event’*. Another key message that was conveyed by the delegate was the high percentage of women as public-sector workers it was felt that this offered an element of *“real world thinking into deliberations and in turn policy lobbying and decision-making processes”*. At a presentation/feedback session with the Cyfenter steering group in December 2006 the delegate offered the following view *“I am delighted to have been given the opportunity via the Cyfenter DP to participate in this valuable and extremely interesting workshop. We are all facing largely similar challenges, and can learn much*

from each other. I hope to be able to foster the relationships made and to develop the work started in the coming months”.

Workshop delivery methods used in Sweden:

Entrée introduced an Interactive drama in their workshop to demonstrate the types of stereotypical barriers that women may face within a *Working environment*. This was again an example of E2 partners introducing new or different modes of workshop delivery.

PORTUGAL

The final E2 workshop and study visit is due to take place in Portugal in March 2007. The workshop is entitled '**Entrepreneurship and Regional Development**' an agenda has been circulated to the Cyfenter Development Partnership.

The point of departure in this section is to offer, that on the basis of such evidence, as described above, the progress to date of the E2 transnational partnership from the Cyfenter Development Partnership perspective is that Transnational working has delivered a range of activities and learning opportunities which have enabled, the exchanging of information and experience, the importing and exporting of new approaches and the exchange of practice between staff.

4.2 Transnational Partnership Observations

The Cyfenter Team had taken the initiative of setting up an exploratory meeting which was a separate and distinct meeting for the external and internal evaluators. This exploratory meeting led to a unilateral agreement to engage in a degree of collaboration in the future months. Three meetings took place: in Cardiff, Germany and Sweden. The evaluators shared methodologies and practice and operationally there was transference of an evaluation questionnaire, which was developed by the Cyfenter External Evaluation. The questionnaire was welcomed by all three partners and was used by two of the three Transnational partners.

This section of the report incorporates the views of the transnational partners using: one to one interview's (conducted throughout the lifetime of the evaluation) the questionnaire returns and information sourced from the Cyfenter Team internal transnational monitoring forms.

4.2.1 General

The main emphasis for transnational work as expressed generally by the representatives of the Transnational Partners as individuals was

- the exchange of information,
- learning from each other and
- the dissemination of national project.

A representative from Sweden described transnationality as an '*inspiration*' and felt that they could influence other transnational participants with the outcomes of their national project in gender equality, offering an example of sharing practice in the promoting of higher levels of entrepreneurship for women. This partner felt that they could '*give back knowledge*' to the partnership and that entrepreneurship was the basis of all transnational activities. In summary they were sure that "*Partners can learn from the transnational partnership, we can learn the process and the working of such partnerships*"

The initial judgment of partner qualities offered by one partner was that Portugal was '*more about regional development for disadvantaged groups*' than enterprise as such. Sweden was '*more advanced [especially in the area of women's entrepreneurship] and so could give added value.*'

Portugal as the newest partners to the transnational equation offered the view that "*the problems are all alike, but the solutions are very different*" and concurred with the views presented by all Transnational Partners that this would be learning and sharing of experiences.

It had been noted that all partners acknowledged Portugal as some distance behind in the inclusion of under represented groups in enterprise.

There was recognition of this by the Portugal Development Partnership itself and as the Portuguese interviewee put it the aspirations of transnational working was *“to learn from others’ ideas and (perhaps more importantly) practicereporting that the visits during the two days in Wales were as valuable as any workshop activity – if not more so”*

Portugal was willing and keen to learn from the experiences of the other partners in order to transfer the learning to their domestic project. Although they agreed that they were starting from a different landscape in terms of experience and under represented groups, they believed that there were some possible lessons that could be shared from them to the partners.

At an interview with Portugal, they were very keen to describe their streamlined process of registering new business *‘enterprise in an hour’* and cited this as an example of what they could share with the E2 partners. They reflected on the *‘quite intensive’* visit they had in Cardiff and observed that what was lacking in Portugal was the range of supporting services for new entrepreneurs – advice, consultancy etc.

In August 2005 the external evaluation reported *‘the Cyfenter team had noted the interaction and involvement of Portugal in the transnational partnership at the meeting held in Wales and felt that it may take time to nurture and grow this involvement “Portugal may feel intimidated by the experience of other partners” further views on this new partner were that of cultural differences, the political arena in which they operate and resources⁶.*

4.2.2 Questionnaire feedback

The questionnaire was concerned with impact and legacy of Transnational work. The return from Sweden and Germany offered the following views:

⁶ Portugal had a transnational budget of 34,000 EUR, it was not the lowest budget of the partnership but had the least amount of money allocated to management costs.

Generally, Transnational working offered opportunities for *“increased development and knowledge of projects in other countries”*, it was felt that *“it opened new perspectives”*. It was felt that it *“was valuable to get an insight of issues and relate it to ones own questions”* and *“it promoted cultural and professional exchange and the different ways of solving problems”*.

The study visits were seen as *“valuable as they were custom made”* – tailored to the needs of visiting participants. The partners offered the point that it was *“important for a range of organisations to participate in study visits”*.

On what you would like to see happening? The questionnaire recipients offered: *“trying to understand other cultures and conditions and transfer the knowledge to our client group, lasting relationships on both personal and organisational level, closer dialogue with other partners and to see the share of practice result in domestic partner processes”*.

On obstacles and emerging issues/difficulties the responses offered the view *“that most obstacles were within the area of economy and politics”*, it was felt *“that there was not a friendly dialogue with some partners and they would endeavour to improve this”*, whilst another view was *“there are differences in structure and culture but this is not an obstacle if we learn from it”*.

On the question of impact and legacy the partners offered that *“every person in the partnership, has a responsibility to disseminate the information and learning to their organisation”* dissemination of information is taken forward via newsletter to the wider partnership”

4.2.3 Feedback from internal monitoring forms

The partnership adopted a monitoring and evaluation form that was used at each Transnational event. The form was distributed to all participants and the information gathered used to feedback to the transnational management group. The form monitored a range of topics such as: equal opportunities, management and empowerment.

In reviewing the monitoring and evaluation forms a number of points/themes emerged: those have been listed here. These themes have been carried to a 'emerging lessons' section later in this report.

- The practical, operational management of visits and activities may have been better enabled if pre-planning meetings had taken place.

This action would enable participants to be better informed on the purpose and structure of visits *"I found the sessions good but it would be good to receive the questions prior to the workshop"* and as another partner suggested *"would have been useful to have the presentations well in advance of the meeting"*

(It should be noted here that this comment came from the first workshop that was run. At the second workshop meeting the questions had been provided well in advance of the meeting).

- A comment made by one of the transnational partners *"we have seen the presentation many times, but given the different context we really don't understand what is being said"*
- Relatedly, another partner offered the view that familiar words such as, for example 'incubators' conveyed different concepts in Sweden, Germany, Portugal, Wales. The apparently familiar word 'advisor' carried different connotations and meanings in each of the member states.

It must be added here, that translation was made available to and for partners at the transnational meeting in Wales by Cyfenter, but there was very limited take up by partners. Delegates expressed to the Cyfenter Team that translation was not required as they preferred to participate in the working language (English) yet the questionnaire returns offered the view that it was difficult to keep up with presentations and discussions due to language barriers. Both workshops in Germany and Sweden did not visibly offer translation facilities, it is known if delegates had been offered the choice and declined.

EMERGING OPERATIONAL LESSONS

- **Communication** - more and better use of ICT for contact, liaison with Transnational partners
- Communication and interaction between all DP members – more interaction between and during visits.
- Clarity of contact points and persons across all the DP to empower and enable interaction
-*Language and cultural differences* – this is not solely a reference to the working language, but an acknowledgement of translation, interpretation and contextualisation of data and language.
- The agreed common working language was English, however, in order to maximise on the benefits of transnational working it may be worthwhile considering the wider, even assumed, use of simultaneous translation.
- A glossary of terms would be a valuable tool for the partnership to develop for the purpose of the project allowing a clearer definition and context
- **Resource and capacity** -the building in of sufficient time for study visits and networking interaction
- Provision of 'cover' remuneration for people to attend study visits
- Ensure that ample notice is offered to the DP prior to study visits and
- Ensure the DP has the relevant information, background, scope and intention of the visit.

4.3 Domestic Partnership views and experience of transnationality

4.3.1 Resources (to enable participation)

In general Cyfenter 2 Development Partners were keen to be involved as they perceived a value in learning from member states. The main operational hurdle to participation was seen as the staffing resource required in balancing domestic and transnational work.

4.3.2 Partners' aspirations for transnational work

Somewhat understandably partners tended to express their aspirations for transnational work in terms of their individual organisational aims and objectives rather than a collective Cyfenter 2 purpose. However, it became evident over a number of interviews that there was a widespread value placed on sharing and learning and, of equal status, an acknowledgment that transnational work offered added value to their own domestic activities.

As one partner suggested, transnationality on an operational level was *'To share what the transnational partners are doing' to see how they are doing things and to look at any innovation and adapt it to suit our areas. This is also an opportunity to show what we have been doing*".

Another partner suggested *"that more opportunities for cross national dialogue and programmes would be a good way forward"*.

4.3.3.....and participation

Although the Cyfenter Development Partnership Agreement provided the formal basis for Transnational participation, it is generally accepted that *active engagement* is linked to a mix of factors including motivation, drive, commitment and the perceived value of intrinsic or extrinsic benefits.⁷ As one Development Partner member put it *'how do you make it (participation) meaningful ... rather than simply part of the agreement?'* Interestingly, and by way of a response to this rhetorical question, another DP member working at policy level, when asked what would encourage participation observed that *"I was offered an opportunity to become involved in the Transnational work but have been a little reticent as the links are more akin to practical level involvement"*.

Taken together these views suggest that participation and involvement is more likely by those Development Partners who are able to perceive a direct link with their own, domestically based role or may be encouraged to do so.

⁷ Five Degrees of Partnership
(from smarter partnerships Educe Ltd www.lgpartnerships.com)

4.3.4 The strategic and operational aspirations of transnationality (communication of the strategic and operation vision of transnationality to domestic DPs)

Responses by the Development Partner members to questions about their aspirations for the Transnational work commonly contained some element of the 'strategic' but more frequently concentrated around operational or functional possibilities.

One example of a strategic level view was provided during the interviews. This was a somewhat exceptional perspective, rather than the general view of the partners. The interviewee felt that the E2 transnational work might offer a platform for:

- *Benchmarking policy and practice in business support*
- *Establishing common models of good practice across countries*
- *Developing a critical mass to change EU and/or UK Policy and/or*
- *Gaining information from EU Commission staff 'about how the(policy) land is lying'.*

More usually DP members themselves declared that they were familiar with the functional practice of transnational working (for example in learning, sharing activity) and how that might benefit Cyfenter and their individual organisations.

Transnational work was a new concept for a number of partners; hence, the level of familiarity of the wider EQUAL agenda was understandably less than if the partners had Transnational experience. The opportunity to work at a Transnational level significantly developed the know how and knowledge of all partners during the delivery of Cyfenter.

4.3.5 Awareness and learning (opportunities for cross fertilisation and learning?)

As noted elsewhere in the evaluation there is clear evidence of mutual awareness and learning across the Development Partnership. In the first instance, the Development Partnership composition itself has offered insights into the different ways of working and different organisational perspectives that contributed towards a sense of shared values.

Further evidence provided by the Transnational partners suggests that the level and depth of understanding of underrepresented groups has increased through this partnership. This view is echoed across the Development Partnerships.

4.3.6 Process and management (management of the partnership from a domestic perspective).

Members of the Development Partnership were keen to acknowledge the level and intensity of work involved in managing a transnational partnership. The overwhelming consensus was that the Cyfenter Team had managed the process well – and positive references were made to timings of meetings, reporting, canvassing engagement and generally enabling participation.

Some suggestions were offered for improvement to the practical details of visits and workshops. Reference was made about the study visit in Germany (for which the Cyfenter team were not directly responsible).

For instance a Development Partner noted that sessions *were very long with little opportunity for interaction*; another member observed *that participants had not been canvassed for their access needs prior to the visit*.

Generally, partners felt that a greater number of study visits directly linked to operational projects would be valuable – as distinct from more conference or information-giving forums and that workshops should encourage interaction.

Positive references were made to the experience in Wales which enabled interaction through round table discussion. The method used in Wales had been 'bit sized' information giving sessions – a set of questions were circulated for small groups to discuss this was followed by a 'plenary' feedback session. Repeating this process throughout the day had enabled all attendees to participate and interact as a group.

The management model of Transnational activities differed between the four Transnational partners. In Wales the responsibility, functions and duties of Transnational cooperation rested solely with the Cyfenter Team. In two of the participating Member States there was a Transnational coordinator with a distinctive role of monitoring and managing Transnational cooperation.

- Difference in managing and monitoring the Transnational cooperation element across four Member States.
- An overwhelming recognition by the Development Partnership of the intensity and level of work that the Cyfenter Team committed to carryout the Transnational cooperation.

4.3.7 Impact

Assessing the impact of the Cyfenter poses a series of challenges not least because there are a plethora of activities, influences and developments that Cyfenter can justifiably lay claim to, but is it added value or impact?

At the time of completing this Transnational evaluation Cyfenter had not seemingly had a **direct impact on policy**. However, it should be noted that Cyfenter are in the throws of dissemination activities and avenues have not as yet been fully exhausted.

It should also be noted that there was some evidence of feeding into emerging policy areas within the Domestic project but this could not be attributed to Transnational impact.

Impact on practice – there has been some evidence of impact on practice within the sphere of partners (organisational) this has emerged from the exchange of practice and experience and has had a tendency to lean towards Member States taking on board practices from Wales. An example of such transference of experience was the opportunity of a Development Partner to work with Sweden and Germany independently to deliver training. Further, the Development Partner was invited to support the German partner to develop/replicate a model of service delivery similar to that offered by the Development Partner in Wales.

There is undoubtedly **a legacy of Transnational** work that will live post Cyfenter but unfortunately any impact post Cyfenter will be outside the remit of this report.

There are a range of opportunities that have been created through the Cyfenter Transnational work, these may be described as:

- The development of a new project entitled the MEPLAN+ is a partnership with Germany, Ireland and Wales.
- Community of Practice is currently being used as an international tool with links in Offenbach, Germany and Ireland
- The opportunity of a Development Partner to work with Sweden and Germany independently.
- The share of a model Junior Chamber of Commerce between Germany and Wales
- The opportunity for future collaborative working between individual Development partners.

4.3.8 Added value of transnationality

Examples of added value abound across the Development Partnership both nationally and transnationally. The challenge here is to better define in tangible terms how this added value manifests itself. If it is simplified as 'sharing of practice' and 'exchange of ideas' it becomes difficult to quantify or measure. The European Commissions Guide identifies Added Value as:

- *Developing common European solutions to common European problems*
- *Building on current good practice*
- *Keeping up to date with policy developments around Europe*
- *Providing the opportunity to add value to the national agenda by looking at issues from different and new perspectives*

In their early discussions with the evaluation the Development Partners clearly expressed added value in terms of learning and development of mutual knowledge and the sharing of ideas.

The examples offered throughout this report exemplify actions and results that have built on current good practice and have provided opportunity to add value to the national agenda.

It is evident that working on a transnational level has enhanced knowledge, learning and know how across both the Transnational and the domestic Development Partnerships. This 'learning' has offered an opportunity for a deeper understanding of the nature and forms of discrimination and a broader understanding of inequality and labour market exclusion.

More practically, the workshops, study visits and interaction with Member States has offered a 'snapshot' of different perspectives on addressing common issues, offering an opportunity to better understand cultural differences in terms of the 'way we do things here'.

LESSONS TO SHARE

Interestingly, Equal offers the following school of thought *“a man of genius makes no mistakes. His errors are all volitional and are the portals of discovery”*

.....More communication – maximise the use of remote communication resources

- Communicate and take the wider Transnational working agenda to domestic and Transnational partners
- Develop early means of interaction and discussion between domestic and Transnational partners
- Maximise the use of study visits

Less lost opportunities – a clear understanding of the policy context and flexibility to respond to and input into emerging policy

- Involve local politicians and policy makers in Transnational visits

.....More partner involvement – encourage comparative studies between domestic and Transnational partners

Drive the impact – maximise the potential impact by influencing key organisations at local, regional, national and European level to change behaviour, approaches and policy.

- Include a communication plan that details where the new learning will be disseminated/shared. It may be at organisational level for example: sharing knowledge/lessons with colleagues in an organisation may change practice, process or behaviour.

Identify policies and work towards informing, influencing, changing– develop a clear policy influencing agenda from the outset of the project. Detail a plan of what, how and who and monitor the plan throughout the life of the project.

Operational-level observations that relate to Cyfenter in practice:

- Comparative studies could have enhanced Transnational understanding and learning, raising awareness about new approaches and innovative developments; and building on current good practice

- Cyfenter Partners hold a wealth of knowledge on equal opportunities. There may have been an opportunity to offer Equal Opportunities training to interested Transnational partners— influencing key organisations at local, regional and maybe national level to change behaviour, approaches and policy.
- Workshops to the Domestic Partners to raise awareness of transnational working - promoting transnationality and maximising the use of study visits.
- Sharing the role of transnational management within the domestic DP – empowerment within the DP to partake in ownership of transnational work.

Developing Transnational Partnerships- observations

....operational practice management

Working transnationally can emerge as a complex and time intensive occupation. The Cyfenter Team have driven the Transnational and domestic project from cradle to grave. Their commitment and hard work has been acknowledged by the domestic partnership and the range of well organised and well attended events laid testament to their hard work.

The practice in two of the four member states has been to engage a transnational coordinator to carry the Transnational activities, the monitoring and internal evaluation of such activities forward. This may in the future funding programmes prove to be a practice worthy of consideration in particular for projects of Cyfenter's size.

....finding appropriate Transnational partners

It may be suggested here that although the decision to work with Cyfenter 1 transnational partners was in part building on past strengths, it was also in part necessarily based on some compromise as the range of suitable partners present on the ECDB was found to be limited.

The ECDB presented one hundred and forty five potential partners (145) of these eight two (82) had been funded in round 1 Equal. This suggests that (82) partnerships were already engaged in existing transnational work, added to this equation was the thirteen UK partnerships, this left Cyfenter with a pool of fifty (50) potential partners. Added to this was the further limitation of the number of partnerships where commonality with Cyfenter 2 existed.

Points that may be worthy of further discussion

A dedicated transnational coordinators role may be a practice worthy of consideration in future Transnational projects.

A data base of Transnational partners may be a practice worthy of replication for future Transnational projects. There may also be an opportunity to further develop the 'database partner search' by offering added support to potential project sponsors by way of practical support and advice to understand cultural differences, dovetail domestic priorities and develop Transnational agreements.

There may also be an opportunity within the new programme for a strategic and coordinated approach of disseminating information on the wider European Agenda – share the European Agenda

5 A Summary Matrix of findings

Drawing from the information gathered and expressed in the preceding pages of this document the following matrix has been used to summarise the key points highlighted.⁸

Key questions and issues	Possible indicators and performance targets	Evidence suggests	Possible practice level suggestions
Resources – Are these adequate to deliver the aims and objectives of the transnational cooperation?	Budget information/costs broken down by activity (Lead body role)	The lead body has made provision for repayment of travel costs to all DP participants	Provision for covering ‘time’ to encourage participation at study visits of DP members who find it difficult to participate due to capacity or resources
Actions and activities – Are these appropriate to the goals set out in the TCA? Are they well planned and carried out?	Activities, outcomes and outputs as described in the TCA	The TN is following a structured work plan (TCA) which is monitored at Management meetings. There is no evidence of time slippage at present.	Maximising and enhancing communication – between transnational co-ordinators and more support for input from DP members.
Participation – Is participation in the transnational partnership both widespread and inclusive? Is it real or token?	All partners with defined tasks and roles All partners attending all meetings	DP members had clearly defined tasks for domestic work. The general view of TN work was not as clearly defined and partners were not generally familiar with the strategy and boundaries of TN work.	Raise awareness of the parameters of study visits. At present the transnational workload is borne by the lead body – it may be worth considering the involvement and where practical the distribution of tasks amongst the wider DP

⁸ framework adapted from the EQUAL good practice guide on transnational work

<p>Impacts – What impact has the transnational partnership had on job creation, employability, social inclusion, equality of opportunity? What impacts on learning? What impacts on labour market strategy? Has there been learning in one Member State from policy or practice in another?</p>	<p>DP partners and transnational partners</p> <p>Politicians and policy makers attendance</p>	<p>Evidence of spin off partnerships</p> <p>Learning and deeper understanding of equality practices across participating member states. Cyfenter has a profile within WAG and amongst DP members – meetings are attended and facilitated by senior members of DEIN</p>	<p>The challenge here is to record and capture the impact - Partners' adoption of shared methods and products - evidence of use and usefulness</p> <p>The involvement of politicians and policy makers – discussion between the DP to find a 'hook' This may be possible through the strategic group?</p>
<p>Awareness and learning – Is there evidence that partners or others have learned about developments and new ways of thinking about labour market issues?</p>	<p>All partners disseminating their work in all partner countries</p> <p>Aspects of work translated into other languages for dissemination (either by producer or by user)</p>	<p>Evidence suggests that transnational working is a new concept for a number of DP members – this in its self has offered a new way of working and has initiated a broader thinking of labour market issues in terms of what methods and processes are in place across the TN to support URG's</p>	<p>Maximising on the benefits of study visits – explore the potential of study visits with partners, clarity of what the study visits can offer (parameters) support the development of interaction and interactive participation with transnational partners.</p>
<p>Processes and management - Has the partnership been well-planned and managed?</p>	<p>DP partners and transnational partners</p> <p>Work completed to time</p>	<p>Internal monitoring (questionnaires) and external qualitative evidence offers the view that the partnership is well</p>	

	Work completed to budget Partners having fulfilled their planned roles	planned and well managed.	
Outcomes and products – How complete and effective are they?	Products and outcomes those that were planned Differences and amendments noted Assessments of their quality and fitness for purpose	A range of products have been produced by the partnership	A quality assurance group would/could be a valuable asset to ensure that all products produced are fit for purpose – incorporating all aspects of quality and equality.
Future collaboration between the partners – Is it likely that this will take place after the work of the EQUAL transnational partnership ends?	Instances of partners making direct use of materials of the partnership Evidence of partners changing policy or practice in the light of partnership discussions Partners identifying related work interests	Evidence of partners identifying related work interests exists in the form of new partnership working and as reported earlier ‘spin off’ work. There is emerging practice exchange – particular reference here on the possible development of a junior chamber of commerce.	Deliberation on how to evidence policy change – which policies? The development of a linkage process to identify key policy areas, key policy makers, movers and shakers – using the networks already in place with individual partner organisations DP and TNP The suggestion of a collaborative evaluation report may better enable the tracking of the ‘legacy’ of transnational work.

<p>The added value of transnational co-operation - Can this be identified and described in terms of policy and practice at local, regional, national and EU levels?</p>	<p>Achievements against planned results Achievements against unplanned results Additions to national DP workplan References to them in policy or practice materials</p>	<p>There is an emergence of added value that can be tracked through the achievements of the TCA planned results.</p> <p>EQUAL began to convene a Thematic National Group (TNG) to support projects with policy – there is evidence of one such meeting. The TNG did not continue past one or two meetings.</p>	<p>Linkages with other national DP's for example: CREATE; The Centre for Organisational Effectiveness (COE) is the UK partner for the 'INTERREG IIIb Atlantic Net' project working with (SMEs). The work in COE includes the development of a pilot project called 'Surviving Start-Up'; The AWE (Accelerating Women's Enterprise) Social Enterprise Partnership. An exploration of bringing together lessons learnt to disseminate in a critical mass.</p>
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6 The leading principles of EQUAL

The following table is intended to provide a convenient evaluative framework within which to begin to explore the ways in which the EQUAL leading principles are expressed in Cyfenter's transnational activity. The judgements it contains are again taken substantially from a review of project documents and interviews over the whole evaluation period. The evaluation stresses that the table – and perhaps especially column 3 - is intended to be modified and updated. The revised details will be incorporated into the Final Report in response to feedback and further TN and DP activity. For example it is hoped that Column 3 in an equivalent table may provide a more 'summative' account of the degree to which the principles have become embedded in practice – as well as providing examples of any good practice, issues and lessons involved.

Table 1. An evaluative framework of EQUAL leading principles

1 Leading Principle	2 Associated Cyfenter 2 aims and methods from a transnational perspective (key features)	3 Observations and notes.
<p><u>Empowerment</u></p> <p>The EQUAL Support Unit has defined empowerment as:</p> <p><i>‘...the development of capacity and the opportunity for individuals and groups to play a full role in society in general, not only in economic terms but also in social, psychological and political terms, with those involved in the implementation of activities also taking part in decision making.....’</i></p>	<p>The DPA explained how an inclusive partnership is seen as a key factor for promoting empowerment. The DPA stated that <i>“one of the best ways of getting things done is to co-operate with others through a shared set of goals and a common perspective”</i></p> <p>These elements were to be advanced by means of <i>Empowering partners to work with and learn from collective domestic and transnational experiences.</i> Elsewhere in the DPA the statement of <i>“Cyfenter 2 as a partnership of equals and stating Members are empowered through effective ways of working, active participation from all partners and innovative actions for example: Bringing together policy makers and practitioners to inform Cyfenter2 action research. The encouragement of open participation through: working groups, identifying opportunities for partners to utilise and develop skills - Encouraging partners to take an active role in transnational activity.</i></p>	<p>Evidence of DP organisations being encouraged to participate in transnational activities has been noted in this report.</p> <p>In general the evidence for both collective and individual empowerment is to some degree problematical to quantify. There is arguably a case for offering an observation in terms of Cyfenter through the Equal principles having enabled partners new to transnational working to actively participate.</p> <p>One DP member reflected on the visit to Germany and offered the view: <i>spending time with partners was useful – it would be useful to look at examples of activities that the transnational DP’s are engaged in. The visits would, from a personal perspective be extremely beneficial if they were more activity based and interactive.</i></p> <p>Cyfenter engaged a research participant to attend the Transnational workshop in Sweden</p>

Innovation

The EQUAL Support Unit advises that

'Innovation within EQUAL means developing new approaches to discrimination in the labour market which can then be mainstreamed.'

The Unit also notes that

'EQUAL is interested in innovation at all levels; locally, sub-regionally, regionally, nationally and across Europe.'

There is acknowledgement that

'Innovation can be difficult to define, categorise and assess. ... there is always likely to be a subjective element based on feelings or opinions rather than fact'

That said, for analytical purposes it can be classified as being 'process', 'goal', or 'context' orientated.

Type of innovation	Example
Process-oriented	<i>New methods New technologies New ways to support integration</i>
Goal-oriented	<i>New target groups New qualifications</i>

The Cyfenter 2 DPA indicated that many of the innovations involved would be of the process-oriented type. The DPA states the *'first key innovation is the empowerment aspect of the Cyfenter2 action based research in that it is a bottom up approach which starts from the perspective of individuals or groups that face discrimination in enterprise rather than that of high growth firms; politicians; or business support providers. Addressing disadvantage in post-business start support and bringing that support up to the level which now exists for pre and start-up businesses will be a major innovation in Wales.* The findings of this process oriented innovation were to provide evidence which is not in existence currently to support post-business support strategies. The findings were to feed into a wider debate at Welsh, UK and European level as to what *'is the most appropriate business support for under represented groups i.e. mainstream support; community support networks; or selected and targeted support designed to complement generic offerings'.*

.....'Cyfenter2 partnership also offers innovative ways of working together, focusing on building a new research and evidence base; a flexible team approach to task delivery and personal development;

The DP interviews broadly supported the view that the innovation in Cyfenter 2 was in the process it had in common with Cyfenter 1 - using an action research partnership to explore the barriers faced by URGs and to use both the process and results to affect policy and practice. A number referred to the uniqueness of this approach among EQUAL DPs. It was not research techniques as such that were judged as innovative but their combination with new partnerships, processes and objectives. (Cyfenter Interim Report March 06)

At a Steering Group Meeting (27th June 2006) the researched findings were disseminated to the DP. There was an overwhelming positive response to the potential usage and value of the findings with partners offering their views as to how they could make best use of the new data within their organisations. As one partner commented *"the data is really useful, it flags up the gaps in provision and we can use this for supporting future funding for work"* Similarly, another partner commented on how the data could be used to support funding for intervention measures for URG's.

At a transnational practice level there was evidence of sharing practice and knowledge of URG needs and support services. At the

Context-oriented	<p><i>New policies</i> <i>Local and regional networking</i></p>	<p><i>knowledge maximisation of all partners and clients - including transnational; challenging existing systems and offering new perspectives; taking a longer-term view and assessing impact of interventions on individuals, sectors and the economy'.</i></p>	<p>Transnational workshops the opportunity to share the domestic learning was always taken up by the Cyfenter Team. At each of the three meetings/workshops attended by the evaluation there was at least one presentation offered to partners on the domestic perspective and the research findings. it was interesting to note the partnerships exploration of common issues and exploration of common solutions. What seemed to be emerging was a sense of shared values in terms of URG business support measures. An example of this was the interest shown by the EXZEPT DP in the methods used to attract the 50+ URG's and the processes used to engage and interact with this group. EXZEPT were keen to draw on the experiences of a Welsh partner and this interaction and interest in the Welsh methodology is an example of how the partnership evolved and gelled.</p> <p>In terms of '<i>challenging existing systems and offering a new perspective</i>' the research has opened avenues to informing and sharing information with the DTI, DEFRA and has feed into a range of local and regional conferences. As one DP organisation expressed - process innovation rested on the <i>implementation</i> of a strategic combination of policy and practice: As it was put to the</p>
<p><i>NEI/FHVR A methodology for the European evaluation of the Employment Initiative</i></p>			

		<i>practical side meet it <u>will</u> be innovative and seen across other countries as useful’.</i>
<p><u>Transnationality</u> <i>The EQUAL Support Unit has identified five levels of transnational working: These levels have been expressed earlier in this report.</i></p>	<p>The planned activity for the E² partnership comprised of; <i>‘A series of workshops A series of study visits Staff exchange - The partners will bilaterally organise exchanges to enhance learning processes and specific know-how transfer . Exchanges could also be possible with the target group.</i></p>	<p>On the evidence of the Cardiff, Offenbach (German) and Sweden experience E² has demonstrated a capacity for mutual learning and sharing of experience – and this was generally appreciated by all those who took part.</p>
<p><u>Partnership working</u> Five Degrees of Partnership (from smarter partnerships Educe Ltd www.lgpartnerships.com) <i>Co-existence may be a rational solution to working together - where clarity is brought to who does what and with whom. Co-operation is often a pre-requisite of further degrees of partnership, where there is early recognition of mutual benefits and opportunities to work together.</i></p> <p><i>Co-ordination is where the parties accept the need to make some changes to improve services/ activities from a user/ customer/ community perspective and make better use of their own resources.</i></p>	<p>The DPA explained the degree of engagement expected of those organisations who signed the DPA was explicit and would be to ‘- <i>Contribute to the strategic direction and development of the project, engaging in project decision making processes. - Identify policy influencing opportunities and actively engage in developing these. - Contribute to/oversee project activities - Attend monthly DP meetings and participate in transnational activities - Provide specific target group expertise - Implement the principles of the Cyfenter Equal Opportunities Policy.’</i></p>	<p>Within the context offered of ‘partnership’ working there are elements of all five degrees of partnership. There is evidence of co-existence in the shape of the DP’s interrelationship – the priorities and agenda of the organisation co-exists with Cyfenter’s priorities and agenda. Co-operation has been expressed within the partnership context as a pre-requisite of further degrees of partnership – this has been evidenced in Cyfenter and E2 as DP’s begin to ‘settle’ and formulate partnerships both as part of Cyfenter and outside Cyfenter. The recognition of the benefits and opportunities of working together would arguably have been present from the beginning of the partnership both on a national and transnational level as it may be expressed as the first building block</p>

<p><i>Collaboration is where the parties agree to work together on strategies or projects, where each contributes to achieve a shared goal.</i></p> <p><i>Co-ownership is where the parties commit themselves wholly to achieving a common vision, making significant changes in what they do and how they do it</i></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="215 518 766 1013"> <tr> <td data-bbox="215 518 421 614">Co-existence</td> <td data-bbox="421 518 766 614">"You stay on your turf and I'll stay on mine."</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="215 614 421 710">Co-operation</td> <td data-bbox="421 614 766 710">"I'll lend you a hand when my work is done."</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="215 710 421 829">Co-ordination</td> <td data-bbox="421 710 766 829">"We need to adjust what we do to avoid overlap and confusion."</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="215 829 421 917">Collaboration</td> <td data-bbox="421 829 766 917">"Let's work on this together."</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="215 917 421 1013">Co-ownership</td> <td data-bbox="421 917 766 1013">"We feel totally responsible."</td> </tr> </table>	Co-existence	"You stay on your turf and I'll stay on mine."	Co-operation	"I'll lend you a hand when my work is done."	Co-ordination	"We need to adjust what we do to avoid overlap and confusion."	Collaboration	"Let's work on this together."	Co-ownership	"We feel totally responsible."	<p>Similarly, the TCA offers a detailed specification of the degree of engagement expected of TNP. (As detailed earlier in the report) the TCA states</p> <p><i>'The EQUAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP trans-national partnership is based on mutual interest and mutual respect'.</i></p>	<p>to partnership. Co-ordination – "A change programme to improve public services that does not begin and end with customers is unlikely to deliver its full potential - if indeed it delivers anything much at all", (Audit Commission Report (2003) 'Change Here'). As quoted in the DPA suggesting that the acceptance to make changes to current provision in order to improve services has been at the forefront of Cyfenter. The partnership incrementally grew toward a collaborative stage where the partners began to achieve and deliver the collective objectives of Cyfenter and E2 - This degree of working has been developmental and it would have further developed had it been given time to do so. However, by its very nature project work equals shortisim.</p> <p>At an equal status is co-ownership</p>
Co-existence	"You stay on your turf and I'll stay on mine."											
Co-operation	"I'll lend you a hand when my work is done."											
Co-ordination	"We need to adjust what we do to avoid overlap and confusion."											
Collaboration	"Let's work on this together."											
Co-ownership	"We feel totally responsible."											
<p><u>Equal Opportunities</u> Equality is a central aspect of the European EQUAL programme.</p> <p>The EQUAL Support Unit stresses that</p> <p><i>'Since equality is the mainstay of the EQUAL programme, you are responsible for developing and disseminating best practice</i></p>	<p>In keeping with the central aspect of the EQUAL programme the TCA expressed: <i>'All partners engage to take part in common activities and support the aims of the trans-national partnership. Each activity will be consistent with the objectives of EQUAL with the ultimate goal of increasing entrepreneurial participation and enhancing equal opportunities for all groups in society'.</i></p>	<p>In similar fashion to other EQUAL leading principles there is an apparent consensus view within those DP members interviewed by the evaluation that the cross-cutting theme of Equal Opportunities is systemic to Cyfenter 2 (E2) as it had been to Cyfenter 1 – built into its aims, objectives and proposed action to secure greater success for URGs in the growth and sustainability of enterprises.</p>										

<p><i>regardless of the theme you are working within. Doing so depends on effective evaluation and monitoring procedures as well as on good communication flows across and between DPs.'</i></p> <p><i>To change perceptions, policies and practices for equality, EQUAL has adopted two approaches.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A vertical approach – based on activities across the EQUAL themes to tackle inequality directly through activities and beneficiaries.</i> • <i>A horizontal or mainstreaming approach – where equality principles and practices are integrated and implemented throughout the programme. This includes discussion and examples to help you to make sure equality is integrated into all your processes and practices.</i> <p>Key aspects of managing equal opportunities well are seen in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>providing training to recognise equality and diversity for those involved in managing and delivering the DP;</i> • <i>establishing a framework for putting equality-related policy and practice into place; and</i> • <i>Resourcing and supporting the needs of specific groups.</i> 	<p>In vertical terms TNP activities promote equal opportunities for URG's as expressed in the TCA..... <i>"Interested in finding new and innovative ways to promote and sustain entrepreneurship. We have different experiences of supporting entrepreneurs from underrepresented groups. The partners would like to develop these support structures to be more inclusive of underrepresented groups".</i></p> <p>In 'horizontal' terms the TCA stressed that <i>"The Trans-national Cooperation Agreement aims to influence policy at all different levels (horizontally and vertically) and to develop innovative policy recommendations which will intend to demonstrate the effectiveness of inclusive enterprise support policies and activities to the policy makers at a regional, national and European level".</i></p>	<p>Observation by the evaluator and members of the DP suggest that perceptions, policies and practice are not consistent with Wales across the TN Member States. As one example; it had been noted by a number of visiting DP's that <i>"accessibility had not seemingly been built into the planning.....this could have been potentially embarrassing.....the visiting DP's were not asked about access needs and whilst the hotel was accessible the meeting venues were not".</i></p> <p>A DP member noted that gender equality in Sweden was of high priority and felt that there were lessons to be shared. TNP are generally keen to share practice and knowledge as one TNP put it <i>"in time advisors will have awareness and knowledge of gender and ethnic differences as a tool in their daily work. The need for special efforts for under represented groups will be eliminated"</i></p> <p>There may have been some lost opportunities here in terms of mapping the 'gold nuggets' of equal opportunity good practice across the TNP and sharing these to promote inclusivity on a vertical level in the first instance may be worth exploring.</p> <p>The External Interim Report suggested <i>'The 'test' of the horizontal approach in Cyfenter 2</i></p>
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<p>DPs are ‘expected to develop a high-quality equality strategy to match their equality policy and to make sure that DP activities are accessible to all disadvantaged groups within their target population’.</p> <p>In the EQUAL mid-term review it was found that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Some EQUAL DPs have appointed an equality officer to their team. • Many DPs have a sub-group or designated committee within the partnership to develop equality issues. • The majority of DPs have equal opportunities reports as a regular item on the agenda of meetings.’ 		<p>may be seen in the degree to which it exemplifies and develops its policy statement in practice’, offering observations by the DP that on a domestic level Equal Opportunities is ‘fairly well embedded ... the culture’s there’. ‘Comfortable with being part of it – ‘the practical arrangements, enthusiasm... the inclusivity’ It may be that this practice could be more widely shared and disseminated.</p>
<p><u>Mainstreaming and creating impact</u></p> <p>The Equal advice here is that:</p> <p>Mainstreaming can take place in two complementary ways.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Horizontally: aimed at the DP, partners and other local or regional agencies with similar interests, and commonly focusing on practical lessons.</i> • <i>Vertically: aimed at influencing national</i> 	<p>It is relevant to note here that the TCA expresses the aspirations of each of the partners on ‘vertical’ and ‘horizontal’ mainstreaming these aspirations have been expressed earlier in the report and have been consolidated here as an example; ‘Creating acceptance in politics and society and is thus highly interested in the development of common policy recommendations and activities at the national and European levels”.</p> <p>“Working with transnational partners will be a</p>	<p>The intent to affect both delivery and policy have been expressed within the design of the TCA in terms of sharing of practice at both operational and policy level. There has been a degree of involvement from politicians however this involvement had been noted by one politician at the Offenbach TN visit when she stated that that the only political presence at this meeting was one person and expressed a wish to meet with other politicians and forthcoming meeting in Sweden. There was no immediate response</p>

<p><i>and European policy, with the role of intermediaries and enablers (such as Regional Development Agencies) being important in passing on key lessons.</i></p>	<p><i>key element of Cyfenter2 objectives to develop a wider European perspective on the nature and forms of discrimination and inequality in enterprise support and to identify and learn from existing good practice, which can be fed into the programme of Action Research being delivered by the Cyfenter2 DP”.</i></p> <p><i>“The activities and output of the trans-national partnership will feed into the national development partnership. In particular the developed policy recommendations will help to create a knowledge regarding working with gender and ethnic mainstreaming in existing structures. In particular in the area of training for advisors in gender and ethnic equality the ENTRÉE partnership can benefit from its partner’s experience”.</i></p> <p><i>“In addition the Portuguese development partnership also aims at creating acceptance in politics and society and is thus highly interested in the development of common policy recommendations and activities at the national and European levels”.</i></p>	<p>from partners.</p> <p>The Cardiff meeting was attended by a local politician from Portugal. The TN Partner from Portugal suggested in the evaluator interview that the attendance of the politician had been a positive experience and that he was in no doubt that it would prove beneficial to the domestic project.</p> <p>At an interview with a Civil Servant the view offered on TN meetings was <i>“I was offered an opportunity to become involved in the TNP but have been a little reticent as the links are more akin to practical level involvement”.</i></p> <p>The point made here suggests that if the TNP involved and engaged Regional Policy level representatives there would certainly be value in the engagement of WAG. In the absence of this Governmental link there was an issue of priorities for engagement.</p> <p>There is still time and opportunity to inform policy at local level the acid test will be can that happen now given the restrictions and constraints of the present environment.</p> <p>(this point is further discussed in the conclusion)</p>
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7 Some Observations on Monitoring and Evaluation

There are differences in the management, monitoring and evaluation across the transnational partner lead bodies. Two of the transnational partners have engaged a Transnational Coordinator to co-ordinate their transnational activities and this role also encompasses that of 'evaluation'

By way of contrast the Cyfenter project has both an internal and external evaluation process in place, bringing an added dimension of partnership learning.

*The evaluation of most EQUAL transnational partnerships, is an on-going assessment of activities and achievements, based on common planning, with continuous feedback to the coordinators and managers of the transnational partnerships (self-assessment) is the approach most commonly used.*⁹

The Cyfenter external evaluation of transnational working aimed to offer an objective, supportive perspective to; in the first instance Cyfenter. The aim here was to give support to realising the full potential of transnational work and maximise value at a domestic level. The external evaluation began at the outset of the Cyfenter 2 project and has had an objective external view of the activities, processes and delivery of Cyfenter 2. This has enabled an on-going assessment of activities and achievements to be reported to the coordinators and managers.

More specifically, Cyfenter called and led a transnational evaluators' meeting in Germany, May 2006. This was the first meeting where all four evaluators were present. It proved to be valuable from an external evaluators point as those involved were able to discuss their individual role, how they perceived it and how they could collaborate (*'lets work together'*)¹⁰ to enhance the transnational evaluation.

⁹ Evaluating EQUAL transnational projects – ECOTEC good practice guide

¹⁰ Five Degrees of Partnership
(from smarter partnerships Educe Ltd)

There has been a sharing of practice between the evaluators which has resulted in aiding the development of an indicator for evaluation (the sharing of a transnational questionnaire for wider distribution) this collaborative approach is termed by the Support Unit as supporting the self-assessment of the partnership.

As an example the evaluation of transnational co-operation in EQUAL must assess three things:¹¹

- The relevance of the activities and results, indicating the extent to which the common objectives met common needs and addressed common issues
- The efficiency (the relation between inputs and outputs) and effectiveness (results in relation to objectives) with which activities are planned, managed and executed;
- Impact – the value the transnational work has added to the activities and results of each DP involved in the short term, and the contribution on the policy and practice of decision makers and stakeholders at European, national and local levels.

8 Concluding Observations

8.1 General Observations

The external evaluation has pointed out in its reporting that any *development* partnership is inherently dynamic and liable to raise challenges that need to be negotiated and resolved. The Transnational partnership is no exception and clearly there have been challenges - whether these are termed as cultural differences, language and contextualisation, the diversity and capacity of Development Partnerships or simply getting to know each other. Such challenges add pressure to the transnational management process and to the achievement of some specific outcomes. However, and to return to the EQUAL Support Unit guidance

¹¹ EQUAL transnational co-operation guidance

'... the purpose of EQUAL is to test new ideas ... (and) ... as long as you properly evaluate your activities and learn and share lessons, it's acceptable not to succeed in the way you had planned'.

Transnational work in general has offered positive learning opportunities to a wide sector and in the case of Cyfenter 2 this has extended to a number of organisations for whom transnational work is a new experience. Additionally, Cyfenter has enabled research participants to engage in Transnational working.

The present section therefore gathers together some final observations and 'issues' raised by the evaluation's work with the partnership.

They are indicative of the range of issues raised but not comprehensive. It is anticipated that the reader will have extracted others from earlier pages perhaps, and especially taking points from the summary tables provided.

The observations are not all of the same 'weight', their inclusion here does not mean that nothing has been done to respond to them, as there are other factors that may be either restricting or pressing on a response.

- It will be clear from this report that Cyfenter has played a full part in the organisation and delivery of the E2 TCA – illustrated perhaps most vividly in the activities of E2 which have been reported on in the section ***'transnational work in practice'***.
- There has been a general willingness among DP members to participate in and learn from Transnational activities – understandably conditioned by individual organisational resources and priorities.
- Cyfenter members have become engaged in planning or delivering 'spin off' transnational activity – and in one case this has continued from Cyfenter 1 and led to the sharing of a joint product.¹²

¹² The Article 6 initiative noted in earlier pages produced a visual, computer based 'instrument' for assessing the state of regional business support.

- There is clear evidence of the relevance and efficiency of delivering and learning from this Transnational partnership and
- There is no doubt that the work of Cyfenter will impact by way of 'legacy'

Perhaps the greatest potential challenge in the remaining period is that of securing and demonstrating the *common* outcomes and impact on practice and policy: the strategic level goals of transnationality. Plans are in hand to produce collaborative reports, for example comparing business support arrangement across national boundaries and there is a planned **symposium event in Brussels**. The most pressing question is how far Cyfenter and its transnational partners can play a part in creating a 'critical mass' to influence relevant European policy for underrepresented groups?

Jo Muscat

March 2007

APPENDIX A

(Ref. Section 1.2)

The TCA agreed for the E2 partnership explained how the four partners would bring a wide range of experience to the common purpose.

Cyfenter offered the view that the Action Research being conducted through the domestic project would benefit from the transnational perspective in support of *“.....developing a wider European perspective on the nature and forms of discrimination and inequality in enterprise support and to identify and learn from existing good practice, which can be fed into the programme of Action Research being delivered by the Cyfenter2 DP. In turn, the Cyfenter DP will add value to the strategy and intended results.*

The German partner *EXZEPT* offered their interests

- *Research on “new self-employment”*
- *After business creation support to enable sustainability*
- *Networking of enterprise’s founders*
- *Multiplication of financially viable entrepreneurial support structures that act for the benefit of local development*
- *Quality control of support infrastructure and trainers; Curriculum and train-the-trainers/ advisors.*
- *Existing micro-lending practice including fund raising and management; accreditation of One-Stop-Shops (OSS) and local hand-out of credits.*

Entree -the Swedish partnership was particularly interested in:

- *Research on the working model of green house to enhance entrepreneurship in underrepresented groups.*
- *Research on the effects on trades based on female or male dominated trades.*
- *Research on mainstreaming of gender and ethnic equality projects.*
- *Eye opening training for advisors and financiers on gender and ethnic equality applied to entrepreneurship’s conditions.*
- *Existing practise of mentorship and coaching programmes for entrepreneurs.*
- *Communication and dissemination of results to succeed in implementation to the existing entrepreneurial support structures.*

Portuguese partner *OESTE EMPREENDEDOR* intended to undertake entrepreneurship from the most disadvantaged groups based upon a regional development strategy. This means the project will intend to influence the activities to be created in terms of its economic sectors or innovative approach, according to the diagnosis is being made at action 1. Other experiences (from main support structures) as well as other studies and reports are being used in the definition of the regional development concept.

APPENIX B

(Ref section 3.2 page 13)

The evidential base for the present report has included

- Reviewing monitoring and other information and documents provided by the Cyfenter project team - including the TCA
- Engaging in face to face discussions with key members of the operational team including the internal evaluator for Cyfenter (1 & 2);
- Attending most if not all of the Steering Group meetings held during the evaluation period
- Participating in workshops at transnational events held in Cardiff, Germany and Sweden
- Holding discussions with the three transnational partners (TN) at the Cyfenter hosting visit in February 2006
- Undertaking some 19+ semi-structured interviews with a sample of DP members, including two follow-up discussions with organisations new to the partnership. and
- Following up with three further interviews primarily focusing on transnational activities.
- Engaging in a meeting with each of the member states transnational evaluators.