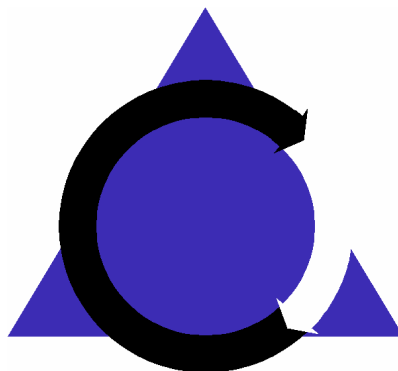


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# **Evaluation of the preparatory and introductory phase of the EQUAL programme**

## **Mid-term evaluation report**



**CyclePlan**

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## INTRODUCTION

Funded through the European Social Fund, EQUAL programme is an initiative of European Union. The objective of EQUAL is to develop and test various means of decreasing exclusion, discrimination and inequality in labour market. The programme is based on 6 principles, which are: thematic approach, partnership, innovation, transnational co-operation, active inclusion and participation, and transferring the results into policy and practice.

In Estonia, three out of the six themes of EQUAL are implemented: "Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or reintegrated into a labour market which must be open to all" (Theme A), "Reconciling family and professional life, as well as the reintegration of men and women who have left the labour market, by developing more flexible and effective forms of work organisation and support services" (Theme G) and "Supporting the social and vocational integration of asylum seekers" (Theme I).

In Estonia, the Ministry of Social Affairs is responsible for co-ordinating the preparation and implementation of EQUAL. The Ministry of Social Affairs is also responsible for the evaluation of EQUAL and submitting the evaluation report to the European Commission. The scope of evaluation is the analysis of Action 1 (preparation and activation phase), which covers the following activities: compiling and submitting monitoring reports, entering into Development Partnership Agreements (DPA) and Transnational Co-operation Agreements (TCA), and submitting specified action plans for Action 2 and Action 3 together with budget and financial resources. Since the interim evaluation must be independent, a procurement tendering was carried out and the contract was won by CyclePlan Ltd (CP).

CP is a consulting company, which is familiar to the evaluation methodologies applied in European Union countries and has a long experience in assessing programmes and projects. CP participates also in the evaluation of Lithuanian EQUAL programme, in the course of which the evaluation methodologies for the whole programme will be composed. The designed methodology will be applied to assess the Lithuanian EQUAL programme in 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008.

CP methodology of evaluation is based on five criteria - relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. Descriptions of these criteria are available in Annex 1 of the current report.

Based on the above-mentioned evaluation methodology, answers to the following questions will be found on the programme level:

- Is the choice of themes and priorities set in the themes applicable to and in accordance with the national policy?
- Do the selected projects comply with the programme strategy?
- Evaluation of the selection criteria for projects

Going further from the programme level, answers to the following questions will be found on the project level:

- How, and of whom are constituted the development partnerships (DPs) that will implement the projects, and are the key people and organisations related to the given area included?

- Are the principles of the programme (partnership, transnational co-operation, innovation, active inclusion, information and mainstreaming) reflected in the action plans for DPs?
- Which are the management systems of the DPs; are they appropriate for the essence and scope of the given projects?
- Which is the potential impact of DP projects on labour market policy and practice?
- How, and of whom are transnational partnerships constituted?
- What is the essence of transnational co-operation? To what extent have the opportunities for transnational co-operation been made use of?
- How is the self-assessment of the DPs planned (which indicators will be evaluated, who will evaluate, how is the evaluation arranged)? Which indicators could additionally be monitored and assessed?

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- DPA – Development Partnership Agreement  
EE-01 – „WE FRIENDS – West Estonian Development Partnership”  
EE-02 – „RE-START”  
EE-03 – „Children Taken Care of, Mothers at Work!”  
EE-04 – „Flexible Forms of Training and Work - Best Practices of Reconciling Family and Professional Life”  
EE-05 – „Development of Multifunctional Care Service to Enhance Employment”  
EE-06 – „Integration of Women Involved in Prostitution Including Victims of Human Trafficking into the Labour Market”  
EE-07 – „Development and Application of Farmers' Replacement Service”  
EE-08 – „Handicapped People Employed in Co-Operatives (HAPECO)”  
EE-09 – „Re-integration of Compulsive Gamblers into the Labour Market and Prevention of Social Exclusion”  
EE-10 – „WHOLE – Work and Home in Our Life in Europe”  
EE-11 – „Increasing the Readiness of the Estonian Society for Integrating Asylum Seekers”  
EE-12 – „Connected Services for Integrating Young Mothers into the Labour Market”  
EE-13 – „Models of Distance Working for Estonian Islands”  
ECDB – EQUAL Common Database  
LG – Local Government  
NDP – Estonian National Development Plan for the Implementation of the EU Structural Funds - Single Programming Document 2000-2006  
TCA – Transnational Co-Operation Agreement  
MoSA – Ministry of Social Affairs  
LMB – Estonian Labour Market Board

## 1. INITIAL INFORMATION ABOUT EVALUATION

### 1.1. EQUAL overview

The total funding of the Estonian EQUAL programme is EEK 84.9 million (5.42 million EUR), of which EEK 78.1 million (92 %) is to finance projects; thereby, 25 % of the projects' funding will be provided by Estonia and 75% by the European Social Fund. The sum will be divided among the three themes to be implemented in Estonia as follows: Theme A – EEK 42.44 million (50 %), Theme G – EEK 33.95 million (48 %) and Theme I – EEK 1.7 million (2 %). In order to get financial support, self-financing in the amount of 5 % must be guaranteed for every project.

38 projects in the application round of EQUAL met the necessary requirements, out of which 13 best projects were selected via assessment. 26 projects were submitted for Theme A, out of which 5 highest rated ones were selected. 11 projects were submitted for Theme G, out of which 7 were selected. In addition to Themes A and G, 1 project was submitted and approved for Theme I. Short description and summary of the projects are available in Annex 3 of the current report.

## 2. RESULTS OF THE EVALUATION

### 2.1. Relevance

#### ***The compliance of the EQUAL strategy with the NDP, Action Plan for Employment and Employment Service Act***

EQUAL programme strategy fits well with NDP measure 1.3 and National Action Plan for Employment 2003, emphasizing specific target groups, and allowing and stimulating to elaborate, implement and test new approaches. In order that any specific socio-economic policy area (currently employment policy) could continuously develop and make use of the experiences of Europe, programmes like EQUAL are necessary.

EQUAL programme also supports the provisions in the Employment Service Act, which regulates the providing of employment service for job-seekers and employers. The objectives of EQUAL coincide with the objectives of the above mentioned act to a great extent – employing job-seekers is favoured, taking into consideration their needs and the right to choose the job. However, the objectives of Employment Service Act comprise ensuring eligible workforce for the employer, while EQUAL does not aim at that. Furthermore, EQUAL is not directly aimed at the co-operation between public employment services and undertakings. On the other hand, both EQUAL and Employment Service Act aim at equality in labour market.

#### ***Selection criteria***

The selection criteria used in the application round are commonly comprehensible and applicable to EQUAL principles. The main categories of the evaluation sheet (relevance, methodology, capacity, impact, reasoned budget and sustainability) do not differ greatly from other evaluation categories for the programmes funded by the European Union. However, it seems that giving points by categories emphasizes too much the methodology (40 % of total points). Thus, two important main categories – capacity and impact, have relatively few points (14 % and 6 %). There are too few points also for the criterion of sustainability (5 %), although EQUAL is an innovative programme and all projects may not always be sustainable. Since the applicants or their advisors (who have plenty experience in applying for or managing EU programmes) have an opportunity to write very well and convincingly about the methodology<sup>1</sup>, the essence<sup>2</sup> of the project stays on to the background. This may obstruct selecting the projects, which favour the innovation and development of the labour market policy the most. Moreover, two important criteria – relevance and feasibility, gathered only 20 % of the total points in the preliminary evaluation phase, although the amount could have been 30-40 %.

Besides assessing the objectives, results and activities in the category of relevance, the needs of the target groups and description of the problem should have also been assessed. Therefore, the application form does not contain enough information<sup>3</sup> about the target groups and problem description. This situation and partial lack of

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<sup>1</sup> The overall structure, action plan, administration and risk analysis of the project.

<sup>2</sup> Especially the impact (11 points together with points in the category of methodology), sustainability (5 points) and capacity (14 points) of the project.

<sup>3</sup> Only clause 4.2.1. requests the applicant to give information used in this regard.



information make it difficult to evaluate relevance. It is especially difficult to evaluate the needs of the target groups on the basis of the information inquired in the application form and the criteria on the evaluation sheet.

The main category of the selection criteria – “Methodology”, is divided into subcategories in detail and comprises several evaluation criteria related to EQUAL principles, such as including the target group, dissemination of the results, innovation, and transnational co-operation. However, the emphasis is still on the relevancy and administration<sup>4</sup>, and the added value of (both Estonian and transnational) DPs is considered to be less important – what can be enhanced in the project when such partners are included, and why such co-operation cannot be implemented with organisations found via tendering procedure. Thus, it is important to raise the question whether the chosen partners have irreplaceable added value, which the partner found via tendering procedure lacks. Additionally, it would have been appropriate to assess also the history of previous co-operation between partners. The existence of previous partnership could have been positive namely because due to that the probability of the co-operation sustainability increases. It would also have been useful to evaluate the résumés of the experts participating in the project already in the application evaluation phase. The aim of this would have been the analysis of participants’ capacity – can the project be successfully implemented with the provided workforce (partners).

Under the category of impact, the impact of labour market policy and practice, and integration of risk groups into the labour market could have been evaluated. The criteria of impact are too limited, being basically equal to the ones that are evaluated also under other measures in the NDP. Therefore, the potential specific impact of the projects under EQUAL is left out when evaluating the applications. Although a project can get 3 points for good descriptions of implementation and dissemination of the results, and 2 points for describing the relation between policy areas, it does not directly ensure the attainability of the overall objectives of the projects or the expected contribution to the EQUAL objectives.

In the criteria of budget evaluation, it would have been appropriate to include the capacity for pre-financing. The need for this lies in the fact that similarly to other SF interventions, all activities under EQUAL must be pre-financed, but for some projects this might be a problem. Such analysis could have been made by giving an overview of cash flows and financial position, which are a part of the application form.

The criteria of sustainability should have been applied not only to the activities but also to the results of the projects. Moreover, it would have been appropriate to assess the existence of financial resources or their probable existence to continue with the activities and results of the project once the project ends.

### ***Capacity of administration and merits***

As for administrative capacity, projects vary to a great extent. On the one hand, there are projects, which involve bigger organisations that have the opportunity to pre-finance their activities and also hire the project manager as a salaried worker; in other words, they are able to pay the wages. Such examples are projects EE-10 and EE-03. On the other hand, there are projects in which the lead partner and also some other partners are non-profit organizations with restricted resources, some of which

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<sup>4</sup> Administration and decision-making methods of DP, comprehensibility of the action plan, proposed co-operation.

even participate in several projects in the present round of EQUAL<sup>5</sup>. In some cases, the representatives of these parties are the same persons<sup>6</sup>, who, in addition to being responsible for the project, are at the same time in charge of running the company. Furthermore, project management is problematic also in the case of outsourced services, because the co-operation between institutions essential for project activities does not advance as easily as it should (in the case of project EE-12). Thus, it is disputable whether these persons are able to make such contribution to the projects as they should according to the application materials and reporting information.

However, some „outsourced” project managers (EE-01, EE-08 and EE-11) have plenty of experience in EU project management. In such projects, there is no fear of facing any problems with co-ordinating activities or reporting, except perhaps a delay in submitting. A delay may occur because very often the activities of Action 1 (preparatory activities rather than the ones related to merits) are delayed or postponed. So, when there are problems with deadlines in the first phase, they are very likely to continue in the following phases as well. On the other hand, there are also projects in which the project manager has very little relevant experience (EE-03); this becomes clear when reading their résumés. Furthermore, there is no organisation with substantial knowledge regarding the target results of the project included in project EE-03. If the project manager has little relevant experience and the partner organisations are small and relatively new, then reaching the project objectives might be in danger. The latter is especially evident when the key people represent several partners<sup>7</sup>.

### **Compatibility with the EQUAL strategy**

Taking into consideration the overall objective of the EQUAL programme – *promoting new means of combating all forms of discrimination and inequalities in connection with the labour market, through transnational co-operation*, all but one of the selected projects are compatible. The projects are concerned with several different target groups: the unemployed, the disabled, single mothers, juvenile delinquents, prostitutes, gambling addicts. The specific EQUAL objectives are covered by establishing 3 themes:

- Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or reintegrated into a labour market which must be open to all (Theme A)
- Reconciling family and professional life, as well as the reintegration of men and women who have left the labour market, by developing more flexible and effective forms of work organisation and support services (Theme G)
- Supporting the social and vocational integration of asylum seekers (Theme I)

Within these themes, several projects have been formulated, with the exception of Theme I, which has only one project. The assessment for one important aspect in the

<sup>5</sup> Tuuru Foundation (<10 people) participated in the implementation of three EQUAL projects (EE-01 as a lead partner, EE-08 as a partner and EE-13 also as a partner). Although Tuuru has currently unofficially resigned from one of the projects (EE-13), participation in several projects means great capacity of work, cost-push, and relatively high budget risk due to the need of pre-financing. A particularly eminent example comes from projects EE-01 and EE-08, in which one of the partners is Lääne County Development Centre (LDC). At the same time, LDC makes profit in a 3-year project of Enterprise Estonia (about incubation centres sub-measures), which is aided by SF. The main attendant of the latter project is the same person who is responsible for the participation in project EE-01.

<sup>6</sup> For example, in projects EE-01, EE-08 and EE-09.

<sup>7</sup> In project EE-09, the representative of Liider Grupp OÜ (former project manager), is more or less officially representing the partner as well (Gambling Addiction Research and Weaning Institute). Both are small and new organisations (established in 2003-2004).

overall objective of EQUAL – innovation, and for other principles related to EQUAL, are presented as follows:

***Innovation: sound regarding the target groups, relatively poor in activities***

The definition of innovation lies in the question whether the project is innovative in Estonia concerning the following three types – new methods, new objectives and new structures. The innovation of projects depends on how many of these dimensions are included<sup>8</sup>. Regarding these concepts, the projects of all three themes are generally innovative: most of the projects are aimed at improving one or another target group's inclusion in the labour market, because there is no specific approach developed for this problem in Estonia. Contrarily to the concepts, the activities in various projects are less innovative.

There are several trainings<sup>9</sup> in the action plan of project EE-10, some of which are running the risk of being relatively general not innovative. The same applies for project EE-01: most of the business methods in the action plan are already existing and implemented under the NDP<sup>10</sup>. In other words, implementing the activities of widely used methods to a specific target group does not make the project innovative but means only partial innovation. It is more important to regard the possibilities of supporting a specific target group under common supporting methods. For example, in the case of business incubator activities, EQUAL could effectively use the investment and mentorship support given under NDP measure 2.3 to support the target groups of EQUAL. For Estonia, such approach would be useful in the European level, for it would be a good opportunity to promote the synergy of using the complementary structure funds together, which has often been recommended to the Member States by the European Commission.

Some projects use the results of previous projects in order to develop them. Although it is certainly logical and rational, their present degree of innovation cannot be very high. For example, the important inputs of project EE-08 are the experiences of two previous projects. Thus, this project is not particularly innovative, for the lead partner of the project has developed the knowledge and models on the same subject under a similar Phare 2002 Twinning project and a project called "Joint Activity – Development through Co-Operation". The project management is then definitely more skilful, but it does not express innovation. However, some projects are very innovative by presenting new and flexible forms of work in Estonia. A good example is project EE-13 – Estonia has got no experience in that matter. It is exactly in the low-populated areas like Estonian islands and some Western Estonian coastal regions that the development of such topic is especially relevant.

The projects in which the emphasis is based on obtaining new information and solutions by explorations (EE-04 and EE-06) are generally more innovative. These projects are opposed to the ones that implement already existing knowledge (in Estonia), e.g. project EE-08. The same applies for the projects in which the training materials for training the target group already exist or need only adjustments (projects EE-01 and EE-10).

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<sup>8</sup> The project is "very innovative" when all three are included, "innovative" when two are included, "slightly innovative" when one is included, and "not innovative" when none of the dimensions are included.

<sup>9</sup> General training for parents, business training for women, cultural training for parents. Job-circulation training appears to be more innovative.

<sup>10</sup> Foundation of incubators, training assistance for entrepreneurs, mentorship programmes.

The projects that aim at establishing first centres or venues for the target group members in Estonia are also innovative. Such examples are projects EE-02 and EE-06. Furthermore, projects EE-07 and EE-05 are also innovative, for they develop a new service in Estonia, although the trainings developed in such projects might not be so innovative.

Altogether, it can be said that the innovation addressed at the objective is well-covered. The innovation aimed at the structure occurs more rarely, but can nevertheless be found in many projects. Out of the three innovation types, the least involved one is the one aimed at methods (exceptional cases only).

### ***Added value of transnational co-operation***

For Estonia, the most valuable forms of transnational co-operation are the ones in the course of which we obtain knowledge (through explorations) and experience (by implementing new policies), especially from Member States with relevant experience. This fact tends to give the best opportunities to the projects that do not emphasize training. The greatest added value can be expected from the projects in which the representatives of the target groups pay a study visit to the systems that are successfully implemented abroad (e.g. project EE-07<sup>11</sup>). In that case the already existing and effective methods can be adopted and adjusted to the situation in Estonia (e.g. project EE-02<sup>12</sup>). The main added value of transnational co-operation, however, should be the mutual satisfaction of the needs of both Estonian and external counter-parties of TCA. This means that both partners would exchange important information, knowledge, experience etc within their competence, being at one occasion in the role of the receiver and at another occasion in the role of the provider.

Although some other projects include transnational co-operation, which lies in exchanging the experience in meetings and which can surely mean additional knowledge for the project (for the team), its added value is somewhat vague. For example, project EE-12 and its transnational partner have similar concepts but no similar practical activities, or, what is even more important – no possibility of implementing these activities. A positive example, however, is project EE-13, in which the difference between the Estonian project and transnational partner's project lies in the target group – in the one case the miners and in the other case the islanders and the inhabitants of coastal region. The best example is project EE-07, in which the target group is taken to the transnational partner to indicate the effectiveness of the project. Consequently, the target group is integrated into the activities of the other project, which gives explicit added value. In the case of the two previous examples, both theoretical and practical basis can be used. Topics such as "social responsibility" are pointed out several times<sup>13</sup>, but it is not yet clear how can social responsibility be learned from other countries (through activity). Since in Estonia the awareness of this matter is low, dissemination would play an essential part in the projects in which it is expected that the employer will also contribute to the engaging of the target group to work (projects EE-02 and EE-06 for certain).

### ***Added value of Estonian partnerships***

When setting up Estonian partnerships, one of the key questions is whether to use outsourced services or include one of the service providers into the project as a

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<sup>11</sup> The example that elsewhere in Europe the unemployed are already taking over the activities of farm for some period may also persuade the Estonian farmers and diminish their disbelief and fear.

<sup>12</sup> The model of the German Jugendwohnung has already proved effective. Thus, adapting and implementing the system in Estonia is a good opportunity and explicit added value of transnational partnership. Without the model it would be very difficult to build such system from scratch.

<sup>13</sup> In projects EE-01 and EE-08.

partner. In the situation where many projects have outsourced professional consulting services on EU projects in order to write applications, it is not always the best option to include the consultant into the project in any other way than merely in project management. If it is agreed that the pay for this service is partially the very participation in the project, the function of this partner does not necessarily add any value to the project.

If the function of a partner is to carry out the project management or training, it would generally be the best option to organise a procurement tendering<sup>14</sup> and outsource the service according to the cost-efficiency. Nevertheless, the trainees and project managers of some projects have been approved as partners, even though the background of the partner-organisations is often not associated with the given topic. For example, projects EE-10, EE-11 and EE-13. In the case of the latter, however, the fact that there has previously been a long and successful co-operation between the applicant and the partner personnel (in the same field) is a mitigating circumstance, and can thus be regarded as value added. The cost-efficiency of these projects is still disputable, for there has not been a tendering to find the best trainee or project manager. It is not always necessary to outsource the training, but if the partner lacks a distinctive added value compared to other service providers, the tendering would still be the best option.

Additionally it can be said that although there are different partners included in many projects, the key people, or the representatives of the partners are partly the same, which means that the added value of one or another partner becomes minimal. Such examples are projects EE-09 and EE-01. In the case of the latter, however, the partnership includes the representatives of three different counties, which gives a chance for interregional exchange of experience. Participation of one undertaking in this project was also particular, although its specific function and also the reason why namely this undertaking and only this one was named remained unclear.

Yet, the many partners of several projects add distinct value to DP. Associations of joint activities and Saare County Educational Centre participate in project EE-08 and their input to this partnership is directly related to practice. In order to implement potential results, many necessary partners have been included into project EE-02 – one prison and also one representative of probation supervision department of court. Unfortunately, not all projects include enough such organisations with practice. For example, there is no local government representative in project EE-11, although the potential centre for refugees will definitely be built somewhere in Estonia (probably in Tallinn). Moreover, there are not enough relevant parties representing the State, the only one being the Ministry of Social Affairs which represents the field of social policy. The field of immigration, which is the administration unit of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, participates in project only to a minimal extent, even though it should be the primary partner (asylum seekers and the related matters).

One overall emerging shortage of the partnerships is the small number of the included employers. Being the first of the three counter-parties on the labour market (employers, employees and trade unions), the employers must definitely be included in order to achieve sustainable results and the actual (re)integration of the target groups into the labour market.

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<sup>14</sup> This is especially relevant when the representative of one such partner gets paid for playing several parts, first as salaried worker, then as a sole proprietor. In the latter case it is obvious that the tendering procurement would have been not only more appropriate but also necessary. Such situations must definitely be avoided and supervised by the LMB much more strictly.

The arguments for the strategic co-operation of partnerships are mainly related to reliability and long-term co-operation. In addition, regional knowledge is also considered to be important (projects EE-01 and EE-03) to help to carry out the project in the region of implementation. Some projects have included local employment offices (projects EE-07 and EE-12) and several partners provide a shortcut to reach the target group (Estonian Association of Gambling Addicts in project EE-09, Viljandi Prison in project EE-02, Farmers Unions in project EE-07). Establishing essential contacts (Association of Local Authorities of Viljandi County in project EE-12, the Ministry of Social Affairs in project EE-11, Estonian Employers' Confederation in project EE-04, Office of the Minister of Population and Ethnic Affairs in project EE-03) that contribute to the successful implementation of the project is also considered to be very important. Altogether, based on this analysis, it seems that the partners who are not from private sector hold strategic advantage (in the sense of sustainability) and have a bigger probability to add value.

### ***Fitness of planned dissemination and mainstreaming***

Most projects have planned satisfactory activities for dissemination of information and experience. The capacity of informing is satisfactory in all projects, although its potential impact is bigger in those few projects in which it is planned on the transnational level. So, on the one hand, the impact crosses state borders, and on the other hand, the division of transnational informing enables to concentrate on one specific method. This leads to essential improvement of cost-efficiency, which in its turn can help to increase informing and thus affect bigger target group.

When viewing mainstreaming as a bigger task, that is, as an influence on other organisations and Estonian community in general, it is not always clear how the projects aim to accomplish this. For example, in the case of projects EE-02 and EE-06, the mainstreaming is built on the assumptions that the target group will co-operate in order to achieve the goals of the project and that the community will automatically accept them. However, the successfulness of mainstreaming is bigger in the case of project EE-03, because the State Chancellery is currently working out a law on the regulations for the requirements for children day-care centres. Yet, the outline or approach for integrating the results of the EQUAL projects into the labour market policy in 2008 is still lacking.

## **2.2. Efficiency**

### ***Transnational co-operation in practice***

In most of the projects, the initiative to begin a co-operation has come from a transnational partner. The spectrum of transnational partners has been wide, and in most cases these have been NGO-s, institutes and universities, and enterprises. Among the domestic partners of the transnational partners, there are such entities as financial institutions, local governments and ministries. Italy, Spain and Great Britain have signed the largest number of TCA-s. The Netherlands and France were also active. In the framework of searching transnational partners for those projects, ECDB (*EQUAL Common Database*) proved to be the most useful when trying to investigate the background of those organizations and projects that had sent invitations for co-operation, and when trying to decide who to continue the co-operation with. Only in few cases there had been contacts with an organization of a foreign country, but it did not prove to be crucial for signing a transnational co-operation agreement. In case of some projects, there exists from an earlier round of the program EQUAL a

partial partnership from the older Member States, joined by organizations of Estonia and of other new Member States.

Although meanwhile there have been quite complicated negotiations as a result of which Estonian partners had to give up some of their almost certain partners in order to maintain co-operation with others (project EE-13), the TCA-s of all the projects except for EE-06 have been signed. At the same time, Estonian partners have gained profit both from the process of signing TCA-s, and from the experience that the foreign partners had gathered in previous projects, which is the most important. In the case of EE-01, a lot of help was got on the subject of constructing the management system of a project.

### ***Estonian partnerships in practice***

The Development Partnership Agreements or domestic co-operation agreements have been signed for all projects except for EE-03, which is still in the process of being signed. Thus it possible to say that one of the most important goals of the first round has been achieved by most of the projects. For some projects, though, there exists the risk of the partnership being breached, and in almost all of the projects<sup>15</sup> there are the unexpected nature and complexity of accountancy and disbursement system caused problems that have probably. This does not apply to the I theme project, EE-11, the applicant being a financially strong organization and the partner being a state authority, the MoSA. In general there have not been great obstacles in the co-operations of domestic partnerships.

A good example of an excellent partnership is project EE-04 where different partners were involved in each specific action (research, training, establishing sample of a target group) or domain (social, economical, legislative) concerning the project. Thus, if specialists are involved, there exists potential to develop promised models. On the other side, there are also projects where the chosen partners may lack knowledge necessary to develop the according models (project EE-03, for example).

### ***Empowerment of the target group in practice***

In general, most of the actions of each project are addressed to the target groups: training, consultation, etc. Thus, the representatives of target groups take actively part in projects' actions. These target groups are not, though, too often involved in decision-making process, planning and preparation. Accordingly, it is possible to say that in Estonia there is no active participation in the projects of EQUAL. The situation was probably the best in project EE-09, one of the partners being the representative organization of gambling addicts which has contacts with many representatives of this target group, which makes it easier to take into account their needs and ideas.

There is one more project where active participation is likely to develop - it is EE-08, in the framework of which individual interviews with handicapped persons are planned in order to ask their opinion. Most likely, their opinion will be taken into account when making the most important decisions concerning the project. Project EE-05 will also be implemented through active involvement of the target group: they will be trained according to their needs.

### ***Realisation of preconditions***

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<sup>15</sup> This problem arised in group interviews where the participants mentioned as one of the main problems the unexpectedly great administrative time expenditure. In addition, many organizations reported problems with the lack of financial resources being the result of the late arrival of payment applications.

For many projects, there will be and for some there has already been a problem with the poor realisation of the preconditions formulated during the planning stage of the project. One of the key questions is: are the target groups interested in taking part in the project? Due to the empowerment of the target groups described in the paragraph above, it would have been wise to develop the conceptions and to prepare the actions concerning a project in co-operation with the representatives of the target groups, who should have been chosen during the actions taken in the first stage of the project. One of those projects that some risks are associated with is EE-03, the implementation of which depends on the development of a relevant legislative act which shall determine how many service providers will be able to enter the market, the fact that the project will be implemented in an area the standard of living of which is lower than the average, being important.

One more risk factor for which several preconditions have been set out in project plans is the less positive or even directly hostile attitude of the society or one part of the society towards the actions or the results of a project. Project EE-06 has clearly shown that the local governments generally do not welcome the idea of creating centres for certain target groups (former prostitutes, incl. victims of human smuggling trade). The same phenomenon can be observed in projects EE-02 and EE-11, where the centres being created for young criminals and local governments consider asylum seekers inadvisable. If we take into account the opinion of experts, according to which Estonian society has relatively traditional and negative attitude towards certain discouraged target groups (for example young criminals, asylum seekers, victims of prostitution and human smuggling trade), then it is probable that problems and antipathy will arise when the projects have already been implemented. Generally, there has not been given too much thought about how to solve that kind of situation. For example, as one way to diminish those risks, it is proposed to “use all possible measures to inform people”, which is certainly not a clear approach to the risk management.

When speaking about actions that have experimental nature (like those connected to the EQUAL program), the risks are inevitably greater. That is why it is not wise to consider high risks as a purely negative feature, especially when the target groups are difficult to handle. But even then it would have been possible to affect the realisation of the preconditions in positive direction if more employers and representatives of target groups would have been involved in projects.

### **Cost-effectiveness of actions taken**

The costs reserved for the project management and co-ordination differ greatly from project to project. In addition, it is not always clear why in some projects<sup>16</sup> does the project management team have to be so big and why it is necessary that in addition to the project manager there have to be several assistants and a person responsible for the transnational co-operation<sup>17</sup>. The analysis of assignments does not reveal that some of the projects would need to do more in order to manage a project, than the others. In these cases the cost efficiency is not homogeneous, and in some cases it seems to be quite low.

Some of the actions that have been planned in the scope of the projects are very highly priced. The prices of training's differ from project to project so much that one is led to ask oneself if the quality of one training course is so much better than of the

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<sup>16</sup> EE-01, for example.

<sup>17</sup> This question becomes especially relevant if the tasks of the transnational co-operation co-ordinator are being filled by the project manager who is not being employed by the parties, being officially a self-employed person.



other. It also applies to training's the aim, the approach and the intensity of which seem to be similar. In these cases it seems that in order to determine the cost efficiency it would have been wise to organize a public offering instead of marking them as the partner's actions. Although the final cost efficiency will be determined on the basis of payments, it is also possible to evaluate the differences in cost efficiency previously on the basis of financial information brought out in application forms and reports.

In case of training's it is not always clear how the new training materials will be used. Sometimes there exists situation where there is written in the application form<sup>18</sup> "we have developed training materials", but it can be seen from the action plan that quite much of the budgetary resources have been reserved for preparing the training materials. Thus it is not clear if the training materials costs are always justified. This means that the cost efficiency of the trainings is not always satisfying, or that it might be useful to carefully compare training activities of different projects.

Some projects have turned out to be quite costly. The projects being in similar stage, project EE-03 has used EEK 66 141.05 (1.95 % of the whole budget), but project EE-09 has used EEK 525 134 (5.42 % of the whole budget). The proportional cost has been the highest in project EE-05, the used 314.869.34 kroons being 7 % of the whole budget of the project. In a great number of projects many computers and furniture pieces have been purchased and missions have been organized, but there have been too little substantial (those addressed to the target groups) actions. This is what makes the first-stage actions less cost-efficient. The reason for it may be the nature of the first stage, but more attention should be turned to it in the beginning of the second stage, so that it would be possible to improve the cost-effectiveness of the actions.

#### ***Different roles of the MoSA***

When reviewing the role of the management authority and the final beneficiary of the EQUAL program, it became clear that the MoSA (or the Department of the Labour Market, to be more precise) had had to this point many different roles. The Ministry had been responsible for developing the program for using the resources of EQUAL program, it has given to it the primary evaluation and it participates as a partner in one project's I subject<sup>19</sup> (project EE-11). The MoSA has the description of required management and control systems. In case if some third party (media, for example) will have questions about how does the Ministry act in different roles, it should be possible to answer all these questions on the basis of this description. In the context of EQUAL program, the situation of the LMB is much clearer, since it only has one role, which is filling the tasks of the final beneficiary.

#### ***Eligibility, payment procedures and reality***

One of the greatest problems when implementing EQUAL projects is the indefiniteness of the eligibility. According to applicants, the rules are not clear and have changed during the program. Many questions have arisen that have to be dealt with *ad hoc*. In general, the Ministry of Finance is involved, which means that the procedure takes more time than previewed. The question is being dealt with in this order: the partner – the leading partner – the LMB – the MoSA – the Ministry of Finance, and all the way back. The result is that the payments are effectuated very much slower, and that being the greatest risk. The situation produces high

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<sup>18</sup> It concerns project EE-10

<sup>19</sup> It may happen that the MoSA will be asked why it only participates in one project although all projects funded by Equal should be important for the labour market policy. It would be wise to formulate answers for questions like this in advance.

administrative costs that reduce the resources meant for dealing with substantial questions.

It is necessary to precise the rules of eligibility – the Estonian Government Regulation no 301 of 21 September 2004 “the procedure of applying for funds of the European Community initiative EQUAL” is not clear enough and makes it possible for the projects to make irrelevant expenses that should probably be corrected afterwards. Compared to some regulations concerning measures of the NDP, the regulation of EQUAL only contains the most general rules. It is necessary that the LMB develops rules that are more precise and accords them with the MoSA and the Ministry of Finance. Here it is necessary to point out the greatest problems concerning the implementation of the projects, to be more precise – the eligibility and the payments. In order to do that, it is advisable that the LMB organizes a relevant survey.

### **Monitoring and reporting**

As a general note, it should be mentioned that only one project was able to present its first monitoring report in time (by the end of May). By the time of the presentation of EQUAL intermediate report (after the deadline had been extended), three projects had still not presented their reports. Although it has made the evaluation process more difficult, it should be considered as a warning. It may happen that these projects will have problems with keeping up with the time schedule and implementing their plans. Some of the reports have been written very concisely and many important details have been left out – for example, if a new partner has been involved in the project, if the project manager has been replaced, or if some survey has been postponed. At the same time there are reports where a detailed description has been done, telling which are the main decisions concerning the project and on which basis they were made. It would be wise to let the other projects know that this is how the reports are expected to look like.

Monitoring as a process is not too developed in this stage and exists on a paper only as a general plan on the basis of which the inspection should be effectuated in cooperation with partners. Here we can see that some projects were not able to make a clear distinction between the inspection and monitoring and the management and monitoring. For example, one project (EE-09) is planning to renew its risk plan (which is a typical project management action) in the course of self-assessment. Not everybody has understood that monitoring does not only mean following the time schedule.

Great differences can be observed in the projects' self-assessment. Some projects have ordered independent observers to make the evaluation for that it would be objective. Depending on the project, the assessments are made constantly or after a period of time. It comes out that the parties of EQUAL do not have a single vision about how and by whom the evaluations should be made. Some of the projects are assessed on the basis of the quality of their actions (EE-01); some take into account the innovation, the best practice and the cost-effectiveness (EE-02). Here it would be wise to use the Lithuanian practice and to develop a general self-assessment method or a form, which would allow getting similar, comparative information concerning all projects. It is unusual and not very convenient to hire an independent evaluator (EE-06, for example) who is not able to convey the *self-assessment* of the project. There are also examples of interesting solutions – for example in EE-08, there is a separate report written about each county, on the basis of which the leading partner draws up the project report.

## 2.3. Productivity

### ***Achievement of objectives***

In general, the projects have during the first stage achieved what they had promised in project applications. In this stage, the projects had aimed to write down the rules and the specified plans of action, procedures and approaches, and to sign DPA-s and TCA-s, the result being that there has been little substantial action. All projects except for EE-06 (TCA is being signed) and EE-03 and EE-08 (DPA is being signed) have successfully managed to sign DPA-s and TCA-s<sup>20</sup>. In addition, most of the projects have formed the required monitoring and/or management commission (committee), even the project that was not required to do that<sup>21</sup>. Some of the projects, though, did not manage to create one or both of them (EE-02, EE-03, EE-08, EE-10).

Some projects (EE-01, EE-03) have managed to organize during the first stage information days and workshops or to use other measures in order to introduce the goals of the project. Some other project (EE-09) was not able to fulfil its promises and is still concentrated on informing. Among other substantive actions are the preparation of surveys and the mapping of the domain. In some projects, no substantial actions (surveys) were taken, they were postponed instead (EE-02). Three actions out of five of the first stage of EE-03 were postponed till the next stage.

Although right now it is difficult to evaluate the productivity of the planned actions, it is still possible to suppose, which projects may have difficulties (administrative or substantial) in the future. Probably those projects will encounter problems with following the time schedule, which did not sign important agreements in time.

### ***Measurability of project goals***

It is not easy to measure the achievement of projects' goals, because a number of projects have not clearly defined the indicators. Often, the indicator is being defined solely on a basis of output, for example in project EE-01: "3 laptops have been purchased" and "300 persons were trained". It is because the goals have been written down as actions. The results and specific goals are rarely measurable and some of them can only be measured several years after the project has ended, even if the goals are achieved during the project's lifetime. We can ask whether the incubator will work and what will be its capacity, but it is difficult to assess it.

There are other projects the goals of which have been vaguely defined: project EE-02 sets out as a goal "the facilitation of the labour market's integration", which is in fact impossible to measure. The "facilitation" of something cannot be objectively measured because it lacks a specific and a measurable indicator. In addition to the previous, vague or (partially) immeasurable indicators are set out in projects EE-03, EE-05 and EE-10. In addition, in some projects the number of proposed goals is too great, making it virtually impossible to measure their productivity and success. It is probable that the later evaluation of these projects will reveal that some of the goals have been achieved, and some of them, not. What makes the later evaluation difficult, is that there is no distinction been made between high and low priority goals. Thus it would be wise to concentrate on achievable goals and their measurable indicators. Then it will be possible to determine to which extent the goals were achieved and if it would at all have been possible to achieve them.

### ***Probability of achieving project goals***

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<sup>20</sup> Only the projects for which a monitoring report was presented were taken into account.

<sup>21</sup> Project EE-05.

Due to the situation described above, even today it is extremely difficult to comment on the projects' probable productivity. It is possible to say, though, that most of the projects have a significantly small number of actions directed to target group. Many actions consist in conveying surveys, preparing trainings and exchanging experience. In addition, too little attention has been paid to employers, who are still a vital part of the labour market. Since the Estonian society does not very much accept the integration of risk groups into the labour market, it may make it impossible for some ambitious goal to be fully achieved. The negative attitude is likely to be seen during the process of integration, even after the project has been finished. It will surely apply to EE-01, EE-02, EE-06, EE-09 and EE-13. At the same time it is necessary to admit that achieving goals that are less ambitious and those written down as actions seems to be more likely (for example projects EE-05, EE-07 and EE-10).

### ***Program's productivity***

If we take into account EQUAL's main goal<sup>22</sup>, we may predict that it is at least partially productive. The reason for it is that for certain target groups the program is important as it helps to reduce their discrimination and inequality. At the same time, the program may not be so efficient in the sense of its second part (development of new measures). Thus it seems to be wise to try the relatively traditional measures with very different target groups. Here it is important to note that some measures that are regarded traditional in Europe, are completely new in Estonia. That is why it is important that the new Member States take over the good practice of experienced Member States, even if it is not connected to the program's goal.

## **2.4. Impact**

Both the general and the specific goals are difficult to measure. In addition, they lack the baseline information (the value of the relevant indicator at the beginning of the project), which makes it hard to determine if the achievement of goals is on schedule or not.

The most probable achievement on the level of general goals is the integration of projects' into the employment policy and practice. Through projects of EQUAL it is possible for Estonia to diversify its intervention strategies, using innovative solutions that have already proved themselves. It is less probable that the projects will have a direct impact on employment or that they will create new workplaces. More likely, they will contribute to the renewal of the labour market policy, which could, through it, become more efficient and have impact on the employment of risk groups. The projects propose some innovative approaches: individual approach (vs. traditional method that is based on the group) and flexible work forms, although the limited involvement of the employers may become an obstacle. In order to develop Estonian labour market policy further, it is important, and in order to achieve a real impact, it is necessary to gather new information both on general and on specific risk groups' level, and to test methods developed abroad on a certain target group. In addition, the projects give a chance to the ideas and methods developed in Estonia.

Yet, it is not clear how are the organizations dealing with the labour market integration problems (the MoSA, and namely the LMB) are going to implement the results of these projects in order to renew the policy and the practice of Estonian

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<sup>22</sup> Developing and testing new measures in order to reduce the discrimination and inequality related to labour market.

labour market. The MoSA and the LMB together with the Employment Office should think of an approach or a strategy for taking over the most suitable solutions and approaches by the end of the year 2008. Right now it is clear that the impact of these projects depends on the powerfulness of the organizations mentioned above and the readiness to develop those results step-by-step. Thus, the impact does not depend solely on the projects' partners.

Many projects have stressed that EQUAL should have impact on the legal framework. It is possible that after reviewing the results the politicians will decide to change the legislation so that it would take more into account the needs and possibilities of the risk groups. Yet it is then necessary that the projects, in active co-operation with and under the supervision of the MoSA and the LMB, concentrate at the end of the second stage more on various possibilities of changing legislation, in order to give a contribution on the political level.

In the framework of one of the most important themes, the expected impact is significantly great: the better understanding about the risk groups' situation, their needs and their potential contribution to the labour market. In many projects, there is great attention being paid to the communicative aspects. Yet it is unrealistic to hope that presenting the results to the public would be able to initiate significant changes. It is more important that the MoSA together with the LMB use the disclosure to introduce the renewed labour market policy and its possibilities. In some of the projects there has been understood that it is important to influence the opinion leaders, which makes it clear that the employers have a great role in taking over new principles.

## 2.5. Sustainability

### ***Non-monetary sustainability: the target groups' ownership over the results achieved by projects***

One of the main obstacles of sustainability is the low involvement of target groups. Since the target groups are one of the main parties of the implementation of the new labour market measures, it is important that they believe in the usefulness of the projects' results, because that will bring them back into the labour market. However, the number of projects the decision-making process of which the target groups (victims of prostitution and human smuggling trade, young mothers, young criminals, handicapped people) have been involved in, is very small. Right now that the plans have already been made, it is possible to improve the situation through developing different methods. In order to make them realistic and acceptable by the target groups, it is necessary to involve the target groups in the projects' steering committees. This will help to avoid the situation where the members of a target group develop an attitude like this: "... once again they say they know better what we need!" It is likely that a member of this group will be able to convince the others that the solution works. The same argument applies to the employers, too, meaning that the target groups need to have a real opportunity to work (that they will be accepted).

### ***Monetary sustainability: using the projects results after the projects' finish***

From all the projects, only few have managed to prove that after the project has been finished, it is possible to move on the basis of achieved results. It was specified in a number of project applications that the utilization of the results can be financed through new projects and from the national budget. In EE-06, for example, it is said

that after the project has been finished, partners will be motivated to search for sponsors, the local governments being the likely candidates. However, since the local governments have not been involved in the project's current stage, it is highly unlikely. Monetary contributions from the financial sector are not likely either, since they have not been involved from the beginning and most probably they are not too much interested (EE-04). Future structural fund measures proposed in EE-05 seem, however, more realistic. In any case, all projects would benefit from a survey, which would map all the possible ways of continuing the work, after the projects have been finished.

It may be true that the reason why it is so difficult to foresee the probable sponsors, is the innovative nature of EQUAL. Yet it would have been useful if the applicants would have thought about involving potential sponsors from the beginning. It would also have been good to see learning from transnational partners as one part of the projects, because it would have helped to see where to move on. For example, in EE-02, the funding of a youth house after the year 2008 is not clear. In addition it is not clear how will the purchased items (laptops, for example) be renewed when they become worn (maybe a couple of years after the project finishes). The previous weaknesses are justified by the fact that in the application form, the information on sustainability was only required in case if the project's actions will still be going on after the project has been finished, which has not motivated the applicants to reflect more seriously on that subject.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

#### **1. Are the chosen themes and their priorities consonant with the national policy?**

*Answer:*

The themes chosen in EQUAL are consonant both with point 1.3 of the NDP and with the National Employment action plan 2003. The program's goals also largely coincide with the domains established in the Labour Market Service Act, the last two of them (labour market support for the employer; career consulting).

*Conclusion:*

EQUAL is consonant with the government's labour market policies, one of the most important parts of them being the intervention. Thus, the direction of EQUAL is in the wider context correct and does not need significant over-orientation.

*Suggestion:*

In case of any change in the Estonian employment policy, the EQUAL projects should be informed of these changes as soon as possible. In addition, it would be wise to try to adapt the actions of EQUAL in this way so that they would work in the same direction and would support the national labour market policies. In addition, when developing future programs similar to those of EQUAL, which contain transnational co-operation projects, it would be necessary to take into account the last two service categories brought out in the Labour Market Service Act, which are: labour market support for the employer, and career consulting.

#### **2. Are the selected projects consonant with the program's strategy?**

*Answer:*

If we take into account the general goals of EQUAL, all selected projects are consonant with the program's strategy. The projects deal with many different target groups and the program's specific goals are all covered in this application round.

*Conclusion:*

The selected projects support the relevance of EQUAL and if efficient and productive, will guarantee achievement of the program's goals.

*Suggestion:*

It is necessary to monitor throughout the program the contribution both to the national labour market policy and specifically, to the achievement of EQUAL's goals. In order to be able to do that, it is advisable to convey in the next few years an intermediate evaluation of the projects' efficiency.

#### **3. Opinion on the projects' selection criteria.**

*Answer:*

The selection criteria are relevant to the context of EQUAL and have been useful in determining which projects to select. Evaluators believe, however, that the main categories of selection criteria are not in correct proportions. For example, such vital criteria as "capability", "impact" and "sustainability" did get a very small

proportion (25% altogether) even if the program was innovative. At the same time, virtually the same amount of points (23%) can be gathered through a skilled description of actions, risks, working order and overall structure. In addition, the evaluation paper does not allow evaluating properly the needs of target groups.

*Conclusion:*

Current criteria taken into account, experienced applicants were in a better position than less experienced applicants (who may have had substantially better projects).

*Suggestion:*

When evaluating application forms for some other program similar to EQUAL, it is necessary to give a greater proportion for such categories as “the partners’ capacity”, “the impact”, “the sustainability” and the analysis of the target group’s needs.

**4. How and from whom are the development partnerships that implement the projects, formed? Are the key persons and organizations of the domain also involved?**

*Answer:*

In Estonia, development partnerships have been formed in several ways. Development partnerships are being created on the basis of a former co-operation (both organizations and persons, in the latter case his/her employer being the partner) or the domain’s key organizations. There are also projects the partners (organizations and key persons) of which are not the most competent. Accordingly, in some projects no employers were involved.

*Conclusion:*

Since in development partnership there is no single structural method, some projects have it very developed and have a great probability of finishing the project successfully. If the development partnership has only been created for one single project, it has much less possibilities to succeed. There exists a risk that employers do not believe in the results of the projects.

*Suggestion:*

The leading partners should organize regular meetings in order to exchange ideas, to get comments from organizations which are competent but which are not being involved in the project. It is necessary to involve the employers more in those regular actions.

**5. Do the development partnerships’ plans of action reflect the principles of the program (partnership, transnational co-operation, innovation, active involvement, informing and mainstreaming)?**

*Answer:*

The development partnerships’ plans of action reflect all of the principles of the program, except for the active involvement. Although all the principles of the partnership and of the transnational co-operation have been brought out, the potential of both the partnership and the transnational co-operation remains only partially used. The principles of innovation are widely known but their role in practice is weak. The communications’ capacity is satisfying for all the projects, but its potential impact is greater in this small number of projects where it has been planned on an international scale. Mainstreaming has been planned for all of the projects, but its actual implementation depends on the realization of



project's premises. In those projects which goals are related to the legislation, the mainstreaming is very clear.

*Conclusion:*

The principles of the program are well reflected in the plans of action, yet their potential is not being completely used. In addition, the principles' actual contribution to the renewal and improvement of labour market policies depends on many uncertain premises.

*Suggestion:*

In order to maximize the implementation of the premises, target groups should be more involved in the planning and decision-making processes of these projects.

**6. What are development partnerships' management systems like? Do they fit for projects with that kind of substance and scope?**

*Answer:*

Development partnerships' management systems differ from project to project, mostly being appropriate for that certain kind of substance and scope. The projects that have a great number of and experienced partners, prefer meetings and workshops as a means of communication. Those who do not have many partners and whose partners' experience is smaller, prefer phone and e-mails. Depending on the project management style, the projects can be divided into two: those who do it themselves, and those who buy it as a service. When it is extremely important that the target groups would be involved, the first option is the best. On the other side, many non-substantial actions such as monitoring, financial management, etc require experience in managing EU projects. At the same time, buying the service does not guarantee sustainability, since no person involved in the project gets the experience.

*Conclusion:*

When evaluating project management, it is important to ask, which one to prefer – efficiency or sustainability? Since the organizations, which deal directly or indirectly with the labour market policy, develop quite fast, which is a part of EQUAL's innovativeness, sustainability should be preferred. Only a few projects have done that.

*Suggestion:*

In order to reduce the addiction to the purchased project management service, it would be useful if the MoSA would develop for future projects alike an active project management supporting structure. One possible method would be to organize training among the applicants.

**7. How and who are the transnational partnerships formed from?**

*Answer:*

In most of the projects, the initiative to begin a co-operation has come from a transnational partner. The spectrum of transnational partners has been wide, and in most cases these have been NGO-s, institutes and universities, and enterprises. Among the domestic partners of the transnational partners, there are such entities as financial institutions, local governments and ministries. The TCAs were the most often signed by Italy, Spain and Great Britain. The Netherlands and France were also active. In the framework of searching transnational partners for those projects, ECDB (*EQUAL Common Database*) proved to be the most useful when trying to investigate the background of those organizations and

projects that had sent invitations for co-operation, and when trying to decide who to continue the co-operation with. Only in few cases there had been contacts with an organization of a foreign country, but it did not prove to be crucial for signing a transnational co-operation agreement.

*Conclusion:*

Although transnational partnerships are different, it is clear that Estonian partners were not too active in finding themselves partners. Since most of the projects accepted the foreign partner's invitation to sign the TCA, there is a danger that the Estonian project will have to be adjusted to the transnational partnership.

*Suggestion:*

In future programs that are similar to EQUAL and that contain transnational co-operation projects it is necessary that Estonian partners would be more active in order to find appropriate partners for the projects.

**8. What is the substance of transnational co-operation? To which extent have its possibilities being used?**

*Answer:*

In general, transnational co-operation is nothing more than exchanging experience and knowledge, and taking over different models. Yet there exist some positive exceptions, where a target group representative is being involved in the transnational partner's project's actions, which is the best example of full usage of the opportunities created by transnational co-operation.

*Conclusion:*

The possibilities of the transnational co-operation have only been used to a small extent, which is the result of the extensive usage of traditional methods.

*Suggestion:*

In future, in case of programs similar to EQUAL, which also contain transnational co-operation projects, the potential applicants should be informed of innovative ways of transnational co-operation already before the application round.

**9. How is it planned to conduct the development partnerships' self-assessment (what kind of indicators will be evaluated, who evaluates, how is the evaluation organized)? What kind of indicators should be included in the evaluation list?**

*Answer:*

Most of the projects conduct the self-assessment by themselves, taking into account such indicators as achieving the goals, following the budget and the time schedule, the implementation of the output and of the results, the quality of the implementation. Some projects buy the self-assessment from outside for that the evaluation would be independent. Self-assessments are being conducted both constantly and after some periods of time.

*Conclusion:*

Since there are two ways of self-assessment that are both being used by the projects, it is clear that different projects have understood it various ways. When conducting a self-assessment, the impact on the target group is left aside. In addition, the target groups are not being asked to tell their opinion about the project or about the new intervention methods being developed by the project. In

addition, critical premises are left aside, the projects' impact being dependent on them.

*Suggestion:*

It is necessary that the final beneficiary would draw the project's partners' attention to the target group's opinion about the fulfilment of its needs. It means that it is necessary to convey surveys among target groups in order to find out what they think about the projects. The implementation of the premises should be critically evaluated.

**10. How can the projects of development partnerships potentially affect the labour market policy and practice?**

*Answer:*

The evaluation of the projects' impact is not easy since there is no baseline information. Certainly, the projects allow us to diversify the strategies of intervention. The next two strategies will probably have a very big potential: individual approach and flexible forms of work. When wishing to renew the labour market policy and practice, the impact may be limited by those factors: employers who have not been sufficiently involved in projects, society the opinion of which concerning the situation of risk groups will not change that fast, and the uncertainty about how will the projects' results used in the renewal of the labour market policy.

*Conclusion:*

The potential impact on the labour market policy and practice is good, since the projects deal with sufficiently interesting subjects. Yet there exist quite many risk factors that may threaten its realization.

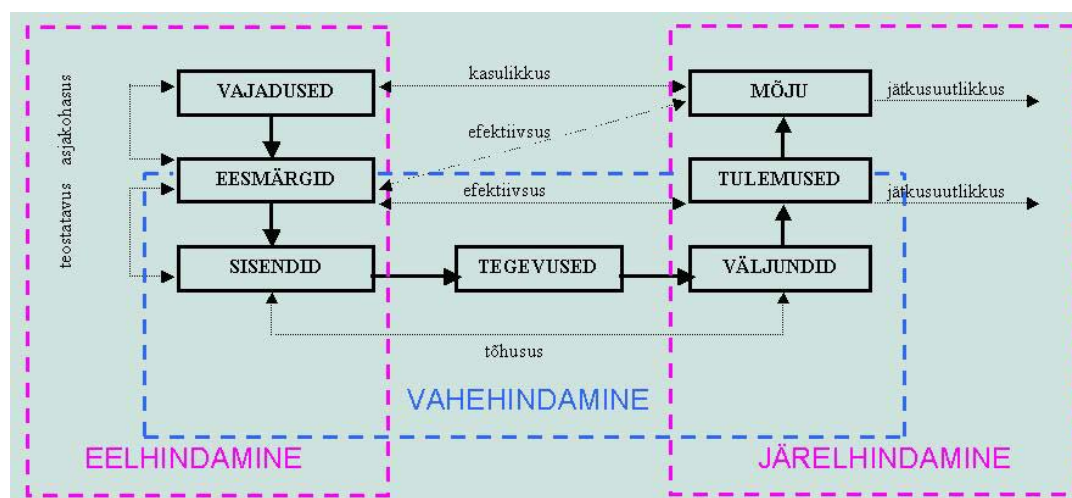
*Suggestion:*

During the current EQUAL program it is necessary to develop in time a plan about how and when it will be possible to insert the most useful results in the NDP 2007-2013, the legislation concerning employment, and employment action plans. Maybe it could be possible in 2008 when evaluating the NDP 2007-2013.

## APPENDIX 1

### EVALUATION CRITERIA

Upon assessment of relevance, the needs of beneficiaries shall be compared with the objectives of the projects and programs. Likewise, it is necessary to observe whether the projects are logically built up and clearly formulated and planned. In the present methodology, feasibility shall not be assessed as a separate criterion, but also interrelation of the objectives and the input shall be treated under the criterion of feasibility. Upon assessment of efficiency, it is necessary to analyse how the input of the project “transformed” into the output. Key issue is: whether the project plan has been adhered to or not? For that reason it is necessary to assess co-operation and implementation process of the whole project, including mutual communication of the partners. The ratio of the objectives and achieved results will show effectiveness of the projects to the evaluator. If the project has commenced lately, it is necessary to give a prognosis on the effectiveness of the project in the future on the basis of the results until the moment of beginning of assessment. This applies more to impact (comparing higher objectives and impacts) and to sustainability (whether the results and impacts are persistent?). These are actually ex-post criteria that could be finally assessed after some time (e.g. one or some years) after the end of the project. Thus, CP shall be responsible for giving prognoses for the last time.



Source: CyclePlan 2004

Vajadused – needs, eesmärgid – objectives, sisendid – input, tegevused – activities, väljundid – output, tulemused – results, mõju – impact; teostatavus – feasibility, asjakohasus – relevance, kasulikkus – utility, efektiivsus – effectiveness, tõhusus – efficiency, jätkusuutikkus – sustainability; eelhindamine – ex ante evaluation, vahehindamine – mid-term evaluation, ex post evaluation – järelhindamine.

## APPENDIX 2

The interviews, based on Themes, were made in the course of mid-term evaluation of EQUAL program. Two of them took place in the Ministry of Social Affairs as group interviews whereof five projects represented Theme A and seven projects represented Theme G. The third interview took place in Jaan Tõnisson Institute. It was an individual interview where one project represented Theme I.

The first group interview took place on 30 June 2005. The list of participants is following:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>
1. Ene Nobel	Tartu Folk High School Training Centre
2. Krista Noorkõiv	OÜ Geomedia
3. Senta Michelson	Tartu County's Board of Disabled People
4. Meelis Joost	Estonian Agrenska Rehabilitation Centre
5. Erika Vahtmäe	State Chancellery
6. Kadri Seeder	Estonian Employers' Confederation
7. Epp Kallaste	PRAXIS
8. Urmet Lee	PRAXIS
9. Jana Kima	Association of Estonian Midwives
10. Toomas Kokovkin	NPA Arhipelaag
11. Tanel Mätlik	NPA Arhipelaag
12. Annika Jaansoo	FK Services OÜ
13. Leo Hussar	Viljandi County Municipality
14. Riina Kaldaru	Estonian Farmers' Federation
15. Kaul Nurm	Estonian Farmers' Federation
16. Stina Eilsen	Labour Market Board
17. Siret Talve	OÜ CyclePlan
18. Ando Lipp	OÜ CyclePlan
19. Klaas-Jan Reincke	OÜ CyclePlan

The second group interview took place on 7 July 2005. The list of participants is following:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>
1. Riina Enke	National Institute for Health Development
2. Eve-Mai Rao	National Institute for Health Development
3. Iris Pettai	NPA Estonian Open Society Institute
4. Ulvar Uljas	Liider Grupp OÜ
5. Merit Meri	Eurohouse
6. Mati Kirotar	Räpina Co-operative Chamber
7. Aivi Telvik	Foundation Tuuru
8. Leonora Kraus	Saare County Educational Centre
9. Anne Tampere	Co-operative Chamber
10. Peeter Alekand	Lääne County Development Centre
11. Mare Ellen	Foundation Tuuru

12. Aivi Telvik	Foundation Tuuru
13. Jaano Räsä	NPA Caritas Estonia
14. Kerttu-Kaia Kesler	Probation Supervision Department of Tallinn City Court
15. Stina Eilsen	Labour Market Board
16. Maarja Kuldjärv	Ministry of Social Affairs

- 17. Siret Talve OÜ CyclePlan
- 18. Ando Lipp OÜ CyclePlan
- 19. Klaas-Jan Reincke OÜ CyclePlan

The third interview took place on 25 July 2005. The list of participants is following:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>
1. Aarne Randmaa	Jaan Tõnisson Institute
2. Agu Laius	Jaan Tõnisson Institute
3. Klaas-Jan Reincke	OÜ CyclePlan

## APPENDIX 3

### Short descriptions and reviews of the projects

#### **A) „WE FRIENDS – West Estonian Development Partnership” (EE-01)**

The target of the present project is the 70% growth of employment among disadvantaged women and young women raising children alone by 2010 in Hiiu, Saare and Lääne Counties. The applicant of the project is Foundation Tuuru who is also responsible for project management. The leading partner is responsible for general management and co-ordinating of the activities that are divided between 6 members of the team: project manager (daily project management), assistant to project manager (assists the project manager and communicates with media), assistant in foreign relations (management of relations with foreign partners), project secretary (technical support), accountant (accounting and reporting) and assistant in the field of training (supporting implementation of training).

Partners of the project are Hiiu County Government, Union of Hiiu County Municipalities, Tourist Union of Hiiu County, Saare County Educational Centre, Development Centre of Lääne County, Hiiu County Labour Market Board and OÜ Vetsitall. Many of the partners participate in common activities that comprise preparation and implementation of labour market research, drawing up of curricula and monitoring. In addition to that, training and provision of practical training and mentoring are among the tasks of several partners. The Foundation Tuuru is responsible for project operations in Hiiu County, and Saare County Educational Centre and Development Centre of Lääne County are responsible for the activities performed in Saare County and Lääne County.

Self- or internal assessment of the project takes place in written on the basis of questionnaire fulfilled by the members of monitoring committee and leading team and by the consultants and undertakings participating in the project. The assessment covers the issues concerning the targets of the project, their achievement and quality of their performance.

Transnational Development Partnerships have been entered into with Italy and Spain whose strength lies in experience obtained from EQUAL Round 1. The latter is expressed in good practices that contributed to the establishment of management and reporting systems for the Estonian project and to the conclusion of Transnational Co-operation Agreement.

Self-assessment of transnational development partnership shall be implemented via evaluation criteria elaborated separately by each state and shall be approved at the meeting of the Steering Committee taking place in September 2005. The context, process, outcomes, impact's analysis and transfer of new information to different beneficiaries shall be assessed separately.

Phase 1 activities of the action plan of the project have been implemented successfully during the reporting period that comprised among other things conclusions of national and transnational development partnerships. In addition to that, the Monitoring Committee and the Leading Committee of the project have been formed, whereby the first-mentioned has convened five times. Moreover, several



briefings and workshops have taken place where the project and the prospective activities have been discussed and presented.

The activities of the project commenced on 10 January 2005 and the planned end is on 31 July 2008. Estimated cost of the project EE-01 is EEK 7,100,000 whereof EEK 446,014.26 (6.3 % of the whole budget) had been spent by 31 May 2005.

#### **A) „RE-START” (EE-02)**

The target of the present project is re-entering of young probationers (16 to 24) in the labour market that shall take place in Viljandi prison whereby working and learning opportunities with socio-psychological support shall be provided. The applicant of EE-02 or the Steering Partner is NPA Caritas Estonia who is responsible for the management and co-ordinating of the activities, monitoring and data collecting. The project manager and his/her assistant are responsible for project management and special youth work specialist shall participate in planning of project activities and in content assessment.

The project partners are Viljandi Prison and the Probation Supervision Department of Tallinn City Court. The main task of the prison is to transfer and contribute know-how to the project concerning behaviour of the previous and present prisoners and feedback about their fate. The task of the other partner is to direct young persons in the project and to assess their participation. The latter covers monitoring of effectiveness of the used measures and evaluating efficiency of the project, based on change in behaviour of young people and improvement of their life conditions.

Self-assessment of the project comprises giving an assessment to the activities of the partners and members of development partnership on the basis of the decisions of the Council and questioning of the members.

TCA of EE-02 project is entered into with the United Kingdom, Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands and Poland whose common task comprises dissemination of their know-how and experience to the team of the project. Moreover, each state is responsible for organizing a meeting of the Transnational Steering Committee that takes place every six month before the rotation of steering role of strategic development partnership.

The final resolution concerning the methods of self-assessment model of transnational development partnership shall be adopted in September 2005 taking into account innovativeness, best practices and cost-effectiveness. As to the evaluation, the preference of the United Kingdom, as the presiding state of transnational development partnership, is to buy in the corresponding service.

Phase 1 activities of the project such as conclusion of DPA and TCA have been completed during the reporting period. Although the Steering Team of the project has been selected, selection of the other staff is still open. Cancelled is a research that was one of the planned activities and which will be transferred together with the foreseen means to the activities of the Phase 2. Reason for postponement of the research lies in failure to meet the date. A budgetary change applies to communication costs, the surplus of which has been used to cover deficit of travel expenses. Council (steering commission), a steering body as foreseen in administration of the project which is responsible for implementation of project monitoring, solving general issues and self-assessment of development partners, will not be formed.

The activities of the project commenced on 1 February 2005 and the planned end is on 30 June 2008. Estimated cost of the project EE-02 is EEK 9,965,140 whereof EEK 384,792 (3.9 % of the whole budget) had been spent by 31 May 2005.

**G) „Children Taken Care of, Mothers at Work!” (EE-03)**

The target of the present project is to create alternative care opportunities for infants in Põlva, providing the parent with an opportunity to return to the labour market. The applicant is the State Chancellery who controls the actual steering partner of the project - the Bureau of Population Affairs. The steering partner is responsible for the management and co-ordinating of the activities, monitoring and collecting and evaluation of data. Among other tasks, the steering partner is responsible for activities connected with the project and disclosure of the results and integration of the results into the politics.

The partners of the project are NA Institute of Family Education and Union for Child Welfare of Põlva. Among the activities of the first partner is implementation of surveys, development of day care model, training of target groups and consulting, organization of conferences and development of methodical guidelines. The responsibilities of the other partner comprise mainly furnishing and opening of the nursery in Põlva.

Self-assessment of the project shall be implemented in Phase 3 on the basis of a survey, performed by the participants, where fulfilment of targets and satisfaction of the participants with the services offered in the course of the project shall be assessed.

TCA has been entered into with France, Italy and the United Kingdom, whose tasks in the framework of the present project comprise interchanging of the reports concerning best practices translated into English and development of methods of social communication and their translation into the official language of each participating state. Moreover, one is also responsible for organizing transnational gatherings and seminars in their home states.

Self-assessment of transnational development partnership within the framework of the project shall be implemented via the committee of the evaluators consisting of one member of each state. The impact of transnational activities to the beneficiaries, impact to the partners and public projects and their impact to the framework of European, public and local policy shall be evaluated.

During the reporting period of the project in Phase 1 TCAs have been signed, but DPs have not been entered into in time. Two activities of five as described in the action plan in Phase 1 has been completed and three activities have been postponed into Phase 2. An extraordinary activity has been implemented comprising targeted dissemination of the project. In addition to that, one has failed to form a monitoring commission, neither the monthly meetings of the monitoring commission have been held.

The activities of the project commenced on 10 January 2005 and the planned end is on 30 December 2007. Estimated cost of the project EE-03 is 3,389,560 EEK whereof EEK 66,141.05 (2.0 % of the whole budget) had been spent by 31 May 2005.

**G) „Flexible forms of training and work – the best practices of reconciling family and professional life” (EE-04)**

The target of the present project is to improve the opportunities to reconcile family and professional life of men and women by means of increasing dissemination of

flexible forms of work and making an impact on attitudes. The applicant of the project is Estonian Employers' Confederation (EEC) who is responsible for the management and co-ordinating of the activities, monitoring and collecting and evaluation of data. For implementation of the project, a Monitoring and Steering Committee and work groups shall be formed, the meetings of the latter shall be organized by a project team. While all members of the DP are represented in the Steering Committee, then in the Monitoring Committee, all members except the leading partner are represented.

The partners of the project EE-04 are the Estonian Women's Studies and Resource Centre (EWSRC), PRAXIS Center for Policy Studies, the Bureau of Population Affairs (BPA), the Estonian Law Centre (ELC), Open University (former Tallinn Pedagogical University) of Tallinn University and TPU Career and Counseling Centre and Association of Estonian Midwives (AEM). The first partner the EWSRC is responsible for the research on attitudes of employers and young parents about flexible forms of training and work, performed in the course of background survey. The next partner PRAXIS analyses advantage/disadvantage of flexible forms of work from economic aspect and ELC does it from legislative aspect. Moreover, ELC analyses competitiveness of flexible forms of work, parents of infants and other groups in the labour market based on legislation. Both AEM and BPA are active in preparing the background survey; the first is supporting the process with consulting services and the other as well as with its implementation. The partner of the project TPU is responsible for selecting a target group and implementing of the background survey and training.

In the course of self-assessment of the project the actual fulfilment of the targets set in the description of the project, but even compliance with the budget and time-scheme as a prerequisite for operating partnership co-operation, shall be evaluated. The Monitoring Committee shall implement the evaluation.

TCA has been entered into with Italy, Germany, the Netherlands and Poland whose common tasks comprise sharing information and experiences in the framework of all activities concerning e.g. implementation of background survey, development of training and consultation programmes and implementation of untraditional forms of work for reconciling professional and family life.

As the monitoring report of the project concerning the reporting period Phase 1 has not been submitted even by the specified term it is known that signing of TCA as one of the planned activities, has been completed. The planned commencement of the activities is on 10 January 2005 and the planned end is on 31 December 2007. Estimated cost of the project EE-04 is 6,177,400 EEK.

#### **G) „Development of Multifunctional Care Service to Enhance Employment” (EE-05)**

The target of the present project is to elaborate multifunctional service for the families with a disabled person. This means that a care nurse shall cope with the home care of a disabled person (including old people and children), management of activities and housework. The applicant of the project is Tartu County's Board of Disabled People who is responsible for the management and co-ordinating of the activities, monitoring and collecting and assessing of data. In addition to the project manager and an accountant representing the applicant, the project team also comprises an assistant to project manager, a co-ordinator of foreign relations and an assistant to the co-ordinator of foreign relations.

The partner of EE-05 is Estonian Agrenska Rehabilitation Centre who occupies an equal position with the leading partner as to the activities of the project. The partner is among other tasks responsible for development partnership and transnational co-operation and mapping of problems and activities.

Self-assessment of the present project shall be implemented by comparing the planned activities with the actual activities as to their term and scope. Like the previous projects, an operating partnership co-operation is a prerequisite for this.

TCA has been entered into with the United Kingdom, Italy, Latvia and the Netherlands whose tasks comprise largely giving advice about legal framework, family models, and best practices concerning care of the disabled people in the context of the present project. In addition to that, e.g. an earlier co-operation with Latvia shall facilitate interchange of experiences and co-operation. Moreover, each partner is responsible for organizing transnational meetings and providing support services in their homestates.

No description concerning self-assessment of transnational development partnership has been provided in connection with the present project. Transnational monitoring, comprising revision and analysis of quarterly reports submitted by the members of TCA, shall still be implemented.

During the reporting period of the project in Phase 1 all promised activities have been implemented whereby the main activities included signing of a TCA and a DPA and the detailed planning of the activities that shall be implemented in Phase 2 and 3. An extraordinary activity has been implemented in addition to the above-mentioned, comprising forming of a monitoring committee.

The activities of the project commenced, according to the application, on 2 January 2005 and the planned end is on 31 March 2007. Estimated cost of the project EE-05 is EEK 4,500,000 whereof EEK 314,869.34 (7.0 % of the whole budget) had been spent by 31 May 2005.

#### **A) „Integration of Women Involved in Prostitution Including Victims of Human Trafficking into the Labour Market“ (EE-06)**

The target of the present project is to increase social coping of women involved in prostitution including victims of human trafficking and their integration into legal labour market. EE-06 applicant is National Institute for Health Development who is responsible for the management and co-ordinating of the activities, as well as monitoring and collecting of data as a leading partner.

The partners of the project are the Estonian Women's Studies and Resource Centre (EWSRC), NPA Estonian Open Society Institute (EOSI), NPA eluliin ("Lifeline") and NPA Sigmund. From the mentioned partners, EOSI is responsible for preparation and implementation of survey, training and the pilot project, ensuring that information is made available to the public and elaborating of a national strategy. In addition to that, EOSI is responsible for training of the project team. Sigmund is responsible for forming support groups in Tartu, Pärnu and Narva, the activity involves finding and training of 45 support persons (included elaboration of code of conduct) and organizing a consulting system for the members of the pilot group. The last partner – Lifeline is responsible for establishment and administration of the ATOLL, the social and psychological rehabilitation centre for persons involved in prostitution.

Self-assessment of the project shall be performed by a leading team who shall review the process, efficiency and results of the project. Assessment shall be based on project documentation, reports, minutes and statistics.

TCA shall be entered into with Italy, Germany, Lithuania, Poland and Portugal whose common task comprises disseminating information and sharing experiences in the framework of the project concerning assistance and rehabilitation provided to former prostitutes and different training and refresher studies in homestate. Moreover, all states shall organize a transnational seminar on their territory, except Germany.

Self-assessment of transnational development partnership shall be implemented by a hired foreign evaluator who shall perform a mid-term and ex post evaluation of the partnership projects.

During the reporting period of the project in Phase 1 such activities as specifying action plans, recruiting staff, entering into DPA, mapping situation and preparing a survey connected with prostitution and preparing work for support groups have been implemented. Continuous activities are entering into TCAs and training of the project team.

The Working Group has convened five times and the Steering Committee two times during the reporting period. As to the budget, an application has been submitted concerning reduction of costs on the staff EEK 118,000 in total. The reason for changes is surplus of the salary for assistant to the project manager, as a right person was not found in good time.

The activities of the project commenced on 10 January 2005 and the planned end is on 30 July 2008. Estimated cost of the project EE-06 is EEK 8,899,900 whereof EEK 270,931.08 (3.0 % of the whole budget) had been spent by 13 June 2005.

#### **G) „Development and Application of Farmers' Replacement Service” (EE-07)**

The target of the present project is to develop and commence the replacement service for farmers and animal breeders in order they could receive holidays and arrange a flexible working and rest time. The applicant of EE-07 is Estonian Farmers' Federation (EFF) who is responsible for the management and co-ordinating of the activities. A Steering Committee consisting of a leading partner and representatives of the other partners shall be formed for implementation of the project. Also a project team consisting of co-ordinators named by the partners and a project manager shall be formed, whereby the project manager shall be recruited on the basis of an open application procedure.

The partners of the project are the Farmers' Association of Harju County, the Farmers' Association of East-Viru County, the Farmers' Association of Pärnu County, the Farmers' Association of Rapla County, the Farmers' Association of Viljandi County, the Farmers' Association of Võru County, Pärnu County Employment Office, Rapla County Employment Office, Viljandi County Employment Office, Võru County Employment Office. Most of the Farmers' Associations (including the Farmers' Association of Harju County) are responsible for co-ordination of the project activities in these regions where, among other activities, monitoring and data collecting are included. Moreover, the Farmers' Associations in Harju, Pärnu and Viljandi County are responsible for assessment activity. Employment Offices are responsible for finding persons who shall receive a qualification to substitute farmers in the regions, their consulting, explaining them the targets and the activities of the project and sending them to training.

Self-assessment of the project has been planned to implement via collecting the data which local farmers' associations are responsible for. A partner who is responsible for drawing up the reports of self-assessment shall be appointed on the basis of the decision made by the Steering Committee of the project. The collected data shall contain quantitative and qualitative information about the performed actions and farmers participating in replacement services.

TCA has been entered into with Italy, Slovakia and Spain whose common role involves sharing experiences and know-how in the framework of the project in order to elaborate, on these bases, solutions for Estonia. This know-how and experiences are mainly connected with reduction of gender inequality in these states. Moreover, the members of TCA are responsible for organizing meetings, workshops and seminars in their homestates.

Transnational Steering Committee shall be responsible for the content of the procedures of TCA self-assessment. The DP co-ordinator Italy is responsible for convening and operation of the Steering Committee. Resolutions concerning self-assessment and monitoring plans together with timeschedule, activities, means of work and indicators shall be adopted at the meeting of the Steering Committee in Estonia.

As the monitoring report of the project concerning the reporting period Phase 1 has not been submitted even by the specified term it is known that signing of TCA as one of the planned activities, has been completed. It has appeared from the group interview that the working load of the project manager in the principal job turned out to be too big, thus a new project manager was recruited. Due to that, the project activities have been somewhat late.

The activities of the project commenced on 10 January 2005 and the planned end is on 31 July 2008. Estimated cost of the project EE-07 is EEK 7,168,000.

#### **A) „Handicapped People Employed In Co-operatives (HAPECO)” (EE-08)**

The target of the present project is to increase the opportunities for work and self-realization of handicapped people in Saare, Hiiu, Lääne, Järva, Põlva and Viljandi Counties, relying on the experiences of the European Union. The applicant of the project is the leading partner NPA Eurohouse who is responsible for the management and co-ordinating of the activities and assessment. The executive leader of the applicant of the present project is also the project manager of EE-08. The situation may result in shortage of time to be spent on project management and thereby jeopardize a successful implementation of the project.

The partners of the project are the Saare County Educational Centre, Lääne County Development Centre, Foundation Tuuru, Co-operative Chamber, Räpina Co-operative Chamber and Viljandi Co-operative Chamber. All partners are responsible for implementation of activities of the project in the relevant county by the local co-ordinator including development of action strategy, monitoring and collecting of data.

In the course of the project a systematic self-assessment shall be implemented performed by people directly connected with the project. At the meetings of the Steering Committee that will take place not less frequent than once every three months, a general report by the project manager and regional reports by co-

ordinators that shall contain a summary and analysis of the activities, shall be presented.

TCA has been entered into with France, Spain and the United Kingdom whose common task comprises transfer of experiences and models elaborated in the relevant states in the framework of the project in order to adapt them to the conditions of Estonia. The support is focused on social undertaking (including co-operatives). Moreover, the members of TCA are responsible for organizing a meeting of the Steering Committee in their homestate according to the action plan.

Transnational development partnership shall be finally developed at the opening meeting of the TCA. The system of consolidated self-assessment shall be created after each member of the TCA has contributed to it. It will result in a unitary assessment system that will be useful for management of the project as well as adoption of resolutions. The mid-term evaluation of the project will take place in June 2007 and ex post evaluation in December 2007. In the course of both evaluations, a member of TCA shall draft an assessment report on all other members of TCA with recommendations and proposals.

During the reporting period of the project in Phase 1 one promised activity, such as signing of TCA, has been completed, except entering of DPA. In addition to that, forming of the Steering Committee has taken place, but the monitoring committee is still missing which was foreseen in the action plan of Phase 1.

The activities of the project commenced on 10 January 2005 and the planned end is on 30 July 2008. Estimated cost of the project is EEK 7,446,050 whereof EEK 257,376 (3.5 % of the whole budget) had been spent by 31 May 2005.

#### **A) „Re-integration of Compulsive Gamblers into the Labour Market and Prevention of Social Exclusion” (EE-09)**

The target of the present project under Theme A is re-entering of gambling addicts in the labour market and anticipating gambling addiction by means of systematic rehabilitation and prevention activities. The applicant of the project EE-09 is Liider Grupp OÜ who is responsible for the management and co-ordinating of the activities, monitoring and assessment as the leading partner of the project, except co-ordinating of innovative activities. In addition to the project manager appointed by the applicant, the project team also consists of an assistant to the project manager, a rehabilitation manager, an assistant to the rehabilitation manager and an information manager. The monitoring reports of the project shall be approved by the Steering Committee that is formed in Phase 1 of the project.

The partner of the project EE-09 is the Institute for Problem Gambling and Treatment (IPGT). It is responsible for organizing elaboration of rehabilitation methodology and development and co-ordinating rehabilitation process. In addition to that, IPGT is responsible for organizing the work of directory enquiries, as well as preparation of the material for disclosure to the public and the target group of the project, and for the planned network, organizing publication and updating of the homepage. The Estonian Gamblers' Society is pointed out as the second partner in the DPA, in addition to the IPGT.

Self-assessment of the project takes place two times – interim assessment (in May-June 2006) and final assessment (in May-June 2008). A round-table discussion form is used for both assessments. In the first case, an assessment on the planned activities and implementation methods shall be given on the basis of the results and a

risk plan shall be renewed. In the second case, the results and the achieved targets shall be assessed and success and problems of the project shall be pointed out.

TCA of the present project has been entered into with France whose contribution involves transfer of methods of rehabilitation activities, concerning persons with mental disorder, and of prevention work to the project EE-09. In addition, the experiences and practices in order to influence the designers of the policy shall be shared. Moreover, the members of TCA are responsible for organization of transnational meetings and management of the Steering Committee in their homestate, as foreseen in the action plan. The actual co-operation concerning the present project shall be specified at the coming transnational meetings that will take place on 8 September in Estonia and 24 September in France.

Self-assessment of EE-09 transnational development partnership shall be implemented similarly to EE-08 which actually includes continuous assessment of the project. Assessment shall be performed by an evaluator selected both by the local and transnational partners, who shall compare interim assessments with special outcomes and after that shall submit recommendations, in order to improve organization of the work. All assessment reports shall be added to the final report of the analysis.

During the reporting period of the project in Phase 1 all promised activities have been completed, except dissemination of information, that will also continue in Phase 2. Consequently, the TCAs and DPAs have been signed, working rooms have been hired and furnished, the action plan has been specified, the homepage has been established and informing of the public has began. But still the monitoring reports do not reflect the change of the project manager, whereby Ulvar Uljas, the representative of Liider Grupp OÜ was replaced with Tiit Ollin, the representative of IPGT, in the course of the project.

The activities of the project commenced on 10 January 2005 and the planned end is on 31 July 2008. Estimated cost of the project is EEK 9,686,795 whereof EEK 525,134 (5.4 % of the whole budget) had been spent by 31 April 2005.

#### **G) „WHOLE – Work and Home in Our Life in Europe” (EE-10)**

The target of the present project is to increase opportunities of employees with children to reconcile their family and professional life in Põlva, Tartu, Jõgeva and East-Viru counties. The applicant of the project EE-10 is Tartu Folk High School Training Centre who is responsible for management and co-ordinating activities, monitoring and collecting and assessment of data. A monitoring committee, a Steering Group and a project team appointed by the latter shall be established for implementation of the project. The Steering Group is responsible for co-ordinating of the activities, national monitoring and exchanging of information.

The partner of the present project is OÜ Geomedia who is responsible for performance of a research on attitudes of the target group and the needs for training as well as for training of substitute employers and for training at the workplace with the aim to give mothers and fathers the opportunity to participate in training of the project.

The system of self-assessment of EE-10 is based on systematic data collecting on the process and activities of the project during its lifetime. For this purpose questioning, opinions of foreign experts, monitoring reports, collecting statistical data,



backfeed questionnaires and administration documentation shall be used. Special attention shall be paid to the six principles of EQUAL program.

TCA has been entered into with Italy, Portugal and Spain whose common contribution involves transfer of experiences from different cultural environments. Transnational partners are responsible for dissemination of best practices concerning family and professional life, elaboration of new curricula and contribution to development of innovative methods. In addition to that, each state shall organize a transnational conference in their homestate and participate in rotation of chairmanship according to the timeschedule.

Responsibility of self-assessment of transnational development partnership has been divided between all the partners after establishment of a joint monitoring committee, consisting of representatives from all states, appointed by the Steering Groups. The monitoring committee is responsible for building up a common assessment methodology and for assessing output, created jointly, using means of work and instruments agreed upon earlier.

During the reporting period of the project in Phase 1 TCA and a national DPA have been signed. In addition to that, a national Steering Group has been established that will convene for the first time in November 2005. On-going activities involve preparation of the specified working plan and formation of a transnational monitoring committee. As a result, forming of a monitoring committee is still open and therefore no meeting has been taken place. Moreover, one has applied for a change in the budget on Phase 1 of the project, including reduction of costs on staff in the amount of EEK 14,450, increase of costs on equipment in the amount of EEK 11,090, increase of general costs in the amount of EEK 15,205 and reduction of other eligible expenditure by EEK 14,525.

The activities of the project EE-10 commenced on 15 January 2005 and the planned end is on 31 December 2008. Estimated cost of the project is EEK 4,216,355 whereof EEK 248,946.30 (5.9 % of the whole budget) had been spent by 31 May 2005.

#### **I) „Increasing the Readiness of the Estonian Society for Integrating Asylum Seekers” (EE-11)**

The target of the project is to elaborate proposals for governmental authorities, local government bodies and the organizations of the third sector concerning social and professional integration of asylum seekers. The applicant of the project is Jaan Tõnisson Institute who is responsible for the general management and co-ordinating of the activities of the project.

The partners of the project are the Ministry of Social Affairs and Euronext Consulting OÜ. The partners are responsible for monitoring, collecting of data and assessment of the project.

Self-assessment of the present project shall be implemented via continuous communication between the target group and the partners. As in previous projects, an operating partnership co-operation is a prerequisite for effectiveness.

TCA has been entered into with the Netherlands, Slovakia and the United Kingdom who are responsible for giving information on the amount and the background of the asylum seekers in the framework of the project, based on their experience. The main activity could focus on study of a possible problem of asylum seekers in the initial

stage. In addition to that, each TCA partner is responsible for operating at least one activity included in the working plan and organizing meetings in their homestate.

As the monitoring report of the project concerning the reporting period Phase 1 has not been submitted even by the specified term it is known from the interview with the project manager that signing of TCA, as one of the planned activities, has been completed. The planned commencement of the activities is on 1 January 2005 and the planned end is on 31 December 2007. Estimated cost of the project EE-11 is 1,700,000 EEK.

### **G) „Connected Services for Integrating Young Mothers into the Labour Market” (EE-12)**

The target of the project is to improve integration of young unemployed mothers of Viljandi County into the labour market by means of interrelated methods. The applicant of the project EE-12 is Viljandi County Municipality who is responsible for the management and co-ordinating of the activities of the project, monitoring and collecting and assessment of the data. A supervisory council shall be formed for implementation of the project that will consist of the representatives of the partners and who are responsible for the assessment and monitoring of the project. FK Services OÜ is the project manager who is responsible for implementation of the activities of the project according to the timeschedule and shall report progress of the project to the supervisory council.

The partners of the project are the Union of Viljandi County Municipalities and Viljandi County Employment Office who are responsible for participation in the discussions at the round-table meetings, in forming of the project group on the basis of the target group, in assessment and monitoring. Moreover, the first partner is also responsible for organizing the transnational conference.

Meetings of the Supervisory Council, where an assessment shall be given to the process of the project, to the work of the project manager and further steps shall be discussed and co-ordinated, shall have a central position in self-assessment of project EE-12 national development partnership.

TCA has been entered into with Italy, Hungary and Poland whose common tasks in the present project comprise sharing information and experiences connected with the activities of the project. This includes, among other activities, activation and involving of the target group, anticipation of additional risks and increase of sustainability. Moreover, each member of the DP is responsible for implementation the planned activities and organization of the meetings in their homestate.

Self-assessment of the transnational development partnership is implemented by a transnational Steering Committee consisting of the representatives of all states. After the end of the project, each member of the DP drafts a summary on the targets and experiences of the project achieved in the course of transnational co-operation.

During the reporting period of the project in Phase 1 all promised activities have been implemented whereby the main activities included signing of a TCA and a DPA. In addition to that, a monitoring committee has been formed and a monitoring research has been performed.

The activities of the project commenced on 10 January 2005 and the planned end is on 9 July 2008. Estimated cost of the project is EEK 3,132,565 whereof EEK 126,106.15 (4.0 % of the whole budget) had been spent by 31 May 2005.

**G) „Models of Distance Working for Estonian Islands” (EE-13)**

The target of the present project is to improve employment of people living on Estonian islands and in peripheral coastal areas through implementation of models of distance working and flexible working forms. The applicant of the project is the Research Centre for Estonian Islands and Coastal Areas Arhipelaag who is responsible for the management and co-ordinating of the activities of the project, monitoring and collecting and assessment of the data. The project EE-13 operates under the competent management of the Steering Committee consisting of the representatives of national and transnational partners. The Steering Committee is responsible for project management on strategic level and supervision. The Steering Group, consisting of the project manager and representatives of the national partners, is responsible for adopting operational resolutions. In addition to that, two expert groups whereof the first one is specialized in distance work and the other in flexible working form, are responsible for implementation of the project.

The partner of the project is Foundation Tuuru who is responsible for implementation of training in the framework of this project. In addition to the mentioned partner, Fontes Project Management OÜ is the other partner who is involved in the development partnership.

Self-assessment of national and transnational development partnership in Estonia, in the framework of project EE-13 shall be implemented on the basis of the results of the research that shall be ordered from competent service providers engaged in project management. Assessment method shall include questionnaires and interviews with the performers of the project and the target group, analysis of project documents and round-table meetings for evaluation of strengths and weaknesses of the project.

TCA has been entered into with the United Kingdom and Ireland who are responsible for dissemination of best practices of these states in the framework of the project. This comprises analysis of problems, development of models and elaboration of training programs for the project EE-13. In addition to that each state is responsible for organizing a transnational workshop and meetings according to the action plan in their homestate.

In the framework of transnational development partnership, the United Kingdom is responsible for self-assessment receiving an input from each TCA member. On the basis of participation of the partners and under management of the evaluator an assessment methodology of the partnership activities shall be elaborated, the right indicators shall be agreed upon and the relevant initial position shall be used. In addition to that, the evaluator shall report progress of the development partnership to the transnational Steering Committee and shall keep review on the learned lessons.

During the reporting period of the project in Phase 1 such substantial activities as signing of TCA and DPA, have been completed. Among other promised activities, forming of the Steering Group has been completed. Expert groups shall be formed in the future by request. The Steering Committee shall not be formed, as there is no need for it. That has not been mentioned in the monitoring report. In addition to the promised activities, an additional partner has been involved in the project who shall implement the training according to the action plan of Phase 2 and 3. In addition to the new partner, Gravitas Consult OÜ as a new expert has been involved in the project.

The activities of the project commenced on 10 January 2005 and the planned end is on 29 February 2008. Estimated cost of the project EE-13 is EEK 5,596,640 whereof EEK 120,900.40 (2.2 % of the whole budget) had been spent by 31 May 2005.

## **APPENDIX 4**

### **List of documents used**

1. Estonian National Development Plan for the Implementation of the EU Structural Funds - Single Programming Document 2004-2006;
2. National Action Plan for Employment 2003;
3. EQUAL Estonia programme complement;
4. Application documents of the projects;
5. Monitoring reports of the projects (except for projects EE-04, EE-07 and EE-11);
6. Government of the Republic Regulation No. 301 of 21 September 2004 Procedure for Application for Funds from the European Community Initiative *Equal*;