

MINUTES

TaRgET Euro-ISDN Project Meeting

Monday 30 September, 1996, Sitges

Present:

Frank Boss - Technology Centre Limburg, Heerlen - Chair
Belinda Tanner - Technology Centre Limburg, Heerlen
Alice Gorissen - Technology Centre Limburg, Heerlen
Elain Gits - Technology Centre Limburg, Heerlen
Bernard Black - Western Connect LTD, Derry
Gerry McGuckin - North West Institute of Further and Higher Education, Derry
Sam Carlin - North West Institute of Further and Higher Education, Derry
Pat Coman - RTC Tallaght, Dublin
Michele Crudele - Associazione Centro Elis, Rome
Brendan Doyle - Camara Oviedo, Oviedo
Peter Dutton - Hertford Regional College, Broxbourne
Bill Grady - North Trafford College, Manchester
Robbie Hegarty - Star Business Communications Centre, Derry
Bengt Kroon - Swedish War College, Östersund
Anna Malchow - Hertford Regional College, Broxbourne
Dimitris Passouris - Greek Productivity Centre, Athens
Tony Stevenson - North Trafford College, Manchester
Rob Vanderstraeten - VIA vzw, Diepenbeek

1. Welcome and Introduction

The Chair welcomes participants and opens the meeting. Apologies for absence are received from Mr D Wilson, Western Connect Ltd.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting are approved page by page without any alterations.

3. Deliverable 3 (First Phase Report and Feasibility Report) - Review

Mrs Gorissen outlines the objectives of Deliverable 3 and explains that the results of the feasibility study were derived from the outcomes of the following Workpackage activities: WP1- Information Needs Analysis; WP2 - Technical Evaluation and WP3 - Co-operation models. It is highlighted that the completion of this deliverable brings to a close the first phase of the TaRgET project.

Mrs Gorissen remarks that based on the findings of this Deliverable, the project consortium must agree to continue invest in the project and commence Phase 2 activities.

The principal objectives of the Feasibility Report were to:

- provide recommendations on the operation of the platform
- provide recommendations on the feasibility of the platform
- define the educational and technical success criteria
- outline both regional and transregional co-operation models

Mrs Gorissen states that future regional training needs were successfully identified during Workpackage 1. Further still, these regional training needs have been successfully transferred into the training topics to be delivered during the regional pilot trials.

Ms Tanner introduces the outcomes of WP3, co-operation models. An overview of the regional and transregional co-operation activities to take place during the project is described. It is added that within each of the regional and transregional co-operation activities, basic and advanced levels of co-operation will occur.

Ms Tanner explains that on a basic level Euro-ISDN applications will be utilised for communication purposes. On the advanced level, Euro-ISDN applications will be used to: support or guide training; deliver training to SMEs and develop training materials.

Within the advanced transregional co-operation activities, 5 levels have been defined ranging from the linking of trainers and trainees and exchanging of experts via videoconferencing, to the delivery of parts of training courses transregionally using Euro-ISDN.

It is noted that as it is planned to train partners in the use of videoconferencing (presentation and chairing skills and videoconferencing etiquette), via a videoconferencing training session (delivered by a University in Belgium), all partners will participate at the fourth level of advanced transregional co-operation.

Ms Tanner continues to explain that based on the descriptions of the regional pilot projects, 3 transregional co-operation groups have been identified. These groups, of which each partner will be a member, are focused upon the following areas (as identified in Chapter 6 of Deliverable 3, Feasibility Study):language training; process operator training and assessment and evaluation of ISDN based technologies. It is noted that during the afternoon session, working groups based on these groups will take place with the aim of formulating transregional activities to take place during the TaRgET project. It is also stressed that the groups defined are not closed groups. Therefore if a partner wished to join in the transregional activities of another group it would be possible.

Finally, the recommendations and conclusions of the First Phase Report and Feasibility Report are presented by Ms Tanner. It is highlighted that the consortium must agree to go on with phase 2 project activities based on the conclusions from the Feasibility report. It is noted that as a result of the extensive investigations carried out during workpackages 1-4 successful outcomes relating to the feasibility of the continuation of the TaRgET project activities have been identified (as described in Chapter 9 of the Feasibility Report).

Consequently, as outlined in the Feasibility report, the project

management recommends that the consortium continues to invest in the project and commences phase 2 activities. The consortium agrees with this recommendation and it is noted that Ms Tanner will formally inform the EC of this decision.

4. Regional Pilot Project Presentations

The Chair requested that each partner presented his/her regional pilot project. During the regional presentations, partners were encouraged to further consider opportunities for transregional co-operation.

Swedish War College

Colonel Kroon provides the following descriptions relating to the 2 pilot projects to take place in Sweden.

Pilot 1 - NNP Project:

The purpose of the course is to link 15 regional supervisors of the NNP agricultural co-operative from the Lower Norrland region of Sweden. The content of the course will be as follows:

- Management, the roles of the manager
- Working with goals
- Climate, communication
- Competence development
- How to meet the future

The aim of the project will be to test the new methodology where responsibility for learning will be placed upon the participants. Also the project will encourage participants to use computers as a natural aid in their daily activities.

Pilot 2-Business English Language Training

Colonel Kroon explains that during this pilot, representatives from 9 timber companies in Jamtland who act as the so-called front-line for export sales will be targeted. The course will include the following elements:

- Effective telephoning in English
- Effective business correspondence in English
- Interpersonal
- Negotiations
- International meetings in English
- Communication cross-culturally in English

The aims of the pilot course will be the same as the aims of the NNP project. It is noted that for each of the above pilot projects, 1-3 trainees from each regional organisation will be involved.

Camara Oviedo

Mr Doyle explains that the aim of the Spanish pilot project is to provide Language Audit training to assess the specific needs and requirements in an SME. He adds that based on the results of the audit, a distance learning programme for business personnel with commercial and technical duties will be developed.

The target group will be up to 5-6 personnel from the SME who have both technical and commercial duties. It is noted that the course has been adapted to the needs of these trainees. At present, these trainees have basic conversational English language skills.

The aim of the training will be to improve the professional activities and develop international communication skills.

Mr Doyle states that videoconferencing and audio and video material will be used to deliver training for 3 hours per week. It is stressed that important success factors will be the training of the trainer in the use of the new technologies. Finally, Mr Doyle remarks that the important outcome from the project will be the assessment of the 'added value' of using videoconferencing for training.

VIA

Mr Vanderstraeten states that the nature of the training will be TPM and will provide theoretical background to gain knowledge of actual maintenance skills. The target group will be production operators. It is added that control groups will be used during the pilot project to ensure thorough evaluation. These groups will consist of 10 Distance learning students and 10 conventional students.

Cd-i's and CD-ROMs will be used wherever possible. Videoconferencing will be used in a supporting role (teacher will guide students and evaluate any problems).

Again, evaluation of the 'added value' of the use of the new technologies will be a very important factor.

RTC Tallaght

Mr Coman explains that the target group for this pilot will be 5 operators in the identified SME. He adds that the aim will be to develop a training programme for test operators to enable them to provide first level fault diagnosis and implement repairs.

Also the pilot will include machine maintenance training from an electrical/electronic perspective to train general operators to develop the necessary skills to provide first level maintenance and fault/problem definition.

The pilot will be delivered via multimedia CBT products customised to the needs of the company (MDS). Local remote access to CBT and other support tools using ISDN will be used as well as limited videoconferencing for lectures (approx 4 over 15 weeks). Additionally, limited videoconference tutorials (1-2 hours per week) will be provided as a support

mechanism for the training. Mr Coman remarks that the opportunity to exchange developed material between VIA/TCL and RTC Tallaght would be an interesting transregional activity.

TCL

Mrs Gorissen explains that the aim of the pilot will be to train operators to become qualified as a mechanical operators.

The target group will be a group of 24 employees which will be divided into 2 groups:

- 1 those who will remain in the open learning centre (control group)
- 2 those who will receive in-company training

The groups will be trained on an individual basis for 8 hours per week.

The training methodology will allow students to study at their own pace.

The self-study learning materials include CD-i's. Videoconferencing will be used in a supporting and mentoring role for the trainees who receive in-company training.

Hertford Regional College

Mr Dutton presents the experiences of Hertford Regional College concerning the development of learning strategies. The main outcome from the experiences to date is that the multimedia interface is the key to a successful learning package.

The aim of the pilot project will be to train draughtsmen/designers in the area of AUTOCAD v12 and Basic maintenance. Videoconferencing will be used in a supporting role . Application sharing and CD-ROM will also be utilised

As with the other projects, Mr Dutton wishes to assess the 'added value' of using these technologies for training.

Centro Elis

Dr Crudele states that training activities of the Italian pilot will focus upon training in new safety regulations which will be compulsory in Italy next year.

The personnel involved are current employees within the SME, the Libero Instituto Universitario Campus Bio-Medico (LIUCBM) based in Rome.

These personnel, who are working in different departments will be trained to improve their standards or to learn new techniques.

Solutions will be delivered via videoconferencing to personnel on the job. These will include issues such as how to use a fire extinguisher, laundry handling and hygiene. These sessions

will stimulate interactivity and discussions. Additionally, another hospital for remote videoconferencing with LIUCBM in training safety procedures has been identified.

Mr Crudele adds that portable videoconferencing equipment would be very useful for this pilot.

The training will be followed up by connection to Elis web server.

Mr Crudele remarks that as mentioned in previous pilot project descriptions, an important outcome from the project will be the 'added value' provided by the technology.

NWIFHE

Mr Carlin remarks that the target group for this pilot will be two students who are in full-time employment whose employer, for various reasons, cannot afford for them to be absent for one day each week to undertake a traditional day release course.

The students need to fulfill the requirements of BTEC to cover the necessary theory and practical work involved in the subject. Therefore this new method of training method will be adopted to enable them to fulfil this requirement.

Mr Carlin adds that both students are at the same stage of development (one will be taught by traditional methods the other via DL). Both students are between 18-20 years old.

The learning materials will consist of conventional training materials such as text books and lesson notes.

The distance learning materials will be CBT consisting of software based lessons, written course material and practical exercise material. Euro-ISDN videoconferencing will be used to provide interactive tutorial support.

It is noted that the learning materials to be used have previously been evaluated with very positive results. Consequently, the use of videoconferencing will provide an additional element to the already successful learning package.

Greek Productivity Centre

Dr Passouris informs the participants that problems concerning the accessibility of SMEs to ISDN facilities has caused a delay in the identification of a suitable SME to be involved in the pilot project (infrastructure problems around Athens).

However, an SME will be identified within the next month. It is planned to train 6-8 personnel. The training activity will most likely consist of multi-media training courses to train people how to use packages such as windows, word, excel, DTP and office automation. At the end of each module, self-assessment exercises will be completed.

The activities will use remote training which will simultaneously link students with trainers. It is noted that the pilot will provide an important trail for the creation of the DL environment of the future as envisaged by the Greek Productivity Centre.

The Chair thanks the members for their contributions.

5. **Deliverable 2 - Presentation**

Mr Black, the Technical Manager presents the outcomes of second Deliverable entitled 'Technical Evaluation'(a copy of which is distributed to members).

Mr Black explains that the report is the culmination of research activities undertaken to analyse the technical needs of the partners and the SMEs with regard to their existing technological base, their requirements to fulfil the objectives of the TaRgET proposal and their aspirations to deliver quality training on a trans-national basis utilising ISDN applications as a means of delivery. It is added that in addition to the user analysis, extensive market research was conducted to identify suitable products to fulfil both the technical and user needs of the project.

It is noted that seven different videoconferencing and collaborative working systems were evaluated by both experienced and novice users. The assessment of the equipment was based on the following factors: availability; supplier presence; support; performance and cost.

Mr Black provides the following recommendations which were derived from the technical evaluation. Firstly, it is highlighted that certain partners will need to reduce the size of the groups to be trained during the pilots. This is due to the budget constraints of the project which have dictated the nature of equipment to be used (i.e PC based videoconferencing). It is stressed therefore that the maximum number of trainees to be trained or guided via a videoconferencing session at one time is 5-6. **Partners who plan to train/guide more than this number of trainees at one time via videoconferencing are advised to reduce the group size. Alternatively, the number of videoconferencing sessions could be increased to include fewer participants, however, in this case, the additional communication costs must be considered.**

Another important factor to consider is that all partners should receive the same level of training in the use of PC technology and conferencing techniques.

It is noted that as indicated in the technical evaluation, regional partners have varying technological requirements during the pilots. It is stated that these requirements have been addressed and the technical management will respond to the individual needs during the project. Additionally, it is noted that a base PC system is recommended in the evaluation report.

Mr Black then presents 3 options concerning the type of equipment and the nature of the platform to be established to carry out the project activities. The main elements of these 3 areas are described below.

The first option involves all partners and SMEs receiving the same base PC system and videoconferencing systems (the exact products to be identified in the near future).

The second option presented involves all partners and SMEs receiving the same base PC system (as above). All partners will receive the same videoconferencing and collaborative systems. The majority of SMEs will receive the same videoconferencing systems. However, in order to meet the regional pilot requirements certain SMEs (Sweden and Spain) will receive a portable compact vision unit.

The third option involves all partners and SMEs receiving the same base system but (based on the 3 co-operation groups identified during WP 3), different videoconferencing and collaborative working systems are installed to allow comparison of platforms.

Mr Black recommends that Option 2 is adopted during the project and after a brief discussion all partners agree to implement this recommendation.

The success criteria factors for the platform are then highlighted and the importance of continuous technical evaluation is stressed. Mr Black informs the members that he will compile a detailed evaluation form which must be completed on a monthly basis by all partners to ensure that the maximum outcomes can be derived from the project.

The Chair thanks Mr Black for his contributions.

6. Addendum to the TaRgET contract

Mr McGuckin informs participants that as indicated in previous correspondence, an amendment to the existing TaRgET contract is required which has resulted in the requirement for all partners to become co-signatories of the contract. This amendment will result in all partners having a separate contract with the Commission.

Those partners who have not to date returned two original letters stating that their organisation is willing to become a co-signatory of the contract are requested do so as soon as possible.

Mr McGuckin then informs participants of the need to revise the project costings due to the low travel allocation and further since the withdrawal of the french partner, CIEFOP from the project. Consequently, a copy of the project proposal which includes the revised project costings table is distributed to members at the meeting.

The Chair thanks Mr McGuckin for his contribution.

The Chair informs members that after lunch, the participants will divide into the co-operation groups as indicated in Appendix 3 of the meeting information pack. It is stressed that the aims of these working groups, is to further clarify and plan the transregional activities to take place during the project (as indicated in the co-operations tables).

7. Co-operation Models - Feedback From Working Groups

The Chair invites members to provide feedback from the discussions which took place during the transregional co-operation working groups.

CO-OPERATION GROUP 1

Partners: Swedish War College, Camara Oviedo, Spain

Ms Tanner notes that the following transregional activities were discussed during the working group session.

TRAINING AREA 1 - Language Training

- 1 15 October - First video/tele conference session to link regions. The aim of this link will be to introduce the teachers and students to each other and define the contents of each course and discuss the transregional dimension.
- 2 Exchange of Spanish trainer to Sweden to receive information concerning the Swedish project and also to receive training in the use of videoconferencing
- 3 Plan a videoconference to deliver common training session on Swedish and Spanish business cultures.
- 4 Plan videoconference sessions to provide the opportunity for the trainees to exchange experiences of using the technologies provided by Euro-ISDN and to assess the 'added value'.
- 5 Jointly develop project evaluation guidelines.

TRAINING AREA 2 - NNP Pilot Project

- 1 Link regional experts/managers of local dairy industries to compare their experiences of EU agricultural policies.
Possible linking of english speaking farmers via e-mail to discuss their experiences of EU agricultural policy.
It emerged during discussions that both regions have strong dairy industries.

Co-operation Group 2 - Operator Training

Partners involved: VIA, TCL, RTC Tallaght

Drs Boss provides an outline of the planned transregional activities for the process operator training co-operation group.

November 1996: Initial training and familiarisation - distribution of detailed information concerning the training to be delivered during each regional pilot (module breakdowns) and also the names of the trainers and developers of the materials.

December 1996: Bi-lateral videoconference to discuss needs of companies. Agree elements of course of study which can benefit from transnational activity. Link via e-mail or videoconference the trainers and developers of programmes to discuss development of training activities using available resources such as laser technology, PLC and Fuzzy Logic.

January 1996: Agree schedule for trainers/developers co-operation.
Study visit of RTC Tallaght partner to TCL and VIA to investigate further the use of existing common training materials.

Co-operation Group 3 - Assessment of 'Added Value' of ISDN Based Technology

Partners involved: Associazione Centro Elis, Hertfordshire Regional College; NWIFHE, Greek Productivity Centre.

Mr Dutton describes the planned activities for the third co-operation group as follows.

October-November 1996: Initial training and familiarisation
December-January 1996/7: Agree elements of courses which can benefit from transnational activity
February 1997: Agree schedule for Student/SME participation.
Monthly videoconference links will take place throughout.

8. Project Evaluation Guidelines

The Chair invites Ms Tanner to describe the evaluation criteria for the project. Ms Tanner stresses that as identified in the feasibility study, one of the main success criteria for the project will be the conduction of continuous evaluation procedures from both a technical and educational perspective. Ms Tanner then explains the evaluation criteria as outlined in Appendix 4 of the meeting information pack. The partners agree that all of the areas covered are important and should be completed on a monthly basis.

Additionally, it is noted that the evaluation guidelines developed by the Swedish pilot will be utilised.

Mr Grady suggests that the evaluation criteria should differ from month to month to reflect the different stages of activity of the project. It is agreed that this method would indeed be useful and Ms Tanner agrees to compile these targeted monthly evaluation criteria. Additionally, Ms

Tanner states that additionally, specific evaluation criteria for both the interim reporting period to the EC (end April 1997) and the final project evaluation will be defined.

Mr Black comments that from a technical perspective, detailed evaluation will also form an essential outcome of the project as a whole. It is agreed that Mr Black will distribute a technical evaluation form which will be completed by all partners each month. It is also noted that each partner will be required to log details of each connection made via videoconferencing.

9. Plans For the Next Phase

The Chair invites Ms Tanner to review the operational activities for the next phase of the project. Ms Tanner highlights that as outlined in the project timeschedule, the forthcoming 3 months of the project will involve all Phase 2 activities i.e. Planning and Preparatory Actions.

Consequently, from an operational perspective, the following activities will occur: production of Deliverable 4 (end October 1996) which will finalise operational plans (such as regional pilot training content, recruitment of trainees, interactions between regions and evaluation mechanisms) and also implementation plans.

Mr Black provides details of the technical plans for the next phase as follows:

- end of October/early November - procurement and commissioning of equipment;
- mid November - testing and technical training;
- end November/early December - training in the use of videoconferencing

10. Any Other Business

Ms Tanner states that as all apart from 1 partner now has a connection, e-mail will be the main communication method for the project.

The importance of completing the 3 monthly progress and financial reports on time is raised. It is stressed that documentation (e.g. copies of air tickets/invoice) to support claims for travel/subsistence must be provided along with staff time sheets to demonstrate the labour time used on the project (forms for these purposes have previously been distributed).

Finally, partners are made aware of the web page for the TaRgET project which is included on the Associazione Centro Elis server (address <http://www.elis.interbusiness.it/target>). Dr Crudele informs members that this page (which has restricted access to the TaRgET consortium) will include word files related to the project activities sent to him by the project management and partners (such as Deliverables, progress reports, minutes etc).

11. Date and Place of Next Meeting

It is noted that the date of the next meeting will take place on Friday 25 April 1997 in Dublin.

12. Closing

The Chair thanks the members for their contributions and especially thanks BC CAD and Camara Oviedo for the excellent hospitality.