



# Evaluation of the **GROW** Programme and Recommendations for **GROW 2**

**Global to Local**  
WORKING FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE



GLOBAL TO LOCAL LTD IS REGISTERED IN ENGLAND COMPANY NUMBER 3108206  
REGISTERED OFFICE: 20 HARROWBY LANE, GRANTHAM NG31 9HX  
DIRECTORS: Helmut Lusser (Chairman), Bruce Cockrean, Tim Cordy (Company Secretary)  
OFFICES IN: Hungary, Sweden, Ukraine PARTNERS IN: Ireland, Germany, Greece, Spain,  
paper from 100% post-consumer waste (no bleaching or optical brightening agents). Blue Angel ecolabel



## INTRODUCTION

This report is an external evaluation of the GROW programme. Global to Local was commissioned to evaluate the impact of its 16 sub-projects, and the management of the programme overall across the participating regions, and to make suggestions as to a successor programme.

Our overall impression is positive. GROW offers a considerable management challenge, and the Secretariat has risen to it:

- it is a 36-month programme that was only approved (with conditions) half-way through Month 1;
- its purpose is to stimulate and fund projects, through a process of promotion, application, selection etc, all of which had to take place within the programme period.

It is therefore a huge achievement that the GROW Secretariat was able to organise two rounds of application and successfully launch all its projects. The Secretariat has also successfully developed and piloted an online management system that has been recognised within the EU 'system'. The GROW system of Regional Correspondents has been universally commended, and in our view has been a principal reason why the European funders of GROW (the Interreg IIIC Joint Technical Secretariat) have told us of their confidence in it.

In this context we should also note that the success of the GROW programme reflects the support of the programme partners - the regional governments of Andalucía, Emilia Romagna, Noord Brabant and Malopolska, their UK equivalent the South-East of England Regional Assembly, the Environment Agency and, especially, the lead partner South East England Development Agency SEEDA itself.

As to the impact of the projects, the signs at this stage are good. Interregional partnerships are seen to have been fruitful, good practice has been identified and promoted, innovation has been fostered. But we should point out that our report is more of a 'mid-term evaluation'; for all projects the 6 months that remain represent quite a significant amount of time still to run (for many almost half of the effective project time), and not all of their results and impacts can be identified yet.

On the future, we are able to report that all 16 projects have plans to continue, most hope that there will be a "GROW2" and that they will be part of it. We believe that Interreg IVC offers a likely way forward, but that there are other possibilities as well.

Our report also reports on those aspects that have been commented on. As evaluators we have set these in the context of the bigger picture, and can report that all are of second (or lower) order: most concern matters that are outside the control of GROW, because of either the timetable or the requirements of the Interreg IIIC programme.

The structure of our report is as follows. An executive summary provides the headline results of our findings, and the report itself provides the detail. We have addressed the various aspects using a similar structure, so each chapter begins with our conclusions and recommendations, followed by the supporting information (drawn from documents, a questionnaire and interviews). We have tried to avoid drowning the reader in a mass of statistics: these are provided in two separate Annexes.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The GROW Programme is a Regional Framework Operation funded under the European Commission's Interreg IIIC programme, which promotes interregional cooperation. The total budget for GROW is €7.5m, shared between the five regions of Andalucía in Spain, Emilia-Romagna in Italy, Noord-Brabant in the Netherlands, Malopolska in Poland, and South East England in the UK. The South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) in the UK is the Lead partner.

GROW focuses on 'smart growth', in line with sustainable development principles, rather than 'growth at any cost'. Through the three 'pillars' of the project, Green Growth, Business Growth and Inclusive Growth, the GROW partner regions are supporting 16 interregional projects which will help them to work towards integrated implementation of the Lisbon and Gothenburg agendas at regional level.

Global to Local Ltd was appointed by all regions to:

1. evaluate the outputs and results of the 16 GROW projects;
2. evaluate the management of the GROW programme;
3. make recommendations for taking forward GROW 2.

The work was done through a study of the GROW files; an online questionnaire completed by a representative 66% of project-partners; and interviews with 33 project-partners, the 5 Regional Correspondents and the Interreg IIIC West Joint Technical Secretariat.

### 1 The 16 GROW sub-projects

#### **GROW has attracted newcomers to the European arena...**

58% of project-partners had not been involved in an Interreg project before; the highest being Noord-Brabant & South-East England (80%) and the lowest Emilia Romagna & Andalucía (27%) so GROW has succeeded in attracting newcomers to the European agenda.

***"The GROW team were exceptionally helpful and gave me a lot of useful tips. They were always on the end of the line and it gave me confidence to submit a proposal".***

#### **GROW Projects expected to exceed their agreed targets...**

All the projects are on target to complete their work according to their agreed contracts despite a very tight framework of work for implementation. 58% of partners were confident that their project would achieve most or all of the stated objectives by the end of the project.

#### **GROW projects influence regional policies...**

The projects are well-focussed on the core Interreg IIIC activities. All respondents said that their projects were involved in the identification of good practices and almost all said the same for interregional events to exchange experience. 76% said their project was involved in policy recommendations.

***"Influence is very high both on a national and regional level. Thanks to the NAMEA tool [National Accounting Matrix including Environmental Accounts], promoted by Eurostat and developed at the Regional level through GROW, it's easy to develop and evaluate environmental policy. It's the first NAMEA in Poland and it will be used for the Environmental Plan in the Malopolska Region as well as in other regions as a benchmarking tool to measure and compare policy performance."***

Policy influence is greatest at regional (56% “direct”, 27% “indirect”) and local levels: and 49% of respondents said their project has no influence at national level. Projects that involve a public administration are more likely to have a direct impact on policies.

***“Some of the results have affected the way in which SEEDA are moving forward in addressing the support for disadvantaged people who want to start a business. As SEEDA is a lead RDA for business support it is felt this may have a national impact.”***

Similarly 69% of project-partners think their project supports regional policy initiatives fully or very well (62% for local, 33% for national). Those projects whose respondents collectively said that the project did “a lot” of policy recommendations are also those that are more likely to say that they do so “very well”. A detailed report of policy impact is available in Chapter 6 of this report and it is worth mentioning that one of the GROW Projects had a recent influence at Ministerial level when Prime Minister Gordon Brown, Chancellor of the Exchequer at the time, took an interest in the Suspurpol project, describing the SH14 policy the project has developed on renewable energy in housing construction as a ‘manifesto’.

### **GROW projects scoring under the 3P model...**

Using the ‘3Ps’ (Planet, Profit People) model that underpins the GROW programme, overall the project-partners consider that the projects are oriented more towards Business Growth (45%), with Green Growth and Inclusive Growth in equal-second place.

Business Growth projects generally fit well within existing strategic local and regional frameworks, and their results and recommendations are more likely to be taken on board by policy makers. GROW projects have created, developed or re-enforced business support networks.

***“SMEs from all regions could compare different ways of “doing business” also best practice share was useful.”***

***“Partners and businesses [in the UK] had never looked at working in an international dimension before and the project has raised awareness of the possibilities to do so.”***

### **Interregional partnership working: a success & GROW projects able to work across cultures...**

75% of project-partners say that working in partnership within their region adds “a bit” or “a lot” of value to their project; the figure rises to 89% when considering other GROW regions. The exchange of experiences from different contexts and knowledge appears the most added value of working in partnership.

***“The added value of working in an international partnership in that project is enormous. There has been exchange, sharing and learning of experiences, in the context, and the way how they are applied. The comprehension of what other regions have done give ideas to be kept in mind for the other regions.”***

Working in partnership on specific objectives and targets has led participants to create, develop or re-enforce networks of experts that will continue beyond the end of the projects. These informal networks and linkages add significant value, and will be used in the future.

Generally, language was not a threat to project delivery, although 20% of project-partners said that institutional differences definitely were, with another 28% saying ‘partly a threat’. This is primarily associated with differences in working cultures and national audit processes in Poland and particularly Italy.

95% of project-partners said they would work with all/some of their partners again, the greatest reservation being in respect of the difficulties of the Italian legislative and audit processes.

***"Overcoming together institutional and working culture differences was in itself an outcome and a benefit of working as part of an international partnership."***

Smaller projects (3 or fewer partners) are the projects more at risk. Experience has shown that projects involving larger partnerships work best and we would recommend that for GROW2 three partners should be set as an absolute minimum size. This would increase the level of interregional co-operation even more as 6 GROW projects involve just 2 partner-regions. The GROW Secretariat did try to impose this as a rule for the first call but it was difficult for the Inclusive Growth projects in particular to bring together larger partnerships. With two years experience of partnership work this should be easier to reach under GROW 2.

South-East England is the lead region for the GROW programme and is also the busiest in terms of the number of project lead partners, the number of partners and the total spend. However, it has to be considered that South East England is not only the Lead region but also the largest region of the partnership in terms of population, so it could be inferred that in order to have an equal impact more project participants are required.

***"GROW gave many people a fantastic opportunity to meet each other and know other cultures and ways of working"***

## 2 Management of the GROW programme

### **Management of high quality...**

The programme is very well-managed. There is almost universal satisfaction with the performance of the GROW Secretariat and the Regional Correspondents, who are particularly appreciated as a language and cultural link between the Secretariat and the projects.

***"I consider the group (GROW Secretariat and Regional Correspondents) to be very cooperative and effective: it is one of the best working groups I have met during my professional life."***

The Interreg IIIC JTS shares this view, noting that GROW is a complex operation approved as part of the final call for bids and therefore with no allowance for slippage: management quality is most clearly demonstrated by the likelihood that the 16 projects will achieve most of their objectives.

The management structure is centralised, which reflects the origins of the GROW programme, the predominant influence of the South East England region, and the intense approach required to deliver the programme. For GROW2 some project-partners having gained in experience would welcome a more collaborative approach.

### **Cash-flow and audit management under Interreg...**

Almost all the criticisms lie outside the control of the GROW Secretariat. Cashflow has been a problem for a number of small organisations, and there is generally a feeling that partners have 'subsidised' the programme by having to front-fund their actions – sometimes for more than 12 months. Some partners with small budgets feel that the auditing procedures impose an unduly heavy cost on them. These issues will need to be addressed at Commission level as Interreg IVC is prepared.

### **The GROW on-line monitoring system simplifies reporting...**

The online monitoring system, which was piloted through the GROW programme, has made monitoring much/a bit easier for 79% of project-partners in respect of activity, and

for 61% in respect of finance. There were some concerns were about data entry, technical problems and user-friendliness. Several project-partners commented on the swift support from the GROW Secretariat when alerted to a problem. The system has been picked up as a best practice in European project monitoring and has attracted interest from other regions and programmes.

***"It is very simply and easy to use. It clearly shows and aids me tracking my partners' finance and activity."***

### **GROW on-line monitoring system "Good Practice" at European level...**

GROW was included in the Interreg IIIC *Good Practice Survey* for its innovative on-line monitoring system.

***"Even though the tool has not been specifically promoted, it has already raised the interest of other projects/programmes".***  
***[Interreg IIIC good practice survey p18]***

### **More time required for project development...**

Project generation and development, and application selection, were seen to have been transparently and efficiently carried out. We detected a feeling that some partners felt that some of the design-changes that they had been asked to make to meet the conditions for approval had weakened their project.

A generally-held view is that the speed at which projects had to be developed meant that the partner-search process had to be rushed to meet tight deadlines. For GROW2 we suggest that this aspect should be given more time, and we would suggest a two-stage application/selection process if possible. Support given by the network of Regional Correspondents was particularly valued.

## **3 GROW 2**

### **100% of partners wish to continue under GROW 2...**

All partners in all GROW projects wish to continue their work after December 2007. Some are already taking action; most are looking to leadership from SEEDA to develop a GROW2 programme.

In addition, some of the current GROW projects have already led to a number of spin off projects, some of them having already submitted new partnership projects under FP7.

Our conclusions and recommendations on Interreg IVC are based on the current (unapproved) Operational Programme. So these will have to be refined in the light of the new programme due to be launched in September 2007.

Interreg IVC offers a serious opportunity for a 'GROW2', but will require the GROW concept to be slightly reworked so as to demonstrate added-value over and above that shown under the current programme. GROW has certainly gained a reputation of excellence in the participating regions and also in other European regions, which should help to position GROW 2 well.

***"The international dimension is one of the most valuable. There have appeared a lot of opportunities to develop new projects on our subject."***

#### 4. The View from the Regions...

The '3P' approach to sustainable development which has underpinned the GROW programme originated in the Netherlands and has demonstrated its transferability by being integrated in regional policies across the GROW regions. Andalucía and Malopolska are currently exploring the use of this approach to benchmark their own region's sustainability, in the same way as has been done for the province of Noord-Brabant. There may be the possibility to roll this model out further through future INTERREG IVC projects.

##### **Andalucía**

All of the Spanish partners said that working individually would not be as interesting as in a transnational consortium and in many cases they wouldn't learn and achieve their outcomes and results. Involvement in the GROW programme has contributed to the development of 4 strategic plans passed by the Andalusian Government: the Plan Andalusian 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the Andalusian Plan for Social Inclusion, the Andalusian Plan for the Environment and the Document for the Andalusian 2<sup>nd</sup> Modernisation.

***"The regional department in Andalucía that is involved in GROW is responsible for Social Policies, and GROW has had a big impact on it, not in drafting new laws yet, but in defining new strategies. The department is now more involved in European social policy and it has managed to get NGOs working in social issues more involved in Europe. GROW has had a positive impact on the Minister of Social Policies for the region of Andalucía and it is starting to have an impact in other regional departments too"***

##### **Emilia-Romagna**

The Emilia-Romagna region has participated in a number of international partnership projects; GROW is one of the few projects which enables learning to take place from such a range of regions and organisations from across Europe. It is hoped that the resulting cross-fertilisation could help to smooth the often too bureaucratic systems of the Italian Public administrations in managing European funds and claims.

***"The impact of GROW is growing; especially during recent months, due to the public events organized by the projects and more recently by the mid-term GROW event held in Bologna. The projects have given the GROW programme exposure to a wider audience, highlighting the usefulness of some outputs in identifying and implementing policy goals. This will result in strong political support for a GROW 2, meanwhile a new regional development strategy is being launched to capitalise on the GROW programme's positive results."***

##### **Malopolska**

GROW is the biggest INTERREG project in Malopolska in terms of the number of partners involved. The Polish partners are very enthusiastic and positive about their EU experience: interregional working helps policy implementers and policy makers to affect key decision makers and stakeholders. GROW has influenced the preparation of the new Operational Programme Document for Malopolska in the future funding period.

***"We promote the programme at every meeting (banners, articles in the press)... the programme is now seen as interesting for other organisations – there are a lot of telephone calls, emails etc. Also"***

***during other meetings people are interested in GROW. Regionally, there is a great expectation."***

### **Noord-Brabant**

Generally Dutch partners seem very positive about the experience and the benefits that were had from working in partnership with colleagues from other countries. One of the key benefits highlighted was the 'inspiration' arising from doing a lot together during a relatively short period of time.

***"The GROW agenda matches the North Brabant agenda, also because we integrated in GROW the "3P" Model. We gained a lot of knowledge from the other regions (e.g.: incubators, etc). Moreover, the activities being part of (financed by) a European programme are more "sexy" at national level. Now, after GROW, the NL stakeholders talk to each other more than in the past, and they cooperate better. And when they go to Andalusia, or to Emilia-Romagna, etc., they look back to our own region from another perspective, they have found common a language, shared fields of interest, etc. Therefore we have increased in our professionalism, because we have improved in some fields, thanks to knowledge imported from the other regions. For example, in NL we have good skills in fund raising for enterprise start-up; in UK they are advanced in supporting the start-up; in IT they are skilled in local communities involvement; etc. In conclusion, there is a benefit in being part of GROW not only for the public administrations directly involved, but for a wider number of actors in the territory".***

### **South East England**

In general, UK partners were convincingly positive and active, and, more importantly, could provide examples of how they learnt from their international partners, whatever the region. For example, the strong links between universities and business networks in NL and ES are hailed as good practice to be followed up.

There has been strong support for the GROW Programme from across SEEDA, the South East England Regional Assembly and the Environment Agency who have developed the programme together with their European partners. It is believed that engaging in European Programmes offers the opportunity to raise the profile of the South East in European policy debates.

***"Gordon Brown visited the Suspurpol project where he described the new SH14 policy on sustainable housing construction as a 'manifesto'. The GROW Programme was mentioned in the UK Presidency EU ministerial Informal on Sustainable Communities (Section 3.2 EU Funded Programmes, Page 149). It is recognized that finance at European level has been an important lever for attracting additional public and private sector support from national sources."***

## CONTENTS

1	BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE .....	2
1.1.	Our Remit .....	2
1.2.	Our methodology .....	2
1.3.	Overall results.....	4
2	PROJECTS & PARTICIPANTS .....	7
2.1.	Projects.....	7
	<u>Activities</u> .....	7
	<u>The 3Ps</u> .....	8
2.2.	Participants .....	10
	<u>European experience</u> .....	10
	<u>Partners and projects</u> .....	11
3	DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION OF THE PROJECTS .....	13
3.1.	Conclusions and recommendations.....	13
3.2.	Summary of evidence gathered .....	14
	<u>Project generation phase</u> .....	14
	<u>Application phase</u> .....	16
	<u>Selection phase</u> .....	18
4	MANAGEMENT OF THE PROGRAMME .....	20
4.1.	Conclusions and recommendations.....	20
4.2.	Summary of evidence gathered .....	21
	<u>Project start-up and management</u> .....	21
	<u>Project implementation monitoring</u> .....	25
	<u>Financial aspects (budget, audit, reimbursements)</u> .....	27
	<u>GROW branding</u> .....	29
5	PARTNERSHIP WORKING & LEVEL OF INNOVATION .....	31
5.1.	Conclusions and recommendations.....	31
5.2.	Summary of evidence gathered .....	32
	<u>Added value through working in partnership</u> .....	32
	<u>Working in an international partnership: analysis by regions</u> .....	33
	<u>Threats to partnerships</u> .....	35
	<u>Project Development and Project management</u> .....	38
	<u>Innovation</u> .....	39
6	IMPACT & OUTCOMES OF THE PROJECTS .....	40
6.1.	Conclusions and recommendations.....	40
6.2.	Summary of evidence gathered .....	42
	<u>Policy influence</u> .....	42
	<u>Details &amp; examples of policy influence by region</u> .....	42
	<u>Details &amp; examples of policy influence by theme</u> .....	45
	<u>Outputs &amp; outcomes</u> .....	47
7	THE FUTURE .....	53
7.1.	Conclusions and recommendations.....	53
7.2.	Summary of evidence.....	54

	<u>Interreg IVC</u> .....	54
	<u>Beyond Interreg IVC</u> .....	56
	<u>Views of the project-partners: plans and priorities</u> .....	57
	<u>Priority themes for GROW2: views of the evaluators</u> .....	58
	<u>Views of the project-partners: operational issues</u> .....	59
8	RECOMMENDATIONS.....	66

# 1 BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

This chapter summarises our remit, methodology and overall results.

## 1.1. Our Remit

GROW is a successful Regional Framework Operation under the Interreg IIIC programme and the project partners intend to prepare a successor GROW programme, GROW 2, under the forthcoming Interreg IVC programme. This work is to evaluate the project in two respects, ie:

- the outputs and results of the 16 GROW sub-projects
  - the management of the GROW programme
- in order to make recommendations for taking forward GROW2.

Our work has been undertaken in parallel with two other studies, ie:

- A comparative analysis of Regional Policies/Strategies compiled by the Malopolska region.
- An evaluation of the sub-projects scoring on the 3P model conducted by TELOS in the Netherlands.

## 1.2. Our methodology

We have undertaken a three-level analysis:

- 1 OBJECTIVE, via a study of the project's documents, systems etc.
- 2 FORMAL, via a questionnaire of key participants.
- 3 SUBJECTIVE, via a programme of structured interviews done by phone

### OBJECTIVE: document study

The GROW Secretariat provided us with a copy of their library, comprising

- Papers concerning the funding of GROW; ie application, request for changes, six-monthly progress reports submitted to the Interreg IIIC West Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS)
- Papers explaining the GROW management procedures, including the GROW Programme Handbook
- Agendas and minutes of all Regional Correspondent meetings (in addition we attended a meeting)
- Agendas and minutes of 4 Steering Committee meetings (in addition we attended a meeting)
- Papers explaining the project application and appraisal process
- A management folder for each project, typically comprising papers on the contract, publicity, meetings (both of the project itself and between lead partner and GROW Secretariat), correspondence on claims made.
- Papers on the GROW Communication & Publicity plans and actions, and copies of publicity material.
- Various presentation files – PPTs and a DVD.
- Material about the 'parallel studies'

We have used these to prepare our questionnaire and interview surveys, and also in the preparation of Chapters 3 to 7 of this report.

### FORMAL: Questionnaire

This was an online survey directed at all project-partners. It comprised a total of some 55 questions, of two types:

- closed-choice, ie '1-5-grading' questions, allowing for some statistical analysis of the views expressed
- open-ended comments usually to amplify the grading answer

The structure of the questionnaire was agreed with the GROW Secretariat at the first liaison meeting, and set the structure for all our work, as follows:

- Development and Evaluation of the projects
- Management of the programme
- Partnership issues
- Impact
- Future

Questions were developed in conjunction with the GROW Secretariat and field-tested. Project-partners were invited to complete the questionnaire online during the period 21-May to 30-May. Of the 77 potential respondents 50 replied; this comprises a response rate of 66%, with a very good distribution as between projects, regions, themes. A qualitative examination suggests that some of the non-responders were SEEDA staff who might have wished to avoid distorting the results, as well as people on holiday. The questionnaire was undertaken in EN only; but we offered an own-language support service in ES, IT and PL: no respondent used this, and there is no evidence that non-EN speakers were discouraged from participating. Overall, we believe that the results can therefore be treated as representative of the total population of GROW project-partners; however, minute analysis of the data is likely to be less statistically reliable.

Table 1.1 and Table 1.2 (end of chapter) show the response rate by region and by project. Further commentary is included in Chapters 3 to 7 of this report. The full results are available in two separate files:

- *GROW evaluation: ANNEX 1* comprises a PDF report of the answers of all respondents to the 'closed choice' questions. The text of the questions is also available in this report. This file is a standard output from the software that we used.
- *GROW evaluation: ANNEX 2* contains the raw data, ie all answers of every respondent, in XLS format. We have edited this to make it more user-friendly as a resource. Note that the questionnaire was undertaken on the basis of confidentiality, so individuals' identities were not collected.

### SUBJECTIVE: Interviews

In order to expand on the 'objective' and 'formal' levels of our analysis we also undertook a series of one-hour interviews with:

- the 5 regional correspondents
- the 16 project lead partners;
- a further partner from each of the 16 projects, selected in order to produce as 'balanced' a sample as possible.
- the JTS project officer responsible for monitoring GROW

The questions particularly focus on aspects of partnership and the impact of the projects. We were particularly keen to establish what impacts have already been achieved (or can be foreseen) given that the GROW programme finishes on 31 December 2007. Again, we agreed a set of questions with the GROW Secretariat; we prepared a dossier for each project so that while the interviews were aiming at a common outcome, the questions were adapted to the particular circumstances of each project-partner interviewed.

A list of those interviewed is set out at Table 1.3, and the questions asked at Table 1.4. Further commentary is included in Chapters 2 to 7 of this report. A summary of the answers is included in file *GROW evaluation: ANNEX 2*: please note that the interviews were undertaken on the basis of confidentiality. We wish to record our thanks to all those who agreed to help us in this way.

### 1.3. Overall results

With the agreement of the GROW Secretariat we have concentrated our efforts on the highest priority issues.

- The documentation has been used primarily as a back-up resource
- The online questionnaire proved to be more successful than we might have expected: most of the questions were clear and unambiguous and this, coupled with a high response rate, has meant that we could confidently interrogate the data. It was especially useful where the quantitative answers told a clear story. The qualitative answers varied; we received some very full answers, most were fairly limited.
- The interviews gave us the opportunity to amplify the questionnaire answers, and also to extend the inquiry in certain respects. We used the GROW Secretariat library (meeting notes, progress reports) and the online monitoring system to prepare our project-dossiers, and these (plus the questionnaire answers) amplified the value of the time spent on the interviews. Despite this we have found that while the responses gathered have been extremely helpful in testing and confirming VIEWS, they have been less successful in gathering additional OBJECTIVE INFORMATION (for example, a comprehensive list of the projects' policy influences).

#### Tables

**Table 1.1: QUESTIONNAIRE response rate by region**

Emilia Romagna	89%
Malopolska	82%
Andalucía	75%
South East England	58%
Noord-Brabant	50%
OVERALL	66%

**Table 1.2: QUESTIONNAIRE response rate by project**

PROJECT	R	N	RATE
A.1.1.1. Building for the future	2	5	40%
A.1.1.2. SusPurPol	3	3	100%
A.1.1.3. Pilot Programme for Sustainable Construction	2	2	100%
A.1.7.1. Florispre	4	3	133%
B.2.1.1. GROWENTERPRISE	3	11	27%
B.2.4.2. BBAS - Bridging Business And Science	5	5	100%
B.2.5.1. Growing Trade and Innovation	3	3	100%
C.3.4.2. Social on Business	3	4	75%
D.1.2.3. RELECOM	5	9	56%
D.1.5.2. RAMEA	4	7	57%
D.2.2.3. EEA - Enterprising Exchange Academy	4	5	80%
D.2.3.1. GrowHealth	2	4	50%
D.3.1.2. FEW!	5	7	71%
D.3.1.3. Learning Reps	1	4	25%
D.3.2.3. Championing Neighbourhoods	2	3	67%
D.3.4.1. EcoSocial	2	2	100%
ALL	50	77	65%

**Table 1.3: PROJECT-PARTNER INTERVIEWS: those interviewed**

Name	Partner	Project <sup>1</sup>	Region
Owen BARFIELD	AOSEC	A.1.1.1	UK
Juan OSORNO	F.L de la Construcción Andalucía	A.1.1.1	ES
Christine WATKINS	Environment Centre	A.1.1.2	UK
Patrycja MACIEJOWSKA-HAUPT	Cracow University of Technology	A.1.1.2	PL
Juani GUTIERREZ	Diputación Provincial de Huelva	A.1.1.3	ES
Laura BRAMLEY	SECBE	A.1.1.3	UK
Jose Manuel REQUENA	Empresa de Gestión Medio Ambiental S.A.	A.1.7.1	ES
Massimo GAMBARDELLA	Municipality Of Piacenza	A.1.7.1	IT
Krzysztof JASZCZUK	Fundacja Inkubator Technologiczny BPCC	B.2.1.1	PL
Stephen DAVIS	The Southampton Enterprise Hub	B.2.1.1	UK
Peter VERDAASDONK	TU/e Innovation Lab B.V., Eindhoven University	B.2.4.2	NL
Sophie STOS	University of Surrey, UniSdirect	B.2.4.2	UK
Richard HALL	EISC	B.2.5.1	UK
Anna STACHOWICZ	Technology Transfer Centre Cracow University	B.2.5.1	PL
Ewa SLEZAK	Małopolska Agencja Rozwoju Regionalnego S.A	C.3.4.2	PL
Rafael GONZÁLEZ MARTOS	Fundación Red Andalucía Emprende	C.3.4.2	ES
John DAJEVOS	Telos, Brabant Centre for Sustainable Development	D.1.2.3	NL
Jan van RIJEN	Brabant Environmental Federation	D.1.2.3	NL
Prof. Andrew CHURCH	University of Brighton	D.1.2.3	UK
Ewa SLEZAK	Polish Academy of Sciences	D.1.5.2	PL
Michele SANSONI	ARPA Emilia-Romagna	D.1.5.2	IT
Malgorzata Goralczyk	Polish Academy of Sciences	D.1.5.2	PL
Tony INGA	Business Link Solutions	D.2.2.3	UK
Joanna ZWOLINSKA	Malopolska Institute of Local Government & Administration	D.2.2.3	PL
Dr David W PARRY	SEHTA	D.2.3.1	UK
Maria Grazia ZUCCHINI	ASTER	D.2.3.1	IT
Anne MINTER	Finance South East	D.3.1.2	UK
Paz ULLOA	Fundación Mujeres	D.3.1.2	ES
Manuel ABRIL	Fundación Esculapio	D.3.1.3	ES
Fred AARTEN	Provincie Noord-Brabant	D.3.1.3	NL
Maria VILCHEZ	Valdocco Foundation	D.3.2.3	ES
Vincent JASPER	Hope in the Community	D.3.2.3	UK
Anna PIRILLO	Provincia di Piacenza	D.3.4.1	IT
María VILLENA	Confederación De Entidades para la Economía Social de Andalucía	D.3.4.1	ES

<sup>1</sup> A.1.1.1 Building for the Future  
A.1.1.2 Blue Print for Sustainable construction (SUSPURPOL)  
A.1.1.3 Pilot project for Sustainable construction (PPSC)  
A.1.7.1 Florispre  
B.2.1.1 GROWEnterprise  
B.2.4.2 BBAS  
B.2.5.1 Grow Trade & Innovation  
C.3.4.2 Social on Business

D.1.2.3 RELECOM  
D.1.5.2 RAMEA  
D.2.2.3 Enterprise Exchange Academy (EEA)  
D.2.3.1 GROW Health  
D.3.1.2 (FEW)  
D.3.1.3 Learning Representatives  
D.3.2.3 Championing Neighbourhoods  
D.3.4.1 EcoSocial

**Table 1.4: INTERVIEW: questions asked**

<b>1 IDENTIFICATION</b>
<b>Q1</b> Position in the organisation
<b>Qb</b> Type of organisation
<b>2 MANAGEMENT</b>
<b>Qc</b> the survey results state that the REGIONAL CORRESPONDENT events and the tel./email advice were the most effective support tools: what about you? can you explain why? Who provided support?
<b>Qd</b> Why did you find the GROW marketing strategy and support useful/not useful? what did you use it for? How important was it to your project's marketing activities?
<b>Qe</b> please explain how online monitoring made it easier, or more difficult for your organisation, to report financial and activity monitoring
<b>Qf</b> Do you have suggestions for improvements?
<b>3 PARTNERSHIP / LEVEL OF INNOVATION</b>
<b>Qg</b> has your project had added value impact in your region? How? Give an example
<b>Qh</b> What added value has your project had on other organisations in other GROW regions? please give an example
<b>Qi</b> Any partnership issues threatened the successful delivery of your project? Which ones? At which stage? Beginning, later?
<b>Qj</b> How much value is added to your project through working in partnership?
<b>Qk</b> why? What will change in your organisation/region/work as a result of inter-regional partnership work?
<b>QL</b> please give example of how your project contributes to the other themes (if it does)
<b>4 PROJECT IMPACT</b>
<b>Qm</b> what are/will be the policy influence of your project? Give tangible examples
<b>Qn</b> progress towards objectives?
<b>Qo</b> what are the main deliverables for your project?
<b>Qp</b> outcomes achieved, double check for TANGIBLE examples
<b>Qq</b> please list any additional/unexpected outputs?
<b>5 CONCLUSIONS &amp; THE FUTURE</b>
<b>Qr</b> Finally, thinking about your experience overall, please can you name 1, 2 or 3 strong and weak point of your project?
<b>Qs</b> GROW 2: what are your plans? what would you like to see done differently?
<b>Other</b>

## 2 PROJECTS & PARTICIPANTS

This chapter sketches a profile of the GROW programme in terms of the projects and partners. We examine:

- Project activities
- Projects and the 3Ps, as reported through our online questionnaire
- The European experience of the project-partners
- The regional distribution of GROW activity

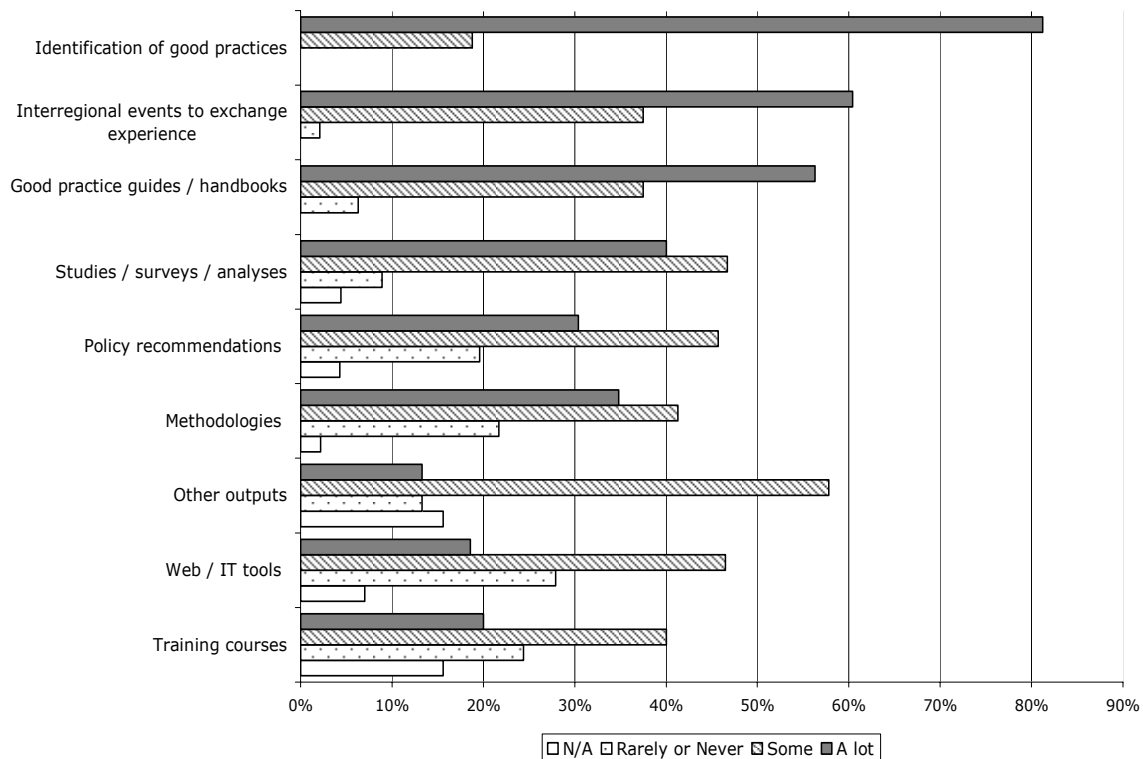
### 2.1. Projects

#### Activities

We asked respondents [Q6]: "Your project is involved in what kind of activities?". Figure 2.1 shows the overall response. At one end of the scale, all respondents said that their projects were involved in the identification of good practices (81% A LOT, 19% SOME). At the other end 60% said that their projects were involved in training courses (20% A LOT, 40% SOME). 76% said their projects were involved in other outputs: we have no information as to what these are.

The emphasis on good practice, experience exchange and dissemination shows that project-partners generally understand the purpose of GROW in the context of the Interreg IIIC programme. Despite already some good influence on regional policy it could be suggested that the 'score' for Policy recommendations (a focus for both GROW and Interreg IIIC) could have been stronger. This may have scored higher if the projects had been surveyed upon completion rather than at their mid-way point.

**Figure 2.1 Questionnaire: Project Activities**



Of the 8 respondents who answered 'RARELY OR NEVER', 3 were from D.2.2.3. EEA - Enterprising Exchange Academy; we can therefore conclude that for this project the true answer is NEVER. In addition, respondents from D.3.1.3. Learning Reps replied 'N/A'. Having checked with the GROW Secretariat, these two projects started late because of internal restructuring therefore it is not surprising these are behind in terms of policy influence.

For a fuller understanding we wondered whether these responses might in some way be related to the perceived output of each project. We therefore compared the answers to this question with the answers to Q38 "At policy level, what has been the influence of your project?" and Q40: "How well does your project support policy initiatives?" The Q38 answers were too general to be susceptible of interpretation. However, the table below offers a comparison with Q40:

**Q6: Activity "policy recommendations" compared with Q40 "How well does your project support policy initiatives?"**

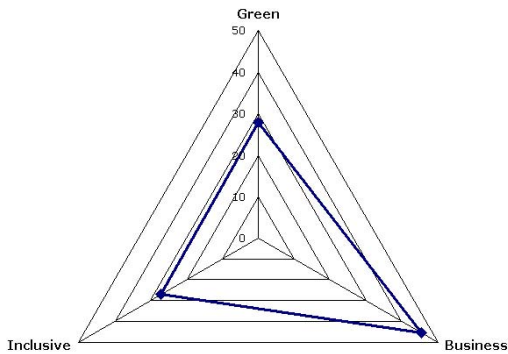
	Q6	Q40
SusPurPol	A lot	Very well
Florispre	A lot	Very well
Social on Business	A lot	Very well
FEW!	Quite a lot	Very well
BBAS - Bridging Business And Science	Quite a lot	mixed
GROWENTERPRISE	Some	Very well
Growing Trade and Innovation	Some	Very well
RAMEA	Some	Very well
Championing Neighbourhoods	Some	mixed
RELECOM	Some	A little
GrowHealth	Some	A little
EcoSocial	Rarely	Not at all
Building for the future	Rarely	mixed
Pilot Programme for Sustainable Construction	Rarely	A little
EEA - Enterprising Exchange Academy	Never	A little
Learning Reps	N/A	A little

There would appear to be some association between the two: those projects whose respondents collectively said that the project did 'a lot' of policy recommendations are also those that are more likely to say "very well". Please note that to construct this table we have had to interpret the replies.

### The 3Ps

To provide linkage with the 3Ps analysis we asked respondents [Q5]: "Which of the three themes of the GROW Programme does your project address? Please assign an approximate numerical value from 1-100 to each of the themes (0= "not relevant"; 100= "addresses only this theme"). The total must sum to 100". Figure 2.2 emulates the TELOS approach by expressing the results in 'radar-graph' format. The graph shows the overall outcome, ie an average score calculated by dividing the total scores by the number of respondents. As can be seen, the pattern is quite skewed, with the business leg at 45%, inclusive at 27% and green at 28%. Table 2.1 shows the full scores for all projects.

**Figure 2.2: The 3P dimensions**



Looking at the project-categories as classified within the GROW programme, the summary scores are as follows:

Questionnaire scores	Green	Business	Inclusive	TOTAL	SCATTER
Green-growth projects	71	20	9	100	41
Business-growth projects	8	89	3	100	77
Inclusive-growth projects	4	27	69	100	38
All	28	45	27	100	

NOTE: 'scatter' is calculated by subtracting the two smaller scores from the largest.

As would be expected, the majority "vote" (71%) of respondents from the 'green growth' projects is for the green growth leg ... similarly for the other project-types. An interesting observation is that the degree of concentration is substantially greater for the business growth projects, ie the questionnaire respondents from these projects say that they are more exclusively focussed on their principal "P" than are green- and inclusive-growth projects.

Among individual projects the highest degrees of concentration were as follows:

GROWENTERPRISE	93
EEA - Enterprising Exchange Academy	89
Florispre	76
SusPurPol	74
Growing Trade and Innovation	73

Interestingly, although FEW! is classified as an inclusive-growth project, the 5 project-partners who responded to the questionnaire collectively said that it was 65% focussed on business growth, with only one of the 5 giving a higher score to inclusive-growth.

The 3P model is a helpful construct, and the parallel study undertaken by TELOS has been able to map changes during the life of the project. We suggest that for GROW2 it could be used in a more proactive manner, in setting both selection and evaluation criteria.

**Table 2.1: Q5 analysis: average scores**

	"Which of the three themes of the GROW Programme does your project address?"	Green	Business	Inclusive	SCATTER
Business-growth	GROWENTERPRISE	2	97	2	93
Business-growth	BBAS - Bridging Business And Science	19	81	0	62
Business-growth	Growing Trade and Innovation	10	87	3	73
Business-growth	EEA - Enterprising Exchange Academy	3	95	3	89
Business-growth	GrowHealth	8	85	8	70
Green-growth	Building for the future	55	28	18	10
Green-growth	SusPurPol	87	13	0	74
Green-growth	Pilot Programme for Sustainable Construction	75	25	0	50
Green-growth	Florispre	88	9	4	76
Green-growth	RELEMCOM	52	22	26	4
Green-growth	RAMEA	67	25	8	34
Inclusive-growth	Social on Business	5	30	65	30
Inclusive-growth	FEW!	1	65	34	30
Inclusive-growth	Learning Reps	5	15	80	60
Inclusive-growth	Championing Neighbourhoods	10	10	80	60
Inclusive-growth	EcoSocial	0	15	85	70

## 2.2. Participants

### European experience

In the questionnaire we asked two questions about the partners' experience in Interreg: Q7: *Has your organisation been involved in an Interreg project prior to GROW?* Overall, 58% of respondents said that their organisations had not been involved. The table below shows the regional breakdown. The two wealthiest regions had the least experience. Andalucía (an EU15 Objective 1 region) was the most experienced, closely followed by Emilia Romagna; these two regions being very substantially more experienced than the others.

	NO
Noord-Brabant	80%
South East England	78%
Malopolska	60%
Emilia Romagna	29%
Andalucía	25%
ALL	58%

Q8: *Does your project team have previous experience of managing Interreg projects?* Here some two-thirds of the respondents said NO, but the range of experience is less diverse. SE England claimed the lowest level of experience, perhaps reflecting the origin of GROW itself, and the high number of lead partners from the region. Given the answers to Q7 it is not surprising to find Emilia Romagna and Andalucía with the highest level of experience.

	NO
South East England	78%
Malopolska	70%
Noord-Brabant	60%
Emilia Romagna	57%
Andalucía	50%
ALL	67%

These figures are significant. It is a measure of success that GROW has recruited so many project-partners that have not been involved in Interreg before (although we can draw no conclusions about whether they have been involved in other European funded activities). At the same time such a high number has implications for programme management, and the need for support, training etc for the project lead partners in particular. These issues are further explored in Chapters 4 and 5.

### Partners and projects

In total, the GROW programme involves some 78 project-partners from 5 regions in 16 projects. On average there are therefore 5 partners per project, but the distribution varies:

Partners per project	Number of projects
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	3
6	0
7	2
8	0
9	1
10	0
11	1

Commentary elsewhere in our report suggests that smaller projects (3 or fewer partners) tend to present more risks. We suggest that for GROW2 three partners should be set as an absolute minimum size.

Of more interest is the regional representation on the projects. Only one project involves a partner from all 5 regions, while more than one-third involve just 2 regions. While the GROW programme as a whole offers a range of mechanisms to ensure inter-project interaction, our experience suggests that more substantive exchange of experience (the objective of the Interreg IIIC programme) is primarily achieved through joint action. Again, we would suggest that for GROW2 three regions should be set as an absolute minimum.

Regions per project	Number of projects
2	6
3	4
4	5
5	1

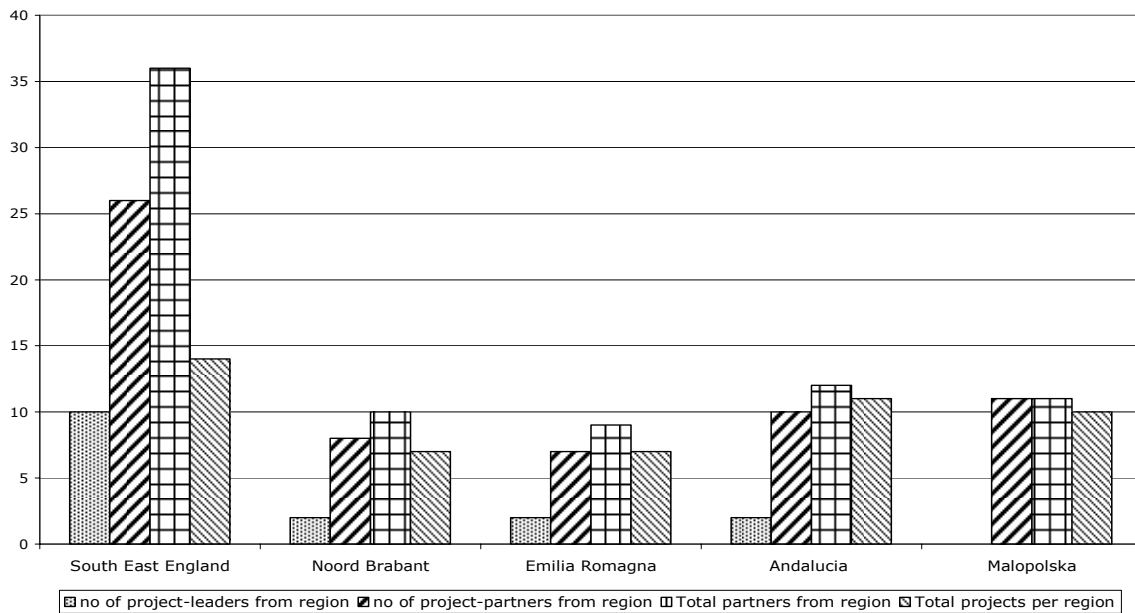
Figure 2.3 presents a regional distribution of the project-partners. At first analysis, it shows a more active role played by SE England in all aspects of GROW. Key dimensions:

- 10/16 project leaders are from SE England whereas none are from Malopolska.
- 46% (36/78) of all project-partners are from SE England; 12% (9) are from Emilia Romagna
- SE England is represented on 14/16 projects: Emilia Romagna and Noord Brabant are represented on 7/16.

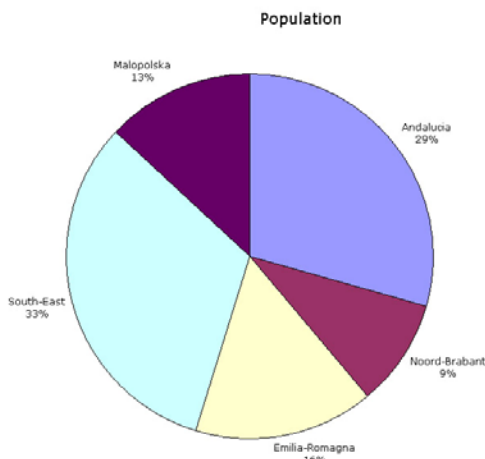
However, we note that SE England is also the largest region of the partnership in terms of population.

We would recommend that for GROW2 a more balanced regional profile could be achieved now that all regions have gained experience; as a general rule the range should be no more than 50%; ie the budget, project-partners and/or project leaders of the least-represented region should be at least 50% of the most represented region. This could be made pro-rata according to population: see Figure 2.4 for data about the relative demographic size of the five GROW regions.

**Figure 2.3: Partner roles by region**



**Figure 2.4: Partner regions: total population**



### 3 DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION OF THE PROJECTS

This Chapter [the first of four] uses our three-level analysis to address a key question about the GROW programme. Here we consider the experience of project-partners in the development of their project, and in the negotiations that took place over the application and the contract. This chapter also reflects the views of the Regional Correspondents.

#### 3.1. Conclusions and recommendations

##### Project Generation:

The process seems to have been very effective: 98% of questionnaire respondents said that the official documents were clear as to which kind of activities were suitable to fund within GROW.

At regional level, some countries carried out concrete actions to steer the ideas, others adopted a more bottom-up approach. For GROW2, the Regional Correspondents indicate the same pattern will probably apply.

Given the strategic aim of the programme and its strong link with national development policies, we suggest a stronger top-down steering of the proposals, in order to focus the selection on the quality of solutions proposed for tackling shared problems/issues: this should allow for a theoretically unlimited number of applications constrained in practice by a very clear strategic filter.

##### GROW tools:

- the Regional Correspondents believe they have demonstrated their key role in management support, and we agree;
- The existing close coordination between Regional Correspondents can assure equity in disseminating information to potential project-partners and “individualizing” suggestions;
- A diverse range of tools is the most appropriate way to maximise partner involvement. the key elements are (a) encouraging interest (for this, promotion and partner fairs seem the best); (b) finding partners (for this, the Regional Correspondents and the GROW Secretariat were essential).

##### Project development:

70% of questionnaire respondents said that the project application system was easy to understand: nevertheless, GROW Secretariat and Regional Correspondent support still remains crucial. In order to improve project Application Forms, the following might be considered:

- extend the call timescale, e.g.: announce first the themes that are the basis for the funding call, then the specific rules: thus a project proposer can start to set up the specific partnership and to agree on main goals, activities, etc., while waiting for the detailed rules, application kits, etc.;
- if confident that there will be a high number of proposals for each call and theme, GROW2 could adopt a 2-step procedure (already tested by “Alpine Space” Interreg IIIB Programme) in order to focus the assessment on high-quality proposals: STEP 1 selection by the Steering Committee on the basis project outlines, in line with the call criteria; STEP 2 Secretariat appraises the short list of fully developed project applications. We recognise that this might create a higher central cost, but it will be less onerous for potential applicants.

## Project Selection

Our recommended 2-step appraisal approach (see above) has benefits at the project selection stage: it enables a proper focus on questions of strategic fit at STEP 1 and it allows appropriate specialist focus at the two stages.

We observe that it is essential to avoid conflict of interest, and to stress the independence of SEEDA evaluators (and GROW Secretariat) in cases where SEEDA is also the project proposer. We can record that this was properly done for GROW.

Approval conditions (changes in partnership and/or in the budget) were a source of concern to several partners. We appreciate that this is often necessary in order to achieve an overall balance to the programme as a whole. For GROW this was necessarily a concentrated activity given the timescale. With more time for the application process (and, as we suggest, a two stage process) this issue may be easier to handle in GROW2; we would argue that it is often better to reject a bid if the weakness is not solved before a full application is submitted. Amendments made after the basic design is agreed are, in our view, never fully satisfactory.

## 3.2. Summary of evidence gathered

In this section we examine the following phases:

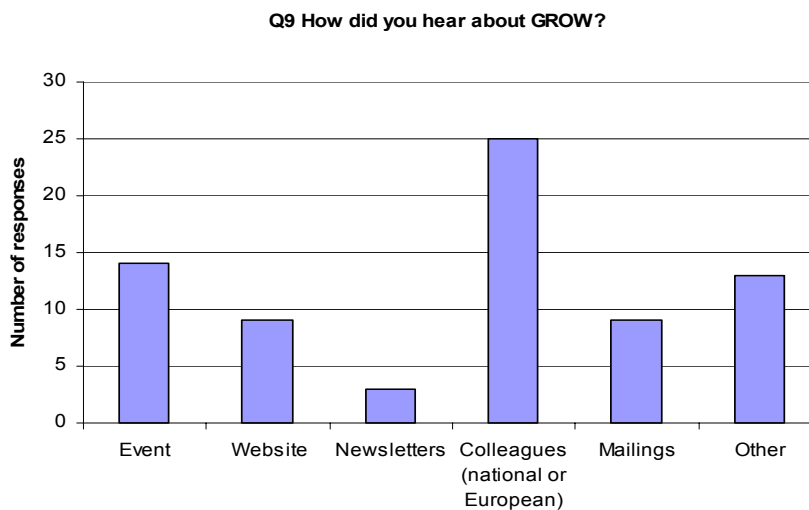
- Project generation
- Application
- Selection

For each we report our findings, offer an appraisal of strengths and weaknesses, and report some suggestions, often made by the participants

### Project generation phase

The project generation phase starts when a project-idea owner “meets” the funding programme and checks the matching points of his idea with the programme goals.

In the questionnaire we asked [Q9]: *How did you hear about GROW?* For the overall pattern, see the graph below; the most successful way of spreading GROW issues was by word-of-mouth among colleagues (from the same institution or from abroad), especially for PL, UK and IT.



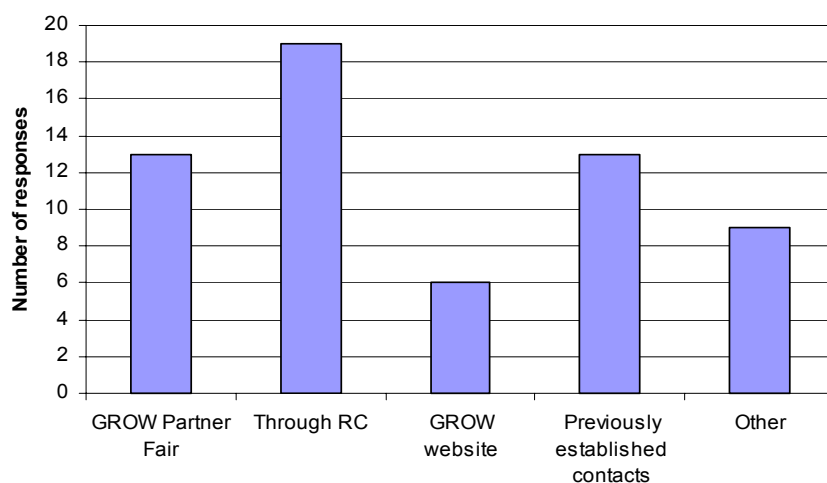
We investigated the “Other” category: the answers both amend the formal questionnaire totals and also offer an analysis of the largest category, as follows [total is >13 because of multiple answers]:

- colleagues (national, not European) 7
- Regional/national authorities 5
- Lead Partners 4
- Regional Correspondents 2
- Contact with SEEDA 2

In the questionnaire we asked [Q14]: *How did you find your GROW partners?* The most successful method is through Regional Correspondent (38%) and thanks to previously established contacts (28%). Analysis of results by region showed that the most useful ways to find partners were Regional Correspondent assistance (ES: 5 answers, UK: 5 answers, PL: 4 answers) and Partner Fairs (chosen mostly by UK – 4 answers and PL – 3 answers). Previous established contacts were used mostly by the UK (6 answers; other regions 1 or 2). We note with interest that so many UK partners found the Partner Fairs of value when these were held in NL and ES.

We examined the data to see if there was a difference of view as between those with and without previous experience, and found that for those with previous experience with Interreg, Partner Fairs and previous established contacts were the most useful. Partners with no previous experience preferred help from the Regional Correspondent.

Q14 How did you find your GROW partners?



The second element were the two fairs, the best way to be fully informed on the GROW features, and then the website (especially in PL).

There is some anecdotal evidence (spontaneous remarks during interview) that some partner organisations were recruited via their 'European liaison' staff; we understand that project delivery staff were brought in at a late stage and felt that the project-design suffered as a result. This should be discouraged and the actual "implementation" team should be brought on board right at the beginning during the design phase of the project.

The interviews confirmed the questionnaire responses: generally speaking the structure of both were appreciated by the participants, and they exploited it not just for obtaining information but especially to set up the partnership on a common idea. The Regional Correspondents agreed on fairs as best practice for well-based projects partnerships setting, and those who hosted the events (ES and NL) appreciated the added value of running the event, because of the impact within their particular region.

Moreover, since to set up an interregional cooperation project is first of all to put together different actors (with cultural, administrative etc. differences), the project proposers

stated that the main GROW support was the assistance by the Regional Correspondents and the GROW Secretariat (see graph below). For non-English regions especially, it seemed easier to work with the Regional Correspondent first rather than potential partners directly.

We investigate the "Other" category:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| ▪ Don't know  | 3 |
| ▪ By help of other organisations                      | 2 |
| ▪ Contacted directly by project-partner, lead-partner | 2 |
| ▪ Own searching                                       | 2 |

In the questionnaire we asked [Q10]: *Was it clear, from the official documents, which kind of activities were suitable to fund within GROW?* 98% of the respondents answered YES.

#### ASSESSMENT: Strengths

- several GROW partnership were based on previous links/experiences;
- the more experienced and language skills confident partner is the more direct ways of contact he/she choose
- the partner fair was best tool for providing information in the most effective, clear and shared way
- the Regional Correspondents helpdesk was best tool for individual responses
- The Website was useful to attract potential stakeholders in the beginning
- National events/meetings and publications (organized in some of the GROW regions) helped to inform potential stakeholders, collect expressions of interest and set up a sort of "national strategy" for GROW calls

#### ASSESSMENT: Weaknesses

- It seems that although all partners speak English there are still language barriers about making first contacts.
- Fairs are clearly appreciated, but there is a potential problem of cost if the fair is to involve substantial numbers from other regions.

#### SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS, coming from the questionnaire/interviews

- Develop the existing partner search area on the website with added tele-conference facilities
- "face-to-face meetings to ensure all partners fully understand what they want to achieve across the partnership prior to submitting the application" [Regional Correspondent]
- "it's better if partners can meet each other before preparing the project" [Regional Correspondent]
- "to "orient" the project ideas with the main goals decided at regional level" [Regional Correspondent]

#### Application phase

The application phase starts when the partnership (or more usually, the agreed lead partner) checks how their idea matches the requirements as stated in the call for proposals.

From the questionnaire we can say that the information was clear, but the timescales (see above) were considered by some project-partners to be quite short (also considering summer holidays).

In the questionnaire we asked:

- [Q11]: *Was the project application system (tools, rules, etc.) easy to understand?* 71% of respondents said it was easy enough, 12% weren't involved in that stage. Results for the regions show no particular pattern.
- [Q12]: *Was the project application support (helpdesk by Regional Correspondent, GROW Secretariat, etc.) effective?* For most of the partners support offered by the GROW Secretariat and the Regional Correspondents was effective (87% for Tel/Email Advice, 85% Regional Correspondent Events, 64% for Partner Fairs and 45% for Surgeries). We are clear that the underlying reason for this is the language support available via the Regional Correspondents, whether by tel/email, or by events – plus of course the relatively low costs of regional events.

"All support tools are useful but especially those that facilitate language communication (Regional Correspondent, emails)"

"All the support tools are very useful. Regional Correspondent support is key for logistic issues (the communication is easy). For the daily tasks mailing and tel. are more effective"

In the questionnaire we asked [Q13]: *Were the timescales appropriate (deadline for submissions etc.)?* 72% of respondents said that the timescale was "about right"; 1 respondent said it was too long. Further analysis shows that there's no experience issue here: from the 34 respondents who answered "about right" 15 had previous experience and 19 hadn't. The same applies when the answer was "too short" – 5 respondents were experienced and 7 not. However during the interviews we got the impression that more partners thought they had too little time to prepare proposals.

Call for Proposal	Deadline	Decision on Project
24th June 2005	30 September 2005	December 2005 (1st call)
December 2005	24 February 2006	June 2006 (2nd call)

When the different partnerships had to prepare their project applications they were supported by the great availability and skills of the GROW Secretariat and Regional Correspondents, provided either by phone/e-mail or by face-to-face meetings. Support was particularly appreciated for the financial aspects of the Application Form.

"The GROW team were exceptionally helpful and gave me a lot of useful tips. They were always on the end of the line and it gave me confidence to submit a proposal"

"a dedicated GROW Secretariat personal project advisor, available at any time, even on mobile. Responses always fast and flexible, including about approving changes to budget allocation"

"The GROW Secretariat was very supportive and give us lot of help and advice. Answers were always very quick (the same day or the next one). We had to prepare some extra documents (some additional info was necessary before signing the contract) and the Secretariat gave us a lot of good advice and help. We are very pleased with SEEDA and its involvement in GROW"

#### ASSESSMENT: Strengths

- "individualised" support from Regional Correspondents and GROW SECRETARIAT
- The complex application rules meant a heavy workload for the partnership, but we take the view that this is positive: "This caused a lot of discussions which were fruitful for the project: sharing knowledge and different point of view is creative" [project-partner]

### ASSESSMENT: Weaknesses

- Match-funding was not always assured at the contracting stage (e.g. in UK), and this caused extensive problems.

### SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS, coming from the questionnaire/interviews

- "It could be good to prepare a project schedule (plan of action) to point out all the important activities ... to start the project" [Regional Correspondent]
- the most important documents (ie Application Form) should be available also in other languages [project-partner]
- application process could be more flexible - "In theory GROW provides the opportunity for pilots. I did not feel this from the appraisal forms, conditions etc." [NL project-partner - transcribed]

### Selection phase

The project appraisal system at interregional level is very clear:

- Each Region selects their Independent Appraisers (2 for each theme);
- GROW Secretariat fills in a "Pre-appraisal checklist" to ensure eligibility and completeness;
- For those projects that have passed the pre-appraisal check, the appraisal by the Independent Appraisers starts;
- The Regional Correspondents collect the results of the appraisals and send to the GROW Secretariat;
- The GROW Secretariat collates the regional appraisals and produces a summary for each project
- mainly based on GROW Secretariat and Independent Experts assessment, the Steering Committee takes the final decision.

The system seems in general quite transparent and fair, and in this way is seen by the project participants. In the questionnaire we asked

- [Q15]: *Was the project appraisal system generally transparent?* 72% said "Yes" to this question, only 2% said "No"; the rest of the answers are about "not being involved in that stage"
- [Q16]: *Was the feedback in your appraisal letter (conditions etc) clear enough for you to revise your proposal?* 77% of respondents said that feedback in appraisal letters was clear enough. Some of them hadn't been involved in that stage (9) and some of them needed further clarification (2).

The implementation of Steering Committee conditions in some cases (imposition of new project-partners, heavy reduction of budget) was considered difficult, because it upset an already existing and detailed structure.

### ASSESSMENT: Strengths

- Technical skills of the experts, that assure a high-quality assessment on the contents;
- Independence vs. regional (national) priorities balance in the appraisal: it is the UK case;
- Regional Correspondents support in Steering Committee conditions-for-approval implementation

### ASSESSMENT: Weaknesses

- Integration of new project-partner:

"After approval we were encouraged to include two further partners. Whilst this helps the overall outcome of the project it involves more project management work and there was no extra funding available to us as project leaders to cover this

additional work. We suspect we may finish the project with our organisation having 'funded' GROW"

- Budget reduction (often coming from Independent appraisal): it "helps to ensure that the project has a wide impact across the participating regions and brings the maximum benefit" [Regional Correspondent] but can potentially create an obstacle for a smooth start up, as declared in the following statement:

"I understand that the project proposal was highly regarded by GROW. Despite this the budget was reduced considerably which led to the partners considering withdrawal. Eventually agreement was reached and the project commenced 5 months after contract date"

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS, coming from the questionnaire/interviews

- Reinforce the regional priorities focus: "during appraisal process the Regional Correspondents have to promote those projects which will be the most valuable for their regions" [Regional Correspondent]
- "an application 'pre-check' phase, prior to the actual contracting takes place, particularly to tighten up the outputs and bring more clarity to their delivery and how the numbers to be achieved are expressed/who has responsibility for what" [Regional Correspondent]
- "I find close contact between Regional Correspondents most important" [Regional Correspondent]

## 4 MANAGEMENT OF THE PROGRAMME

Managing a Programme includes a large number of tasks. The questionnaire and interviews touched upon most of them, and all the information is available in the annexes. In this chapter we review the following aspects:

- Project start up and management
- Project implementation monitoring
- Financial aspects
- GROW branding

We report on all aspects, but inevitably we focus on those on which we have identified opportunities for improvement.

### 4.1. Conclusions and recommendations

The overall management system of the GROW programme is highly appreciated by the final beneficiaries (the project participants) and by the main “surgeons” (the Regional Correspondents and GROW Secretariat). Every region is gaining a lot of interesting hints from the GROW Secretariat skills and experience, and many of the GROW management tools and procedures are considered very useful and worthy to be copied (at national level in other programmes, in the foreseen GROW 2, etc.)

Nevertheless, some areas for improvements still exist, and they come basically – in our opinion – from the fact that the management is of course heavily influenced by a UK-based approach: which from one hand is very positive, since the GROW Secretariat skills and SEEDA know-how seem to fit pretty well in the EU requirements/procedures; from the other hand, a programme that aims at involving fast-developing regions with different levels of EU Programme skills (as it is the current case) must take in account the fact that the problems cannot be solved just by transferring the good practises to the others (also because sometimes it’s impossible, due to different administrative framework, cultural basis, etc.).

At the same time we note a widespread request that Italian public administrations participating in GROW2 will be able to achieve shorter decision-making processes at programme and project level; and also reduce some of the widely-recognised known problems and delays such as the First Level Control system.

Therefore the Programme must think of itself as a partnership with different talents – to be exploited – and different difficulties in using the same tools/processes/timeframes, etc.

As much as the joint preparation of the GROW2 proposal will take on board some elements of flexibility (on monitoring goals, as an example), safeguarding of course the common requirements and goals, so the programme will be less damaged by the individual (regional) shortcomings and will be able to attract other actors (and regions).

In summary, the following are some synthetic suggestions for the different tasks/tools

#### Project start up and management:

- Organize training sessions for project implementation at regional level, for all relevant project-partners just after project approval. This should be done by the GROW Secretariat and/or Regional Correspondent

#### Project implementation monitoring:

- The on-line monitoring system is an excellent tool and widely accepted as a good way to manage GROW, but needs a better user-interface to make it even more user-friendly.
- “Traffic Light System” is a useful tool for the Regional Correspondents but more detailed instructions are needed.

#### Financial aspects:

- Where possible, each project-partner should appoint a financial manager, separate from the project manager, in order to assure tight control on budgeting and cashflow
- Both the Interreg IIIC and GROW management systems should allow greater flexibility on budget amendments than at present.
- Cashflow at start-up can be a real deterrent to small organisations, even a risk to their existence. We recognise that SEEDA accepted to provide advance funding for the Championing Neighbourhoods project run by a small charity organisation, and in so doing took a risk – and the arrangement took time to put into place. Our view is that the provisions of Interreg IVC should allow for this. If not, then GROW2 should provide a proactive mechanism as some of the participating regions have already done for GROW.
- The Interreg IIIC audit requirements are very demanding on project-partners with small budgets. Interreg IVC or GROW2 should find a creative way to overcome this. Two possibilities (there may be more):
  - allow sub-partnership below the project partnership, only the latter having to fulfil all the GROW requirements
  - a regional partner could take out an ‘umbrella’ contract such that a single auditor then works on the accounts of a number of organisations, at reduced cost.

#### GROW branding:

The GROW Programme has succeeded in creating a GROW brand among its regions. However, there is still room for further improvements on:

- Programme strategy which could better coordinate itself with actual output delivery and dissemination actions of the 16 projects.
- Since the participating regions are far from one another, reinforce the “virtual” common visibility of specific project achievements (website, publications, press release, etc.).

## **4.2. Summary of evidence gathered**

In this section we examine:

- Project start-up and management
- Project implementation monitoring
- Financial aspects (budget, audit, reimbursements)
- GROW branding

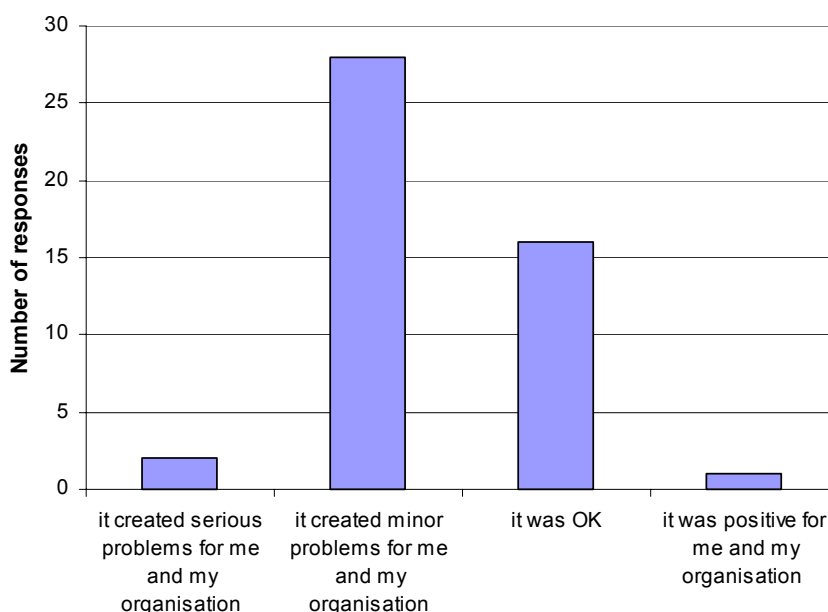
For each we report our findings, offer an appraisal of strengths and weaknesses, and report some suggestions, often made by the participants.

### Project start-up and management

As already mentioned in Chapter 3, the contracting phase has raised some challenges for some projects (at least in adapting the submitted project to the Steering Committee requirements) and of delay.

In fact the questionnaire indicates that most of the partners had problems with this stage and it seems that these problems are not specific to region, project, role in the project or previous EU experiences.

### Q18 How would you rate the contracting process?



Almost 64% respondents answered that the contracting process created problems for them, of which two answers were about "serious" problems. These were match funding and the reimbursement process. These caused difficulties with the smooth start of the projects and also threatened their successful delivery: "The project partners are expected to carry out the project using internal funds for extended periods of up to six months or more. This was deemed to be unreasonable and almost led to the partners disbanding before they had joined together." [lead partner (UK)]

By contrast the Regional Correspondents' assessment on this issue is more focussed on internal problems at project level so that it can start immediately and fulfil all the foreseen tasks.

We think that a smooth and prompt start of the activities in a partnership-based project such as Interreg means that the agreements should be clear, detailed and well "digested" by each project partner, recognising that the majority of GROW applicants were new to Interreg rules and regulations.

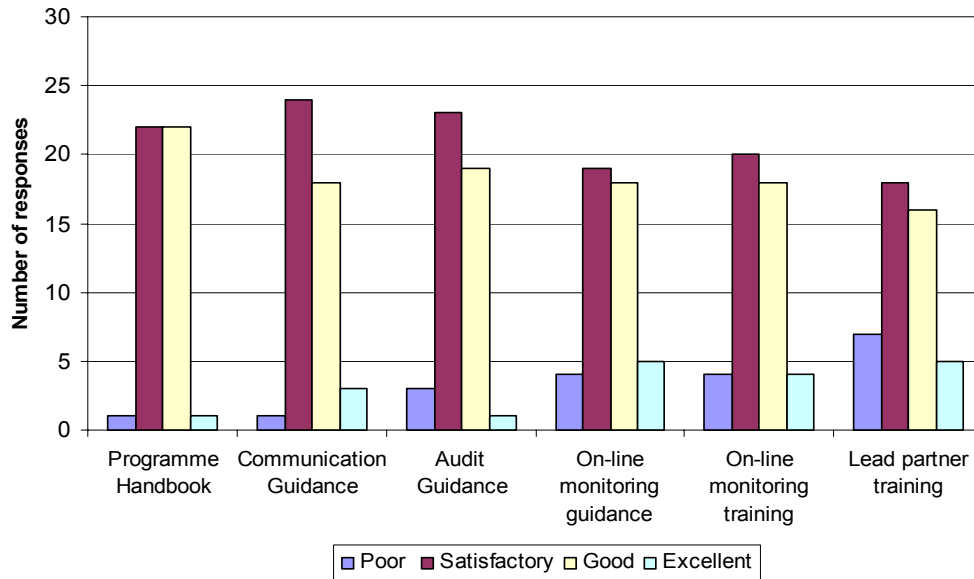
In fact, just as the development stage is crucial for building up a good working group, the same applies for the phase before the start up of the concrete activities, a phase that includes any variation of the Project Application Form and all training for programme requirements (budget details, expenditure certification, activity reporting and cost-claims, rules of procedures internal to the partnership and vis-à-vis with the programme, etc.).

In this sense we assess an under-estimation by the Regional Correspondents on the contracting phase troubles. Nevertheless, the same Regional Correspondents put a lot of effort in supporting the start-up of the projects activities, esp. through "individual" support, like face-to-face meetings.

The GROW Secretariat provided many tools for partners – see questionnaire Q26; most were assessed "satisfactory". The highest rated was the Programme Handbook which was assessed as "good" by 48% respondents. The next is Audit Guidance (41%). Almost 11% respondents showed that On-line monitoring Guidance was "excellent". The same rate is

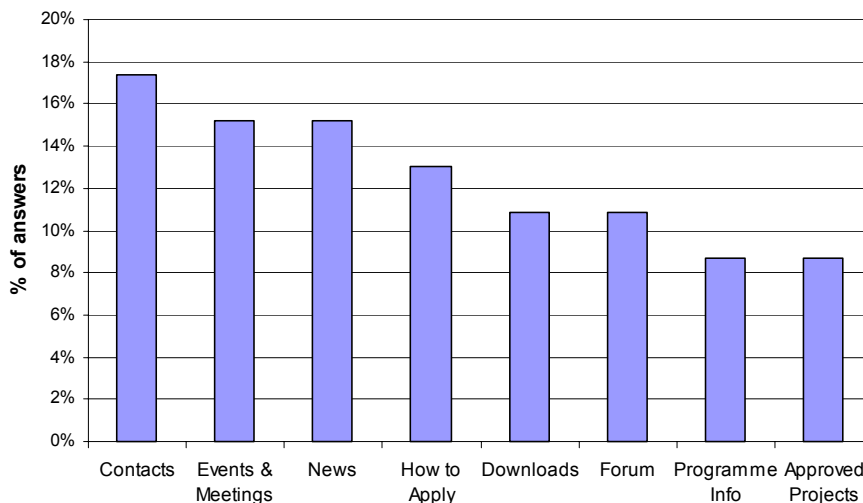
for Lead partner training as “excellent” but this tool got also 15% for “poor” which is the highest rate for all “poor” answers.

**Q26 How would you rate the tools provided by the GROW Secretariat to assist your project management?**



Finally, the usefulness of the Programme website as tool for obtaining general and detailed info is well recognised by the questionnaire [Q29].

**Q29 What information on the GROW website is the most useful?**

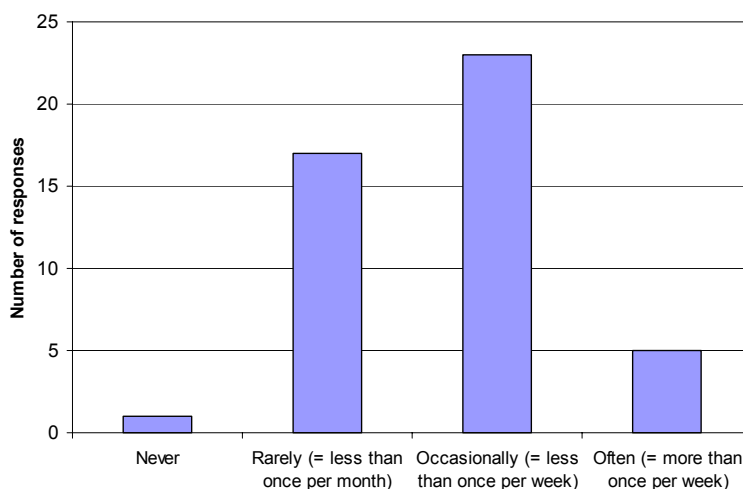


Questionnaire results show that respondents do not agree on what type of information was the most useful. Opinions are equally divided into categories shown on the graph. Most of this information is not useful at the stage of project realisation (How to Apply, Approved

Projects, Programme info) but is extremely important before application process. One answer-option, "Links", found no interest.

Note also that the respondents seem to use web site occasionally – only when they need some specific info or data [questionnaire Q28].

**Q28 How often do you use the GROW website  
(apart from the on-line monitoring system)?**



From the Regional Correspondents there is a general appreciation but with some opposite judgement, eg on usefulness of such a tool for partner search. Almost all found it not detailed enough, as an instrument for spreading different kinds of information.

Questionnaire respondents made suggestions concerning especially the exploitation of the website for information and publicity:

- more information about the partners and the project approved (link home site, summary, events developed, etc.). Therefore, more information about the project approved and less information about GROW.
- list of questions, problems occurred with solutions given.
- websites of sub-projects
- more documents related to Interreg and areas related to be downloaded
- more links and downloads
- projects proposals
- newsletters from each project
- products of the projects/publications

#### ASSESSMENT: Strengths

- Regional Correspondents and the GROW Secretariat support:

The GROW team was very supportive and give us lots of help and advice. Answers were always very quick (the same day or the next one). We had to prepare some extra documents (some additional info was necessary before signing the contract) and the GROW Secretariat gave us a lot of good advice and help.

"the project idea was in the beginning developed by the ES project-partner, that involved us as project-partner through the IT Regional Correspondent; when, just before the deadline for application, they realised their budget should be decreased (because ES GROW share was already completely committed) they asked us to act as

LP, and the Regional Correspondent support was crucial. The contracting phase was smooth, thanks to the GROW Secretariat and Regional Correspondent support.

- Rules and procedures for project structure are clear.

#### ASSESSMENT: Weaknesses

- Initial delay caused by the contracting phase
- "short time period after contracting, only 1.5 year for project implementation. This problem will be solved if a GROW 2 has a longer duration" [Regional Correspondent]
- Website: "It doesn't include the links with all the project websites; updating is centralized in the GROW Secretariat : in this way the Regional Correspondent cannot input any news at regional level (e.g. conferences) and neither the project-partner can use the programme web as dissemination tool" [Regional Correspondent]
- Website: "the sections with other partner languages are not fully implemented and the report news and events are too "UK oriented" and not all the events organized by the sub-projects are noticed" [Regional Correspondent]

#### SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS, coming from the questionnaire/interviews

- "The Regional Correspondent partnership decided to put into their meeting schedule special topic "Projects progress". Thanks to that everybody knew how all projects were going, what should be done to achieve goals, etc." [Regional Correspondent]
- Website: "allow also the Regional Correspondents, at least, to upload information" [Regional Correspondent]
- Website: "All the events organized by the sub-projects should be systematically recorded in the public section or at least in a specific area in the Forum section" [Regional Correspondent]
- Website: "Specific sections for "GROW in the Regions" in their native language (with an English abstract) should be foreseen" [Regional Correspondent]
- Website: "all kind of news facts, with changes continuously and with video clips" [Regional Correspondent]
- Website: "Update more frequently with information and tangible results. Improve listing on the search engines" [Regional Correspondent]

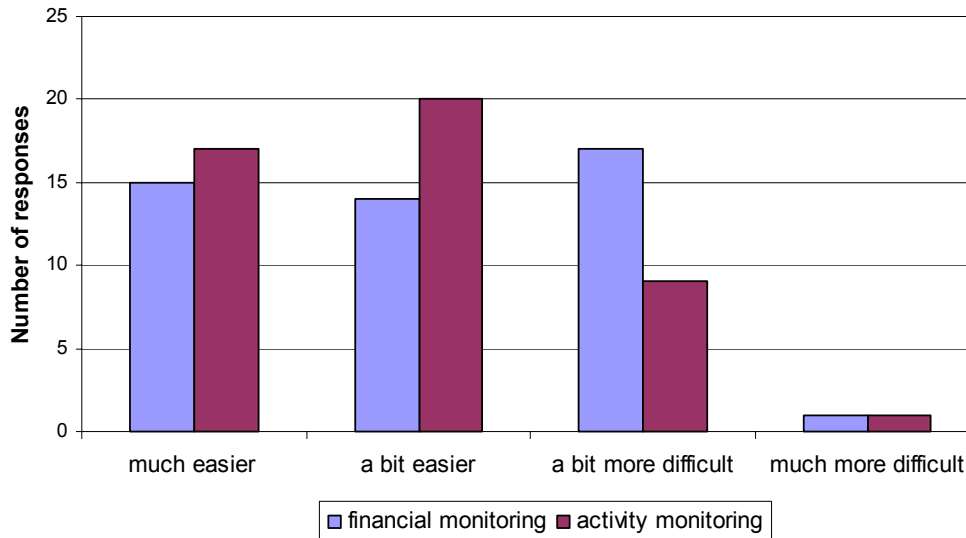
#### Project implementation monitoring

The implementation is monitored mainly by the reports the project has to submit regularly.

In this analysis we have not assessed the "Reporting kit" quality, user-friendliness, etc, nor the occurrences of revision of submitted reports, and the typologies of mistakes etc., as this was beyond our remit. We focussed our attention on the on-line Monitoring System, because it is the common and comprehensive tool for collecting all the data, and it is the main interface between the programme and the projects in such an activity.

The questionnaire results show that most of the partners are pleased with the on-line monitoring system – especially the activity monitoring part (see graph below).

**Q20 Does the on-line monitoring system make monitoring more or less difficult for you and your organisation?**



The following comments from the questionnaire summarise the overall views:

"The lay-out could be better [so that] it is easier to work also with percentages (for forecast). It would also be helpful if a request for change in the budget lines can be put in"

"It is good to have a list of targets and just checking against them, providing that all is correctly entered following the contract (we had changes to the contract, and the system was not updated)"

It is very simple and easy to use. It clearly shows and aids me tracking my partners' finance and activity. It does break down but the GROW staff have always immediately (same day) resolved any issues, what more could you ask for!

The main problems indicated are: technical difficulties (especially with access), inflexibility (unable to change data once put in) and some respondents said that system was user unfriendly and confusing. On the other hand we note that the system has been piloted via GROW, so some initial technical difficulties were to be expected, and the level of user-satisfaction is all the more impressive.

We also note that the online monitoring system has been commended in the Interreg IIIC Good Practice Survey (P.37) and was mentioned in the Interreg IIIC annual report to the European Commission.

The interviews with project-partners described these difficulties, but confirmed the general appreciation registered in the questionnaire: the Monitoring System is considered a useful and rather well shaped tool, also for internal monitoring (the lead partner towards the other project-partners activities). Its technical reliability and flexibility is however doubted by some.

The Regional Correspondents' viewpoints seem to reflect the IT-skills within their respective regions: thus the UK and NL experienced no particular troubles; others (ES, IT and PL) felt caught between the need to give greater support for their project-partners (in own-language) and their own need for support from the GROW Secretariat. All appreciate the "Traffic Light System", but the analysis of the actual use shows that some Regional Correspondents use it less than others. All Regional Correspondents agreed on the

usefulness of such a tool, and on the need to get more familiar with such an instrument, and on its potential to be used in other programmes/procedures.

As a point of detail we detected just a problem on the certified expenses as figured out in the Monitoring system and the actual (printed) Certificate of Expenditure that arrives later, where sometimes the figures are not the same.

#### ASSESSMENT: Strengths

- Comprehensive and reliable
- Synthetic ("it doesn't ask me to write poems" [project-partner])
- It obliges users to have deadlines and stimulates to respect them "it allows me to make sure that the information reaches GROW secretariat on time and that information provided is what is requested" [project-partner].

#### ASSESSMENT: Weaknesses

- Technical problems "sometimes the system fails, which is normal, but if you have to enter the data again because the system fails they (GROW Secretariat ) have to unlock the system and they can't do it anytime because it has risks, so you have to wait until it [is] possible" [project-partner]
- Informing the users on updates

#### SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS, coming from the questionnaire/interviews

From the project-partner interviews we collected a lot of suggestions, summarized below:

<b>Suggestion</b>	<b>No of answers</b>
System should have editing facility and allow modifications	4
System should be more intuitive and user-friendly	4
Restricted accessibility to each project-partner, because the risk of involuntarily changing data of another project-partner and more complicated passwords	2
System should be more robust and have greater technical reliability	2
Training on monitoring system should be improved (didn't say how) and manuals should be in all regional languages	2
Better access to information in terms of what the other projects are doing – info on the web is limited	1
Make each area unique: at the moment numbers don't transfer across - words do; pressing enter should capture input. (rather than save button)	1

From the Regional Correspondents:

- "for the future it should be better that the GROW Communication Officer comes and trains at regional level"
- "a query on a single project-partner should be possible"
- "More could be done to automate more procedures and run reports of the totals of outputs/activities"

#### Financial aspects (budget, audit, reimbursements)

Our comments on these aspects should be understood in the following context: GROW, like all Interreg IIIC projects, has to work within the complex regulations that are imposed

by the EC (and the Member States) on the Interreg programme as a whole. Very few of the problems that we identified can be solved at project management level. However, we report here because some of these issues may be germane to the management of Interreg IVC, and because it may be possible to reduce some of the problems through creative project management: indeed this has been the case with GROW itself.

A well conceived **BUDGET** means that the partnership has clear ideas on what to do: on this matter the questionnaire shows that most of the partners found their budget appropriate (almost 77%) and 92% stated that they will use all the money granted.

Since rules and procedures were generally speaking considered clear by the interviewees, no particular problem seems to be caused by the programme; indeed quite the opposite, all the project participants appreciated the support provided by the GROW Secretariat and Regional Correspondents.

As to **AUDIT**, in the questionnaire we asked [Q22]: "*Is the auditing/certifying system effective?*" The results are mildly positive: 40% said YES, but 36% replied DON'T KNOW. 17% assessed this system as non-effective but outside the control of GROW.

First Level Control systems are out of the control of Interreg IIIC, because the EU Regulations state that they are a Member State responsibility. However delay can disrupt project implementation: the solutions are to be found at national level, and GROW, like other Interreg IIIC projects, has been affected by delays in the IT centralised audit system. To protect the interest of the other partners, GROW has submitted its Progress Reports to the JTS on time so no real delay in payment was experienced by the other partners. Only Italian partners will have actually suffered by this as they have a 6 month (or 1 progress report) delay.

Our interviews identified that partners with small budgets (often themselves small) feel that the cost of audit is disproportionate to the amount of expenditure. Two possible ways forward might be

- allow sub-partnership below the project partnership, only the latter having to fulfil all the GROW requirements.
- a regional partner could take out an 'umbrella' contract such that a single auditor then works on the accounts of a number of organisations, at reduced cost.

**REIMBURSEMENT** in theory presents little delay if the Progress Report is submitted on time (and this depends on the audit, see above). From our experience this is not always the case, however the GROW Secretariat has been able to submit all Progress Reports within the two-month deadline.

The Interreg IIIC method of reimbursement (6-months in arrears) while painful at the start is then more partner-friendly than the more normal 30%-30%-40% model that applies to most other European funding programmes.

A specific problem for several partners, however, was cashflow. This is complex because the problem can arise for many reasons. Clearly it was recognised by the GROW regional partners at the outset as a potential difficulty, and steps were taken to assist where possible. Indeed, SEEDA believes it has been very flexible, especially when compared with other lead partners or local authority structures. However, several interviewees remarked on the problems caused (two mentioned the potential for organisational collapse) or opportunities missed. As stated at the start of this section the cause of the problem is the complex regulations that are imposed by the EC (and the Member States) on the Interreg programme as a whole. Like other Interreg IIIC project managers, the GROW Secretariat has to work within these constraints. For GROW2 we suggest:

- An even greater commitment to communication on financial matters
- Discussion at an early stage with the Interreg IVC Secretariat and with the other GROW2 partners to avoid such problems

- Priority to particularly exposed project-partners: for example. Partner-organisations with an annual turnover of (say) <€150,000 whose GROW2 budget is (say) >25% of turnover should automatically qualify for potential front-funding.

The questionnaire results show that main problems in summary were:

- Cashflow (see above)
- Level 1 audit – too complicated and long, too bureaucratic. In PL and IT the national central audit system caused delays for the rest of the partners who felt they had to wait for their PL or IT partner to claim for money.
- problems with partners because of their regional/national regulations (delays with reports mostly or making decisions)
- lead partner unable to control how project-partner managed the project which could cause delays

#### ASSESSMENT: Strengths

- Clear rules for project structure flexibility
- the GROW Secretariat -Regional Correspondent support in project changes procedures

#### ASSESSMENT: Weaknesses

- First Level Control systems of some countries (beyond the control of GROW)
- Length of reimbursement timeframe (beyond the control of GROW)

#### SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS, coming from the questionnaire/interviews

- “make more flexible changing budget lines - i.e. to 10% level, without extra explanations to the GROW Secretariat ” <from project-partner interview>

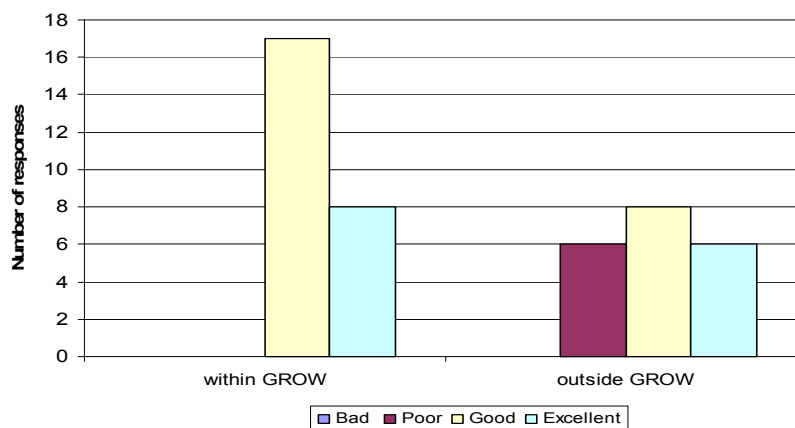
From the project-partner interviews we collected a lot of suggestions, summarized below:

<b>Suggestion</b>	<b>No of answers</b>
More time for reports (esp. at the end of the project), less time for payments	7
Change the audit process – it shouldn't be centralized because it take too long	2
Single audit only	2
Different auditing requirements depending on scale of funding over different periods	1
For small funding amounts, the audit requirements are very expensive to administer. Could partners group together with a regional lead to audit in one place in future?	1

#### GROW branding

In the questionnaire we asked [Q31]: *Is the GROW programme marketing strategy and implementation effective and adding value to your project?* The responses are equivocal. Only 37/46 respondents answered the question. Within GROW 67% of respondents say GOOD or EXCELLENT, 33% don't know enough to say. Outside GROW the respective figures were 40% GOOD or EXCELLENT, 17% POOR, and 43% don't know.

**Q31 Is the GROW programme marketing strategy and implementation effective and adding value to your project? (e.g. branding)**



We pursued the question in the interviews:

- "Within GROW the marketing strategy was useful. However outside it was difficult to convince people to join by just using the marketing strategy of GROW" [project-partner]
- "Marketing strategy and all these tools (logos, templates etc) were very easy to use and they liked using them. Thanks to that there was no wasting time for preparing such documents and tools" [project-partner]
- "GROW branding made [the] project appear more reliable, and more important as [it presents the] image of a region rather than a university" [lead partner]
- "Lots of ready to use documents were available together with detailed explanation how to use it. We had freedom with ways of promoting project - we were allowed to decide to whom info should be sent" [project-partner]
- "Marketing is a weak point of the project, which has not had enough exposure. This comes partly from the traditional marketing work of universities, usually focused on students" [lead partner]
- "Not particularly helpful - difficult to understand. We relied on the lead partner who was well organised for interpretation of the material. Having said that when we had to bring in English Partnership they were able to understand the marketing material easily" [project-partner]
- "What is it?": I come from a marketing background, we see no benefit to clients and little externally unless GROW has a long life. Our letter-paper currently has 7 logos. [lead partner]

We conclude that the GROW marketing strategy (we refer mainly to the "Communication Plan") was very useful as it allowed partners to have the same "corporate line" but did not significantly help the project participants in having special attention by the decision makers and by the main stakeholders. It was rather the opposite: the marketing impact of concrete outputs and outcomes of the project increased GROW visibility at regional level.

## 5 PARTNERSHIP WORKING & LEVEL OF INNOVATION

This chapter reviews how the partnerships have been working and the level of innovation they present.

### 5.1. Conclusions and recommendations

#### Conclusions

##### Working in partnership

1. Generally there was a very positive feedback about partnerships and their added value.
2. The varied composition of partnerships (private companies, local authorities, universities, national government, NGOs) allowed a wider perspective to develop projects.
3. Partnership working encourages and facilitates a move from inward-looking to learning-from-others and working-with-others. The exchange of experiences from different contexts and knowledge appears the most added value of working in partnership.
4. working in partnership on specific objectives and targets has led participants to create, develop or re-enforce networks of experts that will continue beyond the end of the projects. Partners are keen to emphasize that these informal networks and linkages (whether regional or inter-regional) are of significant added value to their organisations and their work, and will be used in the future.

##### Trans-national co-operation

5. Generally, language was not a threat to project development, although institutional differences were (PL, IT), and sometimes it took some time for partners to get used to cultural differences.
6. It seems there are two type of consortium in terms of cooperation:
  - All learn from one. A main partner brings a specific methodology, knowledge, experience etc; the rest of partners apply it.
  - All learn from each. All partners bring their specific knowledge and experience and between all exchange and build a model/method to develop and compare activities.
7. A mix of regions seems to work better in terms of partnerships and innovation: southern/northern and new/old Member States.
8. Some partners would like to see regions from other countries participating, such as Germany and France, who are perceived as potential examples of good practice in some areas.

##### Project development

9. Several partnership-related reasons lie behind some of the delays in project-development:
  - Some organisations (foundations, private enterprises) with low annual budget have subcontracted people to develop the project. That means short, low-cost contracts. In many cases this situation provokes a high level of staff turnover, with disruption to project-continuity.
  - Where the local partnership was not established before the project submission it can take too much time to establish it and sign agreements, etc. If the agreement has to be signed with the public administration then it takes more time.
  - For many partners GROW was their first experience of a transnational cooperation project. Non familiarity is difficult to overcome under time-pressure, despite the support of the GROW Secretariat and the Regional Correspondents.

10. Short timescales at the beginning of programme also meant partners did not have the time at the beginning of the project to carefully allocate tasks, agree on terms of reference, responsibilities and governance roles, clarify objectives and outcomes, recruit best participants (schools, businesses).

### Recommendations

1. Project development  
Pre-project meetings should be held in order to save time and difficulties later, by defining tasks, roles, responsibilities; and specifying objectives and outcomes.
2. Project management competencies  
Ensure, as much as possible, that project management competencies will remain in place for the duration of the project, and in a consistent way. In GROW, some projects suffered due to a delayed start, itself caused by changes in the partnership make-up.
3. Local partnerships  
Pre-agreements of local partnership once a project is submitted. In some cases the absence of this pre-agreements has caused important delays because it takes a lot of time to make contacts, sign agreements especially if it has to be with a public administration.
4. Local strategic fit: influencing policy  
Involving public administrations and local/regional government could help to ensure that policy influence is pursued and delivered. In this respect, securing an influential policy partner may be beneficial. However, in some case, a possible drawback is the lack of dynamism and adaptation to change of such institutions. They could instead be brought in as observers.

## **5.2. Summary of evidence gathered**

In this section we examine the following aspects:

- Added value through working in partnership
  - Policy influence and partners organisations
  - The value added to the project by working in an international partnership
- Threats to partnerships
  - Institutional and cultural differences
  - Project Development and Project management
- Innovation

### Added value through working in partnership

The general feeling is that the key added value is the international dimension of partnership. That feeling is shared both by the partners who apparently bring knowledge and experience, and the partners who receive this. In that sense despite the differences between the members of consortium all of them gain.

### **Policy influence and partners organisations**

Interviews and analysis of the questionnaire indicate that projects which involved public administrations have more capacity to influence policy. However, it may not work for all European regions, in practice.

In the online questionnaire we asked [Q35]: "*How much value is added to your project through working in partnership, within your region?*". The table summarises the responses by region:

	Andalucía	Emilia-Romagna	Malopolska	Noord-Brabant	South East England	All
A lot	50	72	45	60	59	57
A bit	25	14	44	40	23	28
Very little	25	14	11	0	18	15

### Interregional partnership working: a success

"GROW gave many people fantastic opportunity to meet each other and know other cultures and ways of working. All polish partners who were interviewed were very enthusiastic about interregional cooperation. And all of them said that without foreign partners projects wouldn't be so good and with great outcomes." [PL partner]

"A great deal: partners are quite varied: we have private, local authorities, universities, national government, NGOs - as a result the interchange between partners has been dynamic and positive; not competitive - very open;(university operates differently)". [NL partner]

"The partners were at first inward looking. The regular partners' face-to-face meetings saw sometimes some heated debate, but they were positive in that, as a result, partners learnt to speak to each other, and to do things differently, learning from others and it very much improved the project management".

"Overcoming together institutional and working culture differences was in itself an outcome and a benefit of working as part of an international partnership. Partners learnt much about international dimension, and more generally speaking about expanding on the organisational inward looking attitude".

"on the contrary, differences in working culture, experience has brought an added value".

The partnership has allowed the creation of different experts networks in some cases as an additional output. [ES partner]

"Without this project it would have been very difficult to find contacts say in Surrey, this project would not have been possible without working in partnership". [UK partner]

### Working in an international partnership: analysis by regions

#### Andalucía

All of the Spanish partners said that working individually would not be as interesting as in a transnational consortium and in many cases they wouldn't learn and achieve their outcomes and results.

Some Spanish partners said that language problems prevented them feeling really confident about the daily management of the project and increasing the exchange and cooperation at high level (between technicians, politicians).

"The partnership is very good. The added value is between others the personal professional improvement, the learning from other realities and ways things are done".

"The added value of working in an international partnership in that project is enormous. There has been exchange, sharing and learning of experiences, the context, the solutions and the way how they are applied. The comprehension of what other regions have done give ideas to be kept in mind for the other regions".

"The international dimension is one the most added value. There have appeared lot of opportunities to develop new projects on our subject".

#### Emilia-Romagna:

IT institutional arrangements mean many difficulties in advancing money, which creates delays for the projects. Language was not cited as a barrier

"I consider the group (Grow Secretariat and Regional Correspondents) very cooperative and effective: it is one of the best working group I have met during my professional life."

"Nevertheless, I see a problem with Italian administrations (not with my Italian colleagues: I appreciate them a lot!): if they want be part of such a programmes they have to modify their administrative procedures, decision-making systems, etc. in order to

be quicker and more efficient; their procedures last too long and are too complicated for a transnational cooperation programme.

"I think that each administration must find out (in a proactive way) individual solutions to improve its performance. If they can't, I think this can be a big risk for a GROW 2 bid and we must consider changes to the partnership."

"I would very happily work with Aster, but the Emilia Romagna region do seem to slow things down with the project - from not turning up on time to meetings to delays in getting approval for administration"

"Partnership has considerable added value. Experience in master planning in UK has influenced BEF to start discussions with Brabant - would not have been able to do this without the project; Also the thinking of the Italian colleagues and the way they get in contact with local neighbourhoods gives very good examples"

#### Malopolska:

Polish partners sound very enthusiastic and positive about EU experience: interregional working helps policy implementers and policy makers to affect key decision makers and stakeholders.

Polish partners had difficulties with expenses certification. Because audit is centralized in Poland for Interreg III programme Polish partners had less time to report on time. At the end they usually were on time but this caused stressful situations for the rest of the partners - this surely would affect good cooperation.

There is a high degree of centralization of decisions in the public sector: timescales for decision making are long. Also obviously less flexibility and responsiveness to any changes or issues arising.

The project leaders were generally complementary about the quality of motivation of their partners, despite timescales issues which required heightened motivation, and capacity of adaptation. Polish partners especially were complimented for their hard work and taking responsibility.

"Thanks to interregional cooperation the project was much more interesting. SMEs from all regions could compare different ways of "doing business" also best practice share was useful. Additional value: SMEs were informed what is allowed in other regions and what is forbidden - in business contacts. This was extremely useful prompt to future business meeting and cooperation between SMEs".

"UK/ES partners have more experience in project management and have supported PL. But PL's design skills have been very important."

#### Noord-Brabant

Easy partnership with the UK, as NL is in line with UK for many institutional arrangements Dutch partners have learnt much both from UK master planning and the Italian approach to community involvement for example in terms of getting in contact with local neighbourhoods.

Generally Dutch partners seem very positive about the experience and the benefits that were had from working in partnership with colleagues from other countries.

One of the key benefits highlighted was the 'inspiration' arising from doing a lot together during a relatively short period of time.

"If NL hadn't been there at the beginning, it wouldn't have been carried out in Spain as original impetus came from NL."

"This project is so valuable thanks to international cooperation. Thanks to NL with their great experience and also other the building matrixes from other regions this is an interesting challenge."

#### South East England:

In general, UK partners were convincingly positive and active, and, more importantly, could provide examples of how they learnt from their international partners, whatever the

region. For example, the strong links between universities and business networks in NL and ES are hailed as good practice to be followed.

Polish partners are positive about the know-how they gained from their UK partners.

UK partners are on a few occasions deemed not flexible enough by their southern partners.

UK: "some projects suffered due to the different administrative procedures for the start up: i.e. in UK when a project is approved the activities can immediately start, in other countries they need internal procedures and official documents to be signed off prior to commencing the activities".

UK: "The feedback from all partners and from the SMES (including some fairly large ones, employing 50 to 60 people), shows that the international dimension of the project has been an eye opener. Partners and Businesses [in the UK] had never looked at working in an international dimension before, and the project has raised awareness of the possibilities to do so. It was very clear in the development of the project, and confirmed by all partners: at first, each organisation was very inward looking. Then, as the project progressed, partners realised that some of their problems and issues were shared by the other, and that some solutions could be applied to their own organisation, their delivery of the project, etc. "

ES: Due to the excellence experience, professional training of UK partner has allowed to give added value to the project. Without UK partner the project would have been poorer.

UK: The partnership has been very useful to exchange information about legislation of renewable energies

## Threats to partnerships

### **Institutional and cultural differences**

The main problems detected which introduce difficulties for developing the projects are institutional differences that are related to the type of organisation. Public administration (mainly in IT and PL) appears bureaucratic in its internal processes. Differences in working culture also appear but the difference is that in some cases it is precisely the differences in the working culture that gives added value because the partnership as a whole learns of different ways to proceed.

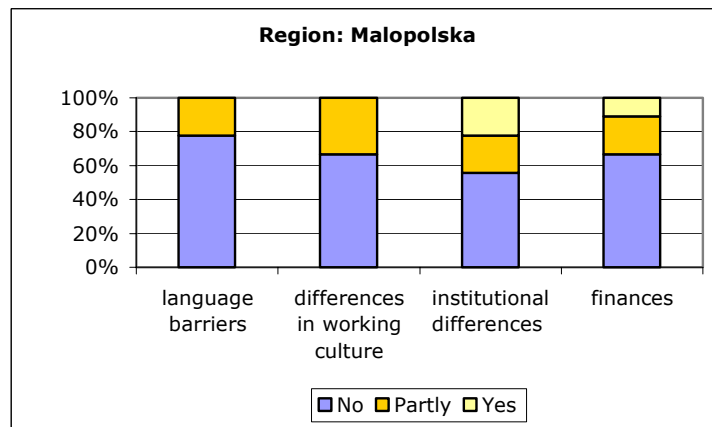
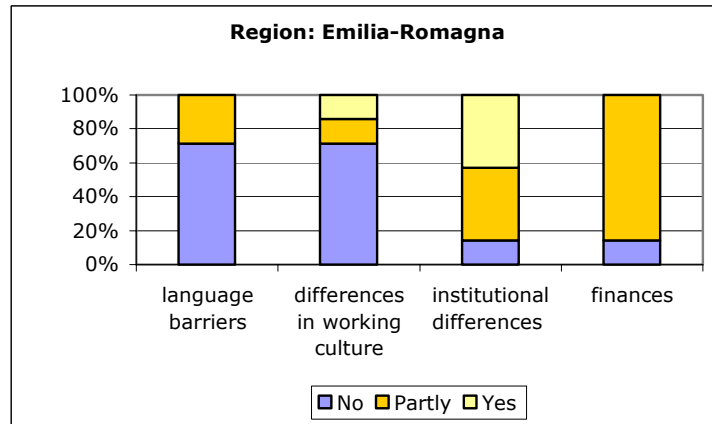
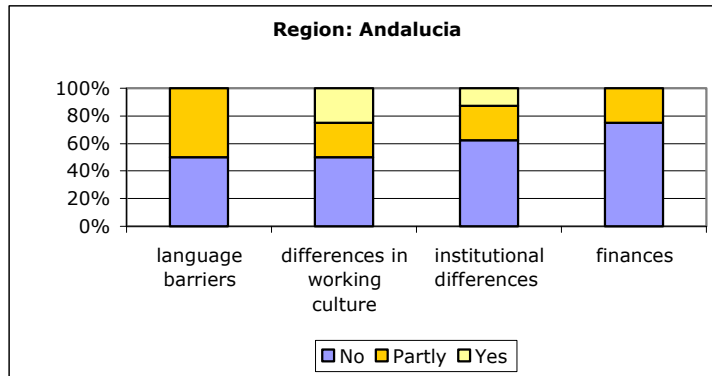
The online questionnaire asked [Qs 36/37]: "*Would you consider working with your GROW partner(s) again in the future once this project has ended?*". The 46 respondents answered as follows:

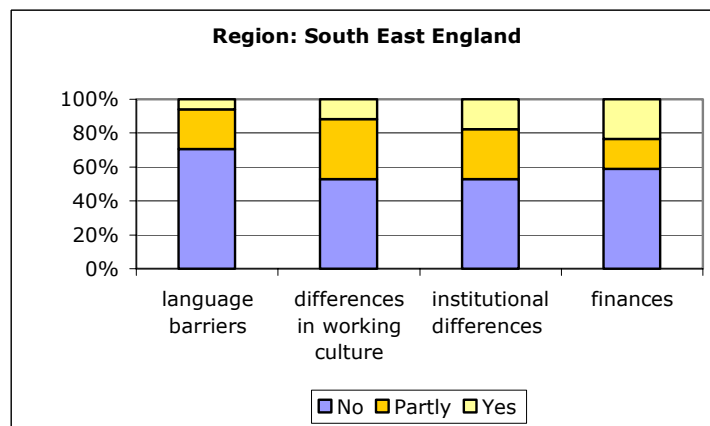
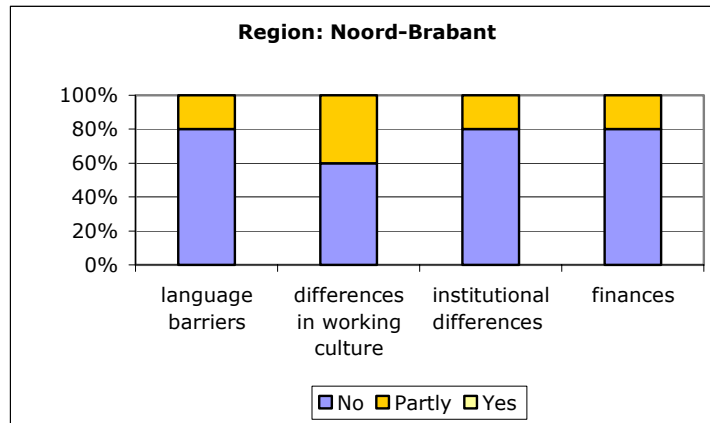
All	65%
Some	31%
None	4%

The questionnaire analysis shows that those participants who would not wish to form another partnership with the same organisations were involved in the same project. In other words, some partnerships were 100% successful, some less so.

Evidence from the responses to the open questions asked in the questionnaire or during the interviews points to the problems encountered: although a couple of less successful partnerships could be considered accidental or inherent to a particular organisation, the majority of difficulties occurred due to institutional differences.

The online questionnaire asked [Q34]: "*Have any of the following partnership issues threatened the successful delivery of your project?*" We have analysed the responses by region as follows:





**Some examples of threats detected by partners**

*Institutional differences/finances*

“The decision making process was sometimes difficult because it was a long process for the Polish partner. They needed to have everything approved by a long chain of command. Bureaucratic and centralised decision making system. It was a problem for the project, but also for the Polish partner, who were paralysed in their actions, and subsequently embarrassed about it”.

“At the beginning there were difficulties in involving the IT partner (held back by administrative procedures). The rest of the members of the partnership did not want to proceed unless solid guarantees could be put in place to prevent negative impacts”.

“One problem was a worry about the Polish situation; Polish very top-down, very hierarchical both in politics and in project details - so there is always a risk of intervention (from people outside the project)”.

IT: “the ES partner has showed to be quicker than us in implementing the project, because it is a consortium with private status, not a public administration like us. ES partner is a consortium with private status”.

“IT has a very bureaucratized public administration. That means delays and difficulties to manage, etc”.

*Language*

“ES should improve but UK must be more tolerant. Differences of working culture (UK very rigid while IT very flexible). Institutional barriers (high bureaucracy process in all public administrations)”.

“The partnership at the beginning of the project was normal and the main barrier was partly the language. The partners felt that this affected project management”.

"The main concern at the moment is the end of the project. Polish partners have committed to do the communication (Newsletter and website) - also responsibilities in terms of final editing of handbook. Handbook needs to be in English and it is a concern whether the Polish partners can manage this or whether they will need (outside) help".

### Project Development and Project management

Project management from project leaders were generally highly praised. However, and mainly linked to the short preparation time for the pre-project proposal, there seems to have been a lack of initial testing of the proposed Leader's resources to carry out the project. This has resulted in changes of leadership and last minute adaptation. Most partners put down these difficulties to the rushed preparation of proposals.

#### **Improvements suggested by partners**

Regional Correspondent: "It's better if partners can meet each other before preparing the project. Nothing compares to a real discussion - mails are not the same. It could be also good to prepare project schedule (plan of action) - to point out all the important activities etc. Sometimes it was difficult to start the project - it was not only clear how to start, what should be done first etc. The second call was more clear, some rules were changed and appraisal process went quite good".

Regional Correspondent about project development:" Concerning this phase, I'd be in favour to stress the importance of investing time and resources in identifying partners and putting the bid together, alongside the advantages of a face to face meeting to ensure all partners fully understand what they want to achieve across the partnership prior to submitting the application. This will greatly help the implementation phase if their project is approved. The guidance could be given through the website and partner fairs."

Lead partner: "I would recommend an application 'pre-check' phase, prior to the actual contracting takes place, particularly to tighten up the outputs and bring more clarity to their delivery and how the numbers to be achieved are expressed/who has responsibility for what"

Lead partner: it's good to create on every partners meeting "plan of action" with dates and activities to do till next meeting and who is responsible for tasks.

Interestingly, two partners offered active advice, in opposite directions:

One said that as they had a low budget they subcontract people and that means that conditions are not so good and there is a high level of rotation, changes in the people involve. That means delays, much effort to be involved in projects, etc.

Another suggested that, when smaller (private) organisations are involved in the projects, they do not always have the capacity to spend on project management, monitoring, finance handling, being focused on delivery. It was suggested that part of the funding could be allocated to fund a dedicated project manager. This is in effect the approach which is adopted in EU projects, and more specifically in the GROW programme. However, closer scrutiny may need to be lent to this, to ensure continuity and reliability in the project.

Alternatively, when there are uncertainties about the Project Leader's pro-active and consistent involvement, an additional partner could be brought in to ensure the smooth management of the project. It is important to note that this proposal came from the leader of one of the most successful projects in terms of delivery of outcomes and of unanimous satisfaction about the partnership.

Best practice: In addition, it is worth noting that some partners, who were extremely satisfied with their partnership, praised the help that were the techniques of "facilitating meetings". These techniques involved mainly some pro-active work prior to any meeting/event: forms distributed about the partners' organisations, the individuals and invitees taking part; ice-breaking "games"; ensuring networking informal opportunities. These success stories may be worth gathering and spreading as part of the final GROW event, or beyond.

## Innovation

The GROW definition of innovation is “assess the degree to which projects were addressing more than one pillar of the 3P model (e.g. Environment and Business etc)”. However, as highlighted by the 3Ps study, the programme has not been most successful in fulfilling this objective. Another vector of innovation “is the successful exploitation of new ideas. It is the process that carries them through to new products, new services, new ways of doing things” and “transferring knowledge, best practices and experience from one region to another where in one region it’s innovative the way to proceed”.

In general we are unable to draw firm conclusions at this stage in GROW. What has been found is confirmation of the transfer from “old” EU members to “new” members, but also:

- transfer from more liberal economies (in the economic sense) (UK, NL) to IT & ES in terms of prioritizing business over administration.
- developing new ways of working.
- The techniques of peer group scrutiny, benchmarking (formal or informal), mentoring groups, and public/private mixing seem to have been exploited to the full during the programme, leading to a very high level of satisfaction about partnership working, with special emphasis on international networking. It is worth noting that the regions that, on a first approach, seem to be leading the innovation due to their original more integrated approach between the 3Ps, are also positive about their international partnership, emphasizing the benefit of going out of the comfort zone. Tentatively, this may be even truer for projects involving small private partners such as educational establishments or SMEs.

### **Innovation: learning from the partner regions**

PL: “Learning not only about work culture but also how different problems are solved in other regions”

PL: “Responsible and experienced partners shared their knowledge. We learn a lot from their experience.”

NL: Inspiration - we have done a lot together; 3 regional conferences - discussions, walking, eating together; exchange of ideas; very intensive; very direct impressions of what people are doing in other regions - 'one of the better things in life'.

UK: “The feedback from all partners and from the SMES (including some fairly large ones, employing 50 to 60 people), shows that the international dimension of the project has been an eye opener. Partners and Businesses had never looked at working in an international dimension before, and the project has raised awareness of the possibilities to do so. It was very clear in the development in the project, and confirmed by all partners: at first, each organisation was very inward looking. Then, as the project progressed, partners realised that some of their problems and issues were shared by the other partners, and that some solutions could be applied to their own organisation, their delivery of the project, etc.”

ES: “All partners are strongly involved and bring their knowledge and experience. But it could be said that UK partner brings more than the rest in terms of knowledge and methodology. One of the most relevant ways of proceed within the consortium is that everything is consensus”

ES: “The added value of working in an international partnership in the project is enormous. There has been exchange, share and learning of experiences, the context, the solutions and the way how they are applied. The comprehension of what other regions done give tracks to be kept in mind for the other regions”

IT: “The partnership is very rich concerning the horizontal integration (Research-oriented bodies, Regional administrations, technical agencies); the vertical one (from decision maker to final user) has been assured by the relations of each project partner at local level. The NL PP is the most advanced on Environmental Accountability at national scale. In summary: cooperating in partnership is useful to set up common and shared tools with high innovation degree”

## 6 IMPACT & OUTCOMES OF THE PROJECTS

This chapter reviews the progress to date of the 16 GROW projects. Project deliverables and final outcomes will not be available before the last trimester of 2007. The objective of this chapter is a mid-term evaluation in terms of outcomes achieved and impacts measured by policy influence.

### 6.1. Conclusions and recommendations

#### Conclusions

##### Strategic fit

- Projects that involve a public administration are more likely to have a direct impact on policies.
- Projects which support existing objectives will also have more synergies, and ultimately more impact on the policies, as a direct result of the activities. However, projects that aim at shaping new policies in regions, although less likely to have an immediate (and measurable) impact, may bring more innovative and deep changes in the long run.

##### The regional dimension

- PL has made a strong effort involving and introducing the different projects to the key local, regional and national stakeholders in order to influence and start introducing a new culture of changing views and ways of acting as in the rest of EU countries.
- UK partners in many cases express that the prime objective or initial intention of their project was not to influence policy. Despite this projects have an impact on the existing regional and national objectives.
- ES has developed through the projects many recommendations hoping that some of them one day will be considered into legislation.
- NL partners have introduced in different projects interesting discussions that could finally affect/influence the way a specific policy could be reoriented.
- IT partners have realised and confirmed in many cases the regional difficulties of having an impact at policy level due to the extremely bureaucratised administration. At the same time the interest in the projects have created an expectation. (for policy change)

##### The thematic dimension.

- Business projects generally fitted in cosily with the existing strategic local and regional frameworks. As such, their results and recommendations are more likely to be taken on board subsequently by policy makers, introducing incremental changes in the future, especially in the area of funding criteria. Business support networks are also benefiting from the GROW projects, with experts networks (local, regional, or interregional) supported..
- Green projects could influence and have policy impact through the recommendations provided on the assumption that in a short or medium term they could be included in the policy regulations.
- Inclusive projects also compile good practices and develop recommendations that could have benefits in social welfare. There appear to be more difficulties in terms of implementation at policy level because in many cases the recommendations are addressed to enterprises.

### Objectives

- The achievement of objectives is difficult to evaluate when projects are not finished. An important percentage of partners (58%) were very positive that their project would achieve most or all of the stated objectives by the end of the project.

### Outcomes

- Outputs (eg organization of events) are well delivered, but many outcomes (eg trading agreements, research agreements, jobs created, etc) are long term. We detect a general feeling that indicators and targets are over ambitious. This also relates to short lead times at beginning (lack of clarity and agreement on objectives, terms of reference, outcomes), and to different people being involved in project proposal / delivery & management.
- Involving public administrations and local/regional government could help to ensure that targets are pursued and delivered. In this respect, securing an influential policy partner may be beneficial. However, in some case, a possible drawback is the lack of dynamism and adaptation to change of such institutions. They could potentially be brought in as observers.
- The quality of the progress achieved in terms of time appears to be related to the type of partners (public/private) and the existence or absence of agreements at local or regional level.

### Recommendations

1. Ensure that programme participants have a clear and common understanding of the terms of reference, particularly in the field of policy
2. The programme aims of influencing policy have to be tightly defined: in GROW, project appraisals included an evaluation of how the project fitted in the strategic framework. Although it may not be achievable all the time, the criterion of capability to influence policy may be more relevant: this would include strategic fit, as well as the project's capacity for introducing change, either because of the level of innovation embedded in the project for some partner regions, or because of public administrations being involved (as active or observing partners)
3. It seems difficult to expect effective policy impact in statutory strategic terms. But the role of the GROW and GROW2 projects could be precisely: to create a new culture of awareness in different themes, to suggest tools for policy makers, to support existing policy objectives and the improvement of good practices, to make recommendations to improve local/regional/national strategies.
4. Dissemination and sharing of good practices from GROW between all partners. Some good practice to be picked up from interviews feedback, to share with the GROW Secretariat and other projects. GROW2, partly from our report, should be able to extract best practice and pass on to other projects.
5. Progress made by projects is naturally related to aspects of programme management and partnership working (see elsewhere in our report). One key for good project outputs is to avoid losing time through the consolidation of partnership, local/regional agreements.
6. The achievement of objectives also is related to partnership consolidation. It is crucial that the project-contract sets achievable objectives rather than a long list of outcomes and results.
7. Allowing time and funding for project development will help to ensure maximisation of outcomes, good partnership working, and policy influence. A specific feedback from the interviews is that study visits should be an essential element in all projects because they allow a direct understanding of policy issues in other contexts. Future applicants

serious about co-operation should consider investing forward funding for this initial study visit at the project preparation stage.

## 6.2. Summary of evidence gathered

### Policy influence

Responses to the questionnaire show a diversity of responses within any given project which tends to indicate that the policy influence

1) is linked to the existing policies in place in the local/regional/national area, and how the projects either support them or can fit in with them

2) may be interpreted differently by different types of organisations and language speakers. In that sense policy is one of these terms of reference for which it is important to ensure all partners have a common understanding.

Below is a summary for all respondents highlighting the results expressed in % of the questionnaire:

	None	Direct	Indirect
Local	20.0%	55.6%	24.4%
Regional	17.8%	55.6%	26.7%
National	48.9%	15.6%	35.6%

Q38 "At policy level, what has been the influence of your project?"

Q40 "How well does your project support policy initiatives?"		Not at all	A little	Very well	Fully
	Local	6.7%	31.1%	51.1%	11.1%
Regional	8.9%	22.2%	53.3%	15.6%	
National	35.6%	31.1%	17.8%	15.6%	

Interviews confirmed the uneasy determination of policy influence. However, the overall response indicates that policy is being influenced as a result of the GROW projects, either formally, informally, or as an expectation in the near future.

Overall, partners are either positive about concrete policy influence, or very optimistic of the impact of the project. This is backed up by examples of developed working relationships or by positive feedback from the policy making organisations.

The local strategic fit does contribute to the policy outcomes. However, it can be argued that the objective of programmes such as GROW are precisely to introduce change, therefore pointing to regions where policies are not already in line with the GROW objectives.

### Details & examples of policy influence by region

#### **Malopolska**

Good examples of policy influence of several projects, with more work on influencing policy anticipated

**Green** – "Influence is very high both on national and regional level. Thanks to NAMEA tool it's easy to create and to evaluate environmental policy. It's first NAMEA in Poland and it will be used for Environmental Plan in Malopolska Region. They are convinced that created NAMEA will be basis to create national NAMEA matrix. NAMEA will also allowed to create many other policies, such as development, economy, etc."

**Business**- "It is difficult in this project to tell how it influences policies. Partner organises meetings with businessmen and promotes results and objectives of the project. They hoping that in this tricky way can change way of thinking. It won't be any recommendation for policies in this project but they're going to publicise reports about its results."

"Jagiellonian University has adopted internal regulations on intellectual property and spin-out creation, which were based on knowledge gathered during project study tours. Other universities consider these regulations interesting and probably will use them to develop theirs."

"Our project has created a possibility to develop interregional networks among entrepreneurs and researchers. Polish representatives of both business and science are still reluctant and afraid to cooperate with each other, even on national level. We have observed that thanks to examples of good practices presented by other regions Polish representatives have learned that this cooperation actually does work, stimulates innovation and could be profitable for both sides. Still, concrete and tangible results are expected not now but in the future, maybe even after the project ends."

"Their project is not policy influenced but they want to prepare a report about project results and present it on regional body of education control to get their opinion and then to present it to Ministry of Education. They also organising seminars for teachers because they want to convince them about how important is to teach young people enterprising"

"We promote the programme on every meeting (banners, articles in press), and also prepared gadgets with GROW sign. The programme now it's seen interesting for other organizations – there are lot of telephone calls, e-mails. Also during other meetings people are interesting in GROW". Regionally, there is a great expectation." [Regional Correspondent]

There has also been policy influence from the Regional partner level through participation in GROW In Poland a GROW event was part of the preparation for the Malopolska Regional Operational Programme which is reflected in Measure 8.2 where there is an aim to "strengthen the position of Malopolska in EU cooperation networks." (source: progress reports)

### South-East England

"This is a difficult question to judge. In general the understanding is that project impact will have some effects beyond the lifetime of the programme, and may not be fully evident for some time ahead."

"Strong support for the GROW Programme from across SEEDA who believe that engaging in European Programmes offers the opportunity to raise the profile of the South East in European Policy debates".

**Inclusive-** "Some of the results have affected the way in which SEEDA are moving forward in addressing the support for disadvantaged people who want to start a business. As SEEDA is a lead RDA for business support it is felt this may have a national impact. Some direct local impact would have been achieved through the project as it involves working with local business support organisations".

#### **Business -**

\* in NL, influence of regional economic strategy by UK briefing paper

\* comparison of national funding mechanisms has led UK lead partner to endorse and recommend the "escalator" funding mechanism [practised by NL]. Currently lobbying DTI and Treasury national government departments to apply NL best practice. Optimistic about response, as no additional cost to Government.

\* a methodology has been developed for "meet the buyer" events organisation

\* business mentoring has permeated partners' culture"

"SEEDA very positive about project: it will affect the RDA's funding and support policy, especially in encouraging taking up of partnership by universities in projects involving SMEs, an area currently under-developed in UK"

"NL & Norway model of ONE regional Business Development support [for research], based in a university, is successful, and SEEDA is looking to promote this model."

"The "enterprise in education" subject is already part of UK curriculum, so there is no change in policy. However, this project supports the existing policy, by helping to implement it [provide tools]"

"SEEDA are very interested in using the regional cluster maps and possibly developing new ones to inform their inward investment policy. The maps are also providing very useful intelligence for innovation and enterprise"

"Project is in answer to regional economic strategy. The objective is to inform, support, act as a catalyst and as leverage, towards ambitious regional targets for international trade and for inward investment. Realisation regionally of the importance of clusters (6000 companies in SE UK!)"

"Project outcomes and links been used to develop SEHTA International Strategy plan to be submitted to SEEDA for adoption and funding early summer 2007"

"Gordon Brown 'visited' the Suspurpol GROW project and announced he would integrate some of its ideas into his policies. The GROW Programme as mentioned in the UK Presidency EU ministerial Informal on Sustainable Communities (Section 3.2 EU Funded Programmes, Page 149) – recognized that finance at European level has been an important lever for attracting additional public and private sector support from national sources" [Regional Correspondent]

There has also been input at Regional partner level through participation in GROW, to support and influence policy to fit with other wider plans and programmes: In the UK, the new Regional Economic Strategy fits with the Lisbon agenda as a direct result of input from the GROW programme. GROW was also featured in the EU Ministerial Accord (Bristol) which concluded that the EU member states lack the skills needed to deliver the sustainable communities and sustainable urban development agendas.

## Andalucía

In general projects develop and compile recommendations in the three themes of GROW. The influence in policy could be at mid term (the regulation to be implemented the recommendations). In the cases where the public administration participates directly in the project could be more influenced but it means that if they participate is because they are interested to find solutions or new ways to act in a specific subject.

**Green** - "Impacts could be divided into 2 categories:

1. The influence done between partners due to their specific knowledge. Although each partner address the project to a specific group of population UK has a huge experience in flood risk prevention rather than IT & ES. In that sense there has been an exchange of experiences about organisation of civil protection. It has impact in the improvement of awareness of flood risk across diverse groups.

2. Each regional partner collaborated very closed to the public body in charge of flood risk prevention. In that sense the public campaigns are done in line, in coherence, with the endorsement of public institutions.

ES cooperate with Civil Protection as one of their lines of work is flood risk. In that sense the administration is using the work (recommendations) done in the project".

**Business**- "Regional and local public organisations focused on innovation have considered BBaS as an excellent proposal and are expecting our final guidelines in order to know in depth the current situation of Technology Transfer bodies in other regions and best practices applied within them."

"The regional department that is involved in GROW is the responsible of the Social Policies, and it has had a big impact by GROW, not yet in drafting new laws, but in new strategies' definition , as e.g., the goal of making more Europe-involved the NGOs (those involved in social issues) and to be more involved in the EU Social Policy as department itself. Also the Andalusia Region "Minister" of Social Policies was positively affected by GROW. In the other regional departments GROW impact is in the starting phase" [Regional Correspondent]

There has also been policy influence from the Regional partner level through participation in GROW: In Spain the GROW programme has contributed to strategic plans passed by the Andalusian Government which fit with the Lisbon agenda: the Plan Andalucía 21st Century; the Andalusian Plan for Social Inclusion; the Andalusian Plan for the Environment and the Document for the Andalusian 2<sup>nd</sup> Modernisation.

## Noord Brabant

A feeling that the work carried out will lead to some substantial opportunities for influencing policy at a number of levels. However as time has been so short for the projects, real impact is not expected until well after the completion of the project.

**Green** - "in NL there are big discussions on brownfield regeneration and project will give examples for input into NL government discussion; Regional: The NL RDA introduced discussions for development of land fill and brownfield sites. The influence of the project is wider than just discussion on landfill site - should be seen in the wider discussion on brownfield regeneration"

"The GROW agenda matches the North Brabant agenda, also because we integrated in GROW the "3P" Model. We gained a lot of knowledge from the other regions (e.g.: incubators, etc). Moreover, the activities being part of (financed by) a European programme are more "sexy" at national level. Now, after GROW, the NL stakeholders talk each other more than in the past, and they cooperate better. And when they go in Andalusia, or in Emilia-Romagna, etc., they look back to our own region from on other perspective, they found common languages, shared fields of interest, etc. Therefore we have increased in our professionalism, because we have improved in some fields, thanks to knowledge imported from the other regions. For example, in NL we have good skills in funds raising for enterprise start-up; in UK they are advanced in supporting the start-up; in IT they are skilled in local communities involvement; etc. In conclusion, there is a benefit in being part of GROW not only for the public administrations directly involved, but for a wider number of actors in the territory". [Regional Correspondent]

## Emilia Romagna

Many of the IT partners have been public administrations. The impact and influence is difficult to be measured but it's agreed that the different project have allowed to realise the regional difficulties to impact at policy level but at the same time the interest the projects have created.

**Green** - "Competent Public Bodies has found this project very interesting for the following reasons: a) it allows them to show their activities (and approaches) at European level; b) they can gain new approaches from abroad; c) at local level, the project activities encouraged the different stakeholders to talk each other, acting a facilitator. At the end of the project we will produce a Report for the Municipality of Piacenza, with some crucial recommendations for the relevant sectoral policies: the interest they have in our activities is already high, because it started with the MEDOCC project, and the City Government has been confirmed in the recently elections."

"The impact of GROW is growing, especially during last months, due to the public events organized by the projects. They have given me the possibility to attend and promote the GROW program to a wider audience. Now GROW has a strong support by the political sector, also in view of GROW 2". [Regional Correspondent]

### Details & examples of policy influence by theme

Table 6.1 (end of chapter) sets out the expected policy impact of each project, listed by theme; and Table 6.2 provides a full list of examples. Our summary of the general trend for each theme (with selected examples) is as follows:

**Business Growth:** Business projects generally fitted in cosily with the existing strategic local and regional frameworks. As such, their results and recommendations are more likely to be taken on board subsequently by policy makers, introducing incremental changes in the future, especially in the area of funding criteria. Business support networks are also benefiting from the GROW projects, with experts networks (local, regional, or interregional) created, developed or re-enforced.

- "Answers by all partners give complete, consistent and positive overview, with specific examples. SEEDA very positive about project: it will affect the Regional Development Agency's funding and support its policy, especially in encouraging taking up of partnership by universities in projects involving SMEs, an area currently under-developed

in UKNL & Norway model of ONE regional Business Development support [for research], based in a university, is successful, and SEEDA is looking to promote this model."

- "Regionally, UKTI has learned that match-making events are different to meet-the-buyer event (more expensive and difficult to organise) and will hopefully change their ways of working accordingly. b) Local policy impact: universities/business support agencies links more developed now. Again, future will tell, but these organisations should work more closely in the future."
- "The project aims and objectives have been communicated to top authorities within region to clarify how important business incubation and knowledge transfer are."
- "Locally and regionally the project involved several small companies in international research, including FP7 proposals. Both, the university academics and the SEE business was exposed to R&D practice and fruitful contacts with researchers and business in three other EU regions. The BBaS project was of great interest to participants of the UK FP7 meeting in London."

Green Growth: In general the influence and policy impact is achieved through the projects making recommendations with the idea that in a short or medium term they could be included in the policy regulations.

- "At ES regional level there is an involvement of the public administration. The objective of the project at regional level is not to influence directly in policies. That's not their role. They will give recommendation hoping that will be taken into account by policy makers. The direct impact and influence of the project will be at the end of the project once the contents of the guide produce about sustainable construction will be teach in the different courses they do."
- "In ES the partner is directly the public administration (in particular the environmental area). In that sense the influence is directly. As they main objective is to disseminate the use of renewable energy the impact could be measured by the Guide of good practices of sustainable construction (waste material for construction, renewable energy, water consumption) and the management of materials for construction."
- National: allowing English Partnership to share practice with participants; Has changed university policy re regeneration in Hastings - including creative, cultural and tourism also into syllabus and courses (especially after Bologna experience) - expect a formal policy and new courses in future

Inclusive Growth: In general inclusive projects compile and develop good practices that could have an influence in the ways to improve social welfare. These appear more difficulties to implement at policy level.

- "There are differences between partners in the institutional support receive. The ES case is the partner which receive more support express in interest of the public bodies. In fact, behind the partner is the Regional Government (Science, innovation and enterprise Department). This project attempts to influence/improve welfare and employment issues."
- "Final dissemination in November - we will look at how we can inform EU policy; Spanish and Dutch local and regional authorities interested in removing local barriers; Dutch Queen's commissioner keeps a close eye on the project (Dutch business need to register and one of the criteria is hours worked - this makes it difficult for part time business) and is asking to change such criteria; In UK we have a pattern that works it should be expanded and rolled out. RDA has lunch on the 4th July - FEW will speak at that occasion."
- "The influence of the project could be measured at local level. The project promotes new ways or culture to work between low skilled workers through promoting permanent training. The model followed is from UK "Learning representatives" and consists in use volunteers from the trade union most representative in the enterprise and they catch the target audience of the training. In ES the pilot project (training sessions) was selected once the project started (it means no previous contact). The requirements to select the organisation were: big size of the company and personnel in opposition to the formation. This selection cause delays and, as the organisation is a public administration, it takes a lot of time to establish an agreement. The model used to educate workers in a new culture of permanent training and improve their cycle labour life will be disseminated

through the public administration. Difficulties to influence policy because enterprises show reticence to develop such experiences."

- "The main impact of the project can't be measured at policy level. The main impact is the cooperation between enterprises of both areas to learn and exchange best practices".

### Outputs & outcomes

A substantial proportion of project deliverables and final outcomes will not be available before the last trimester of 2007. Despite this the general impression of partners is very optimistic about the achievement of the outcomes agreed in their contracts.

The desk study of the GROW library of documents, the notes of meetings, the online monitoring, and the Traffic Light system created by the GROW Secretariat, did not always give a clear picture of the progress on projects. We therefore concentrated on this aspect in our interviews, and learned a great deal, which is set out in detail in Tables 6.1 to 6.3 (end of chapter). In summary our findings are:

- Compulsory reporting of financial streams is a priority, as per E.U. regulations and checking procedures;
- traffic light and reports by the GROW Secretariat of face-to-face meetings are a very important and useful tool for monitoring and programme managing progress, giving programme managers an overview of progress;
- the appraisal from independent assessors, and the feedback given to project proposals often foresee potential difficulties in the projects;
- this report is a positive step taken by the GROW programme management to address these gaps.

Most project participants highlighted that:

- Time constraints, in the project development phase, did not allow for partners' full mutual agreement of outputs, outcomes and targets.
- performance assessment cannot be realistic and representative within the projects' official lifetime
- In some cases, targets were overambitious, whether because of being unrealistic about what could be achieved, over-enthusiasm, or regional pressures.
- Partners would much prefer a harsher line on delivery appraisal, but with more realistic targets.

Below is a summary for all respondents highlighting the results expressed in % of the questionnaire (Q41): "*By the end of the project, what progress will the project have made towards its stated objectives?* ".

Additional outcomes identified by project participants in the questionnaire and interviews are analysed and synthesised in other chapters, as they principally address partnerships and policy outcomes.

FEW objectives achieved (<25%)	0.0%
QUITE A FEW objectives achieved (25%-75%)	22.2%
MOST OR ALL of them achieved (75%-100%)	57.8%
ALL of them achieved AND MORE (100%+)	20.0%

Table 6.3 (end of chapter) gives a summary of individual project outputs and outcomes, by theme

## Tables

**Table 6.1 EXPECTED POLICY IMPACT**

<b>Business Growth</b>	
GROWENTERPRISE	In NL, the project's results will be integrated in the regional economic strategy. In the U.K., NL model of funding are currently actively lobbied to national government department, with optimistic expectations of outcomes. In Poland, interregional cooperation enables better business understanding across Europe and helps to provide good examples for policy makers
EEA - Enterprising Exchange Academy	<p>PL: A report about project results will be presented to the regional body of education to get their opinion and then to present it to Ministry of Education</p> <p>UK: The project aims to improve practice, not policy; but it supports Government policy in developing enterprise education.</p> <p>The main impacts are about providing teacher with a better understanding and tools for the teaching of enterprise in schools to young people.</p>
GrowHealth	Regional and interregional cluster maps will support and feed into and regional economic and inward investment strategies
BBAS - Bridging Business And Science	<p>In the U.K., the project will affect the RDA's funding and support policy, especially in encouraging taking up of partnership by universities in projects involving SMEs, an area currently under-developed in UK. Also, the NL &amp; Norway model of ONE regional Business Development support [for research], based in a university, is successful, and the regional agency in U.K. is looking to promote this model.</p> <p>The collaboration between university researchers and industry is well developed and understood in the UK and Netherlands, Spain and Poland are not so well advanced in this area, so for them it was an important opportunity to find out how it is done elsewhere.</p> <p>SMEs are very inward looking, it was a surprise to some how useful it is to meet researchers and business people from other EU regions. The networks have been created, the seeds sown, and should bear fruit in the future.</p>
Growing Trade and Innovation	Very SMEs focused, this project has an impact on policy in terms of opening horizons for businesses and for universities' business support units, to work with each other and internationally
<b>Green Growth</b>	
Building for the future	<p>The project has improved LSC policy for sustainable construction in FE colleges in the UK. There could be done at the end strong policy recommendations at Education level as well as Building construction regulations.</p> <p>The potential impact on future generations of FE students and tutors.</p>
SusPurPol	A new policy, SH14 about sustainable construction policy for the Southampton area has been included in the draft South East Plan. Former Chancellor Gordon Brown described the policy as a 'manifesto'. Aims to promotion and spread new construction methods that take into account all the inherent aspects to the sustainability of the building (from the planning phase to the demolition and recycling).
Pilot Programme for Sustainable Construction	The influence will be done from the administration to the construction companies in order to promote existing and emerging sustainable construction knowledge.
Florispres	Each regional partner collaborated very closed to the public body in charge of flood risk prevention. In that sense the public campaigns and all dissemination are done in line, in coherence, with the endorsement of public institutions.

RELECOM	There will be done policy recommendations, but also practical audits of the regions' brownfields.
RAMEA	High policy influence in the sense that the tool elaborated to evaluate environmental and others policies has been easily adapted in different regions.
<b>Inclusive Growth</b>	
Social on Business	This project attempts to influence and improve welfare and employment practices as it involves working with local business support organizations.
FEW!	The outcome of the project (a guide of recommendations in employment genre trends) it's addressed to the different public administration in order to influence policy makers.
Learning Reps	Development of a model to educate workers in a new culture of permanent training and improve their cycle labour life. Although the dissemination will be done through the public administration it requires the involvement of enterprises.
Championing Neighbourhoods	The project tries to influence policy makers through getting them involve in the different activities developed by the project.
EcoSocial	The main impact is the cooperation between enterprises of both areas to learn and exchange best practices. Difficult to measured influence at policy level despite the public administration is behind the two partners involved.

**Table 6.2 DETAILS AND EXAMPLES OF POLICY INFLUENCE BY THEME**

<b>Business Growth</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ It is difficult in this project to tell how it influences policies. Partner organises meetings with businessmen and promotes results and objectives of the project. They hoping that in this tricky way can change way of thinking. It won't be any recommendation for policies in this project but they're going to publicise reports about its results. In UK, Regional Strategy adopted already, so too late to influence it. In NL, influence of regional economic strategy by UK briefing paper. Comparison of national funding mechanisms has led UK lead partner to endorse and recommend the "escalator" funding mechanism. Currently lobbying DTI and Treasury national government departments to apply NL best practice. Optimistic about response, as no additional cost to Government. A methodology has been developed for "meet the buyer" events organisation* business mentoring has permeated partners' culture.</li> <li>▪ Answers by all partners give complete, consistent and positive overview, with specific examples. SEEDA very positive about project: it will affect the Regional Development Agency's funding and support its policy, especially in encouraging taking up of partnership by universities in projects involving SMEs, an area currently under-developed in UKNL &amp; Norway model of ONE regional Business Development support [for research], based in a university, is successful, and SEEDA is looking to promote this model.</li> <li>▪ Influence rather small - only particular SMEs will take benefits from the project directly but thank to that it's possible to share knowledge with other organisations, non GROW. Project is innovative only in meaning "sharing technologies and good practises" to other partners. Interviewee believes also that project will influence on better international cooperation between SMEs.</li> <li>▪ Regionally, UKTI has learned that match-making events are different to meet-the-buyer event (more expensive and difficult to organise) and will hopefully change their ways of working accordingly. b) Local policy impact: universities/business support agencies links more developed now. Again, future will tell, but these organisations should work more closely in the future.</li> <li>▪ Their project is not policy influenced but they want to prepare a report about project results and present it on regional body of education control to get their opinion and then to present it to Ministry of Education. They also organising seminars for teachers because they want to convince them about how important is to teach young people enterprising</li> <li>▪ As a result of problems at the start of project, Business Link has tightened now its procedures related to match funding in projects: no contract of agreement will be signed without "the money in the bank" prior to the signature. B) The "enterprise in education" subject is already part of UK</li> </ul>

curriculum, so there is no change in policy. However, this project supports the existing policy, by helping to implement it [facilitates, provide tools]

- The project aims and objectives have been communicated to top authorities within region to clarify how important business incubation and knowledge transfer are.
- Regional and local public organisations focused on innovation have considered BBaS as an excellent proposal and are expecting our final guidelines in order to know in depth the current situation of Technology Transfer bodies in other regions and best practices applied within them.
- Jagiellonian University has adopted internal regulations on intellectual property and spin-out creation, which were based on knowledge gathered during project study tours. Other universities consider these regulations interesting and probably will use them to develop theirs.
- Locally and regionally the project involved several small companies in international research, including FP7 proposals. Both, the university academics and the SEE business was exposed to R&D practice and fruitful contacts with researchers and business in three other EU regions. The BBaS project was of great interest to participants of the UK FP7 meeting in London.
- The regional level was assured by the nature of the project. Involvement at local level was provided thanks to the relationships of our organisation with a number of local stakeholders. We hope that in the future the cluster maps that will be produced in the project will be useful also at national level.
- SEEDA are very interested in using the regional cluster maps and possibly developing new ones to inform their inward investment and economic development policies. The maps are also providing very useful intelligence for innovation and enterprise.

#### Green Growth

- Development of a specific BREEAM standard for colleges: this a direct output from the project, with influence over the Learning & Skills Council. Previously any college had to go to the expense of preparing its own bespoke standard.
- "At ES regional level there is an involvement of the public administration. The objective of the project at regional level is not to influence directly in policies. That's not their role. They will give recommendation hoping that will be taken into account by policy makers. The direct impact and influence of the project will be at the end of the project once the contents of the guide produce about sustainable construction will be teach in the different courses they do."
- Although in Poland policies are making on national level they are thinking about working with professionals who have influence on policy making process. They're already make contact with them and trying to assure them about importance of sustainable development in construction. It is almost sure that new regulations will included this issue.
- "In ES the partner is directly the public administration (in particular the environmental area). In that sense the influence is directly. As they main objective is to disseminate the use of renewable energy the impact could be measured by the Guide of good practices of sustainable construction (waste material for construction, Renewable Energies, Water consumption) and the management of materials for construction."
- National: allowing English Partnership to share practice with participants; Has changed university policy re regeneration in Hastings - including creative, cultural and tourism also into syllabus and courses (especially after Bologna experience) - expect a formal policy and new courses in future

#### Inclusive Growth

- "There are differences between partners in the institutional support receive. The ES case is the partner which receive more support express in interest of the public bodies. In fact, behind the partner is the Regional Government (Science, innovation and enterprise Department). This project attempts to influence/improve welfare and employment issues."
- Within the consortium ES is the unique partner that participates with a public administration with direct power to influence policy (the regional government). In particular this project affects and impact in the employment policies. In ES it's been created a network of experts at regional level who directly work giving support to women to validate the recommendations. The guide of recommendations it's addressed to the public administration and it'll be distributed to the corresponding organism.
- Final dissemination in November - we will look at how we can inform EU policy; Spanish and Dutch local and regional authorities interested in removing local barriers; Dutch Queen's

commissioner keeps a close eye on the project (Dutch business need to register and one of the criteria is hours worked - this makes it difficult for part time business) and is asking to change such criteria; In UK we have a pattern that works it should be expanded and rolled out. RDA has lunch on the 4th July - FEW will speak at that occasion.

- The influence of the project could be measured at local level. The project promotes new ways or culture to work between low skilled workers through promoting permanent training. The model followed is from UK "Learning representatives" and consists in use volunteers from the trade union most representative in the enterprise and they catch the target audience of the training. In ES the pilot project (training sessions) was selected once the project started (it means no previous contact). The requirements to select the organisation were: big size of the company and personnel in opposition to the formation. This selection cause delays and, as the organisation is a public administration, it takes a lot of time to establish an agreement. The model used to educate workers in a new culture of permanent training and improve their cycle labour life will be disseminated through the public administration. Difficulties to influence policy because enterprise show reticence to develop such experiences.
- Brabant is very interested - if recommendations in November are of interest there is a good chance that they will implement them; There was a great interest in this field even before the project and a delegation went to Manchester to study a TUC idea - now project concept will be part of a life long learning concept ('knowledge means participation) - Province encourages new techniques and the GROW output (toolkit) will be one of those)
- "The main impact of the project can't be measured at policy level. The main impact is the cooperation between enterprises of both areas to learn and exchange best practices".

**Table 6.3 SUMMARY OF PROGRESS MADE BY PROJECT**

BUSINESS	
GROWENTERPRISE	Most of the objectives and outcomes are achieved. Project is going well and, although there were difficulties at the start, the project is on track. Overall, a delivering partnership, with partners having gained a clear understanding of errors and new ways of working.
EEA - Enterprising Exchange Academy	Despite a difficult and very delayed start, the partnership seems to have "triumphed over the odds", and is now delivering beyond set targets.
GrowHealth	A potentially very significant impact for this project, especially in terms of current and future policy influence and economic growth, <i>if</i> the Italian partners manages to overcome the extensive burden of administrative delays.
BBAS - Bridging Business And Science	All objectives and outcomes are achieved, with the anticipated exception (flagged up early to Grow Secretariat) of formal letters of intent of cooperation by the local businesses. A very active partnership, with consistent, positive and evidenced feedback from all partners, all sounding extremely pleased with each other.
Growing Trade and Innovation	Due to an original difficult start, the project has not delivered the planned outcomes as yet, but is optimistic that it will achieve a fair share before the end. On the plus side, all the partners are pleased to have made and established new partnerships within the project and also outside it.
GREEN	
Building for the future	Although there are some partners with a bit of delay in delivering the project will have a significant influence in the construction sector in the regions involve. They expect to achieve all outputs at the end of the project.
SusPurPol	Due to a strong and proactive partnership the development of the project is on the right way. All partners agree about they have

	<p>achieved additional outputs: big influence at regional level, new involvement of institutions in the network about Sustainable Construction.</p> <p>All outputs will be achieved.</p>
Pilot Programme for Sustainable Construction	<p>Despite there are some delays in delivering both partners agree that stated objectives have been progressively achieve except those to be reached at the end of the project.</p>
Florispre	<p>The project in general goes on time and will achieve all objectives. They feel very proud and confident because of the originality of some outcomes produced.</p>
RELECOM	<p>There are some differences in the points of view of partners about the progress done and the outputs achieved comparing with the stated objectives.</p>
RAMEA	<p>This project is excellent managed with an enthusiastic partnership. Besides the progress against stated objectives are perfect and on time. One of the best examples of project development.</p>
<b>INCLUSIVE</b>	
Social on Business	<p>One of the most relevant ways of proceed within the consortium is that everything is consensus before advance in activities. Due to the strongly cooperation between partners all outcomes are expected to be achieved.</p>
FEW!	<p>All things are as planned and there are no doubts to achieved all objectives stated and at the end of the project all outcomes will be ended.</p>
Learning Reps	<p>Despite the difficulties appear through the project (withdrawn of the leader, problems to establish a local partner agreement to develop activities) they are confident to achieve the objectives.</p>
Championing Neighbourhoods	<p>There are a strong cooperation between partners. They feel confident with the progress done: most of the output stated.</p>
EcoSocial	<p>Due to an important lack of communication there have been delay of the activities and a low level of cooperation. Separately partners are confident to achieve all outcomes but in an individual way.</p>

## 7 THE FUTURE

This chapter reviews the plans of the partners beyond 31 December 2007, and the possibilities for funding a 'GROW2', either under Interreg IVC or through some other route.

### 7.1. Conclusions and recommendations

#### Future Funding

1. All partners in all GROW projects wish to continue their work after December 2007. Some are already taking action; most are looking to leadership from SEEDA to develop a GROW2.
2. The GROW Secretariat has already instigated a programme of internal consultation over this. Our questionnaire and interviews contribute to this and details are reported in this chapter.
3. Our conclusions on Interreg IVC are based on the current (unapproved) Operational Programme.
4. Interreg IVC offers a serious opportunity for a 'GROW2', but will require the GROW concept to be reworked so as to demonstrate added-value over and above that shown under the current programme.
5. Interreg IVC priorities will mean that inclusivity is an implicit priority and certainly lower than green- and business- growth. We suggest that:
  - Close liaison with the Interreg IVC Secretariat once the Operational Programme is approved will define the precise opportunities for inclusive-growth activity in a GROW2 funded under Interreg IVC
  - Our 3Ps analysis (Chapter 2) suggests that most of the current GROW inclusive-growth projects have a strong "business growth" component; this could be used as the justification for their inclusion in GROW2.
6. The 3P model is a helpful construct, and the parallel study undertaken by TELOS has been able to map changes during the life of the project. We understand from TELOS that the model can be used in a proactive manner (to set targets), and we suggest that for GROW2 it could be used to set both selection and evaluation criteria.
7. The OP makes it clear that the Commission will look favourably on actions that will assist regions "under rapid development"; this implies that the GROW partnership might be well served by recruiting the involvement of another new Member State region.
8. There is some evidence that some GROW partners assume that their projects can continue under GROW2. This needs to be verified and addressed. The GROW partners should consider planning an exit strategy for the 'inclusive growth' projects that are unlikely to find favour under Interreg IVC. We have in mind some advice about continuation-funding opportunities. Please note that this suggestion is not meant to suggest that the project-partners should not be taking their own steps, rather that the GROW partners have a different perspective and experience to contribute.
9. The GROW Secretariat could also consider a different funding route for 'GROW2'. The Regional Operational Programmes of 4 of the 5 GROW regions under the Structural Funds may provide such an opportunity (interregional working should be a theme in all OPs); or more specifically for opportunities under the ESF for the 'inclusive growth' projects: the UK has 'opted out' of any specific provision. Other options include current Calls under the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (projects typically c€2m) and FP7.

### Relevant Future Sub-themes

10. We have undertaken a 'relevance test' of the current and proposed GROW sub-themes. We very tentatively conclude that the following have the highest level of relevance:

- Resource Management
- Environmental Management Systems
- Technology transfer
- Environmental Technologies
- Urban Renaissance
- Sustainable construction

### Operational Improvements

11. In addition we have been made aware of a range of operational improvements that could improve the life of project-partners. These concern a number of matters over which the GROW Secretariat itself has little control, but some may be worth raising with the new Interreg IVC Secretariat in the next few months. These include: cash-flow protection for small organisations; audit requirements for small-budget operations.

## **7.2. Summary of evidence**

### Interreg IVC

Interreg IVC offers substantial opportunities for a GROW2. This report does not offer a detailed analysis of the Interreg IVC programme, indeed this is not possible for timing reasons. While the Operational Programme [OP] was published in April 2007, it is unlikely to be approved until September 2007 shortly before the first Call is planned. Meanwhile it is subject to serious negotiation between the Commission and the Member States, and nothing should be taken for granted. While enough key points have been determined to mean that it should be considered as a serious option, no firm plans should be made until the OP is finally approved.

### Community strategic guidelines on economic, social and territorial cohesion, 2007-2013

Key statements from the Council Decision of 6 October 2006 include:

"In accordance with the integrated guidelines for growth and jobs of the renewed Lisbon agenda, the programmes supported by cohesion policy should seek to target resources on the following three priorities:

- improving the attractiveness of Member States, regions and cities by improving accessibility, ensuring adequate quality and level of services, and preserving the environment,
- encouraging innovation, entrepreneurship and the growth of the knowledge economy by research and innovation capacities, including new information and communication technologies, and
- creating more and better jobs by attracting more people into employment or entrepreneurial activity, improving adaptability of workers and enterprises and increasing investment in human capital.

In taking on board the renewed Lisbon agenda in the new programmes, attention is drawn to the following principles: ...cohesion policy should

1. focus ... on knowledge, research and innovation, and human capital.
2. boost synergies between the economic, social and environmental dimensions.
3. pursue the objective of equality between men and women
4. take appropriate steps to prevent any discrimination. [p4]

"Interregional cooperation programmes should focus on the renewed Lisbon strategy: strengthening innovation, SMEs and entrepreneurship, the environment and risk prevention. In addition, exchange of experiences and best practices regarding urban

development, modernisation of public sector services (such as health and government using ICT) and the implementation of cooperation programmes as well as studies and data collection will be encouraged. Interregional cooperation may also be supported within programmes for Convergence and Regional competitiveness and employment. In addition, exchange of experiences and best practices regarding urban development, social inclusion, relationship between cities and rural areas, and the implementation of cooperation programmes will be encouraged." [p22]

#### Priorities of Interreg IVC

At the core of the Interreg IVC programme is the "Regions for Economic Change" (RfEC) initiative. This "introduces, among others, new ways to motivate regional and urban networks to help them to have innovative ideas tested and rapidly disseminated into the mainstream programmes. It is dedicated to discovering best practice in economic modernisation, in particular in relation to projects clearly contributing to the Union's jobs and growth agenda, and spreading this to all regions in order to help stimulate their regional growth and reducing economic disparities." [OP page 7].

The funding priorities of the programme are:

- Priority 1 (55% of the budget) addresses **innovation and the knowledge economy**, focusing mainly on the sub-themes innovation, research and technology development, entrepreneurship and SMEs, the information society, employment and qualification.
- Priority 2 (39% of the budget) targets **environment and risk prevention**, most notably the sub-themes natural and technological risks, water management, waste management, biodiversity and preservation of natural heritage, energy and sustainable transport, cultural heritage and landscape.

#### Interreg IVC mechanisms

The OP proposes operations with a range of different cooperation-intensities, of which the Regional Initiative Project offers something similar to the Interreg IIIC Regional Framework operation. In addition, the OP makes provisions for capitalisation activities, which "optimise the results achieved in a specific domain of regional development policy. They consist of the collection, analysis and dissemination of practices in the policy area in question. One of the expected results of these activities is the transfer of the good practices identified into the Convergence, Regional Competitiveness and Employment and European Territorial Co-operation programmes of regions wishing to improve their policies and programmes".

#### Interreg IVC: our commentary

The stated priorities match two of GROW's 3Ps. The consequences are:

- Positive: innovation and environmental sustainability should be the clear focus.
- Questionable: although "social inclusion" is a stated priority of the Cohesion Policy Strategic Guidelines, the phrase is nowhere used in the draft Interreg IVC Operational Programme. We conclude that the GROW 'inclusive growth' pillar is unlikely to find high priority under Interreg IVC.
- Questionable: in theory GROW2 should be able to set clear outcome goals expressed in terms of the 3Ps; but the absence of 'inclusivity' substantially undermines the conceptual underpinning of GROW.
- Negative: the proposals are uncertain and late. The OP will not be approved until Sep-07, when the first Call is planned. If all goes to plan the first bids will be evaluated by Mar-08; a more realistic assumption would be a start in Jun-08.

Informally we have learned the following:

- A GROW-successor will have to offer added-value, ie be more than a mere extension of GROW.

- A GROW-successor should pin-point the core objectives of Interreg IVC, by refining or deepening the actions of GROW.
- The OP makes it clear that the Commission will look favourably on actions that will assist regions “under rapid development”; this implies that the GROW partnership might be well served by recruiting the involvement of another new Member State region.
- The Fast Track networks (a subset of the capitalisation activities) indicate even more clearly the core priorities of Interreg IVC.

From our experience of European funding bids, it is essential that a GROW2 aims unerringly for a core priority of the Interreg IVC programme.

### Beyond Interreg IVC

We would observe that Interreg IVC is not the only funding option. Within the European funding ‘market’ others include (in descending order of potential for GROW and its partners):

#### The core structural funds

All Member States have prepared their own National Strategic Reference Framework for EU structural funds programmes 2007- 2013; these set the Member State context for action on ERDF and ESF. They were adopted in late 2006; subsequently each region is required to prepare an operational programme in line with their NSRF. Interregional cooperation was one topic to be considered by each Member State, is as to how this would be supported through action at regional level. There is thus the possibility that GROW2 could seek mainstream ERDF or ESF funding for all or parts of its actions. However this cannot be a universally appropriate model, as the UK NSRF excludes interregional cooperation from its priorities.

#### Research and technological development.

The focus of “FP7” (there have been six predecessors) is to foster the knowledge-economy and support other EU objectives; so this programme supports research and technological development across a wide range of policy areas, including innovation and environment, as follows:

Information and Communication Technologies	€9.1bn
Health	€6.0bn
Transport (including Aeronautics)	€4.1bn
Nanosciences, Nanotechnologies, etc	€3.5bn
Energy	€2.3bn
Food, Agriculture and Biotechnology	€1.9bn
Environment (including Climate Change)	€1.8bn
Space	€1.4bn
Security	€1.4bn
Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities	€0.6bn

A complex (and very specific) work programme is available for download at <http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/home.html>. Calls are regularly opened.

#### Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme

This brings together three existing programmes and gives them more focus and resources.

1. the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (EIP) has priorities that match two of GROW’s:

- Better access to finance for SMEs through venture capital investment and loan guarantee instruments
- Business and innovation support services delivered through a network of regional centres

- Promotion of entrepreneurship and innovation
- Support for eco-innovation
- Support for policy-making that encourages entrepreneurship and innovation

Several Calls are currently open but none would appear to be relevant to GROW2, see [http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/funding/files/themes\\_2007/calls\\_prop.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/funding/files/themes_2007/calls_prop.htm);

2. the ICT Policy Support Programme is not relevant for GROW2

3. the Intelligent Energy Europe Programme (IEE) is concerned with a range of potentially-relevant actions, including energy efficiency, renewable energy, transport: a call is open, deadline is end-Sep-07, see

[http://ec.europa.eu/energy/intelligent/call\\_for\\_proposals/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/energy/intelligent/call_for_proposals/index_en.htm)

#### LIFE+

This is run by DG-Env and provides €2,143m funding (co-financing @ 50%) for actions in support of the 6th Environmental Action Programme. It comprises three strands of which one is potentially relevant to GROW2

- LIFE+ Nature & Biodiversity
- LIFE+ Environment Policy & Governance will contribute to: the development of innovative policy approaches, technologies, methods and instruments; the building up of the knowledge base regarding environmental policy and legislation; and monitoring, in particular of forests, and environmental interactions. Specifically, this component will focus on projects concerned with 13 priority objectives: climate change, water, air, soil, urban environment, noise, chemicals, environment and health, waste and natural resources, forests, "innovation", strategic approaches, governance.
- LIFE+ Information & Communication

A Call is imminent. Draft application guidelines for LIFE+ project proposals will be published "at the end of July". <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/funding/lifeplus.htm>

#### Community programme for employment and solidarity - PROGRESS (2007-2013)

The programme has six objectives:

- to improve knowledge and understanding of the situation in the Member States through analysis, evaluation and close monitoring of policies;
- to support the development of statistical tools and methods and common indicators;
- to support and monitor the implementation of legislation and policy objectives;
- to promote networking, mutual learning, and the identification and dissemination of good practice at EU level;
- to make stakeholders and the general public aware of EU policies in the fields of employment, social protection and inclusion, working conditions, diversity and non-discrimination, and equality between men and women;
- to boost the capacity of the key EU networks to promote and support EU policies.

The budget proposed is €743m for the period 2007-2013. The breakdown of funding between the different sections will comply with the following lower limits:

- Employment 23%
- Social protection and inclusion 30%
- Working conditions 10%
- Diversity and combating discrimination 23%
- Gender equality 12%.

The programme will be delivered through contract-letting and grant-aided projects (@80%):

[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/emplweb/tenders/tenders\\_en.cfm?id=1765](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/emplweb/tenders/tenders_en.cfm?id=1765)

#### Views of the project-partners: plans and priorities

The questionnaire shows that all partners in all projects are interested in carrying forward the work they have started under GROW. Some have already started to explore prospects

under other programmes (FP7 being the most frequently mentioned). Many are frustrated that the short time-scale of GROW itself means that the fruits of their work will not ripen until after 31-Dec-07, and they wish to find ways to develop and capitalise on the investment already made. Some wish to proceed on a limited basis, not necessarily involving interregional cooperation. However the vast bulk wish to carry their work forward with their existing partners (perhaps expanded).

### Priority themes for GROW2

At the request of the GROW Secretariat, via the questionnaire we asked participants to indicate their interest in a range of sub-themes. These included the existing sub-themes and a number of others that are currently under discussion. The results are reported in the table below:

<b>Green Growth</b>		<b>Business Growth</b>		<b>Inclusive Growth</b>	
Waste management	40.9%	Culture of Entrepreneurship	65.9%	Education and training to young people	50.0%
Environmental Technologies	38.6%	High Quality Workforce	59.1%	Public - Private - Community partnerships	38.6%
Sustainable construction	34.1%	Technology transfer	50.0%	Integrating marginalised and excluded groups	38.6%
Climate Change	34.1%	Cluster development	38.6%	Social Enterprises	36.4%
Resource Management	27.3%	Incubation	34.1%	Labour market functionality	34.1%
Environmental Management Systems	27.3%	Trading	25.0%	Human Resource Management	25.0%
Sustainable Public Procurement	25.0%			Urban Renaissance	25.0%
Environmentally friendly means of travel	22.7%			Demographic change - ageing population	22.7%
Water Management	22.7%				
Brownfield regeneration	15.9%				
Flood Risk Management	13.6%				

### Ideas for GROW2

We also asked a more open question, so that respondents could describe their plans, and we followed this up in our interviews. Table 7.1 (end of chapter) reports the answers given in the questionnaire.

### Priority themes for GROW2: views of the evaluators

We have been asked to advise on the relevance of the various possible GROW sub-themes to the Interreg IVC priorities and to other funding possibilities. Table 7.2 (end of chapter) attempts this task. We have taken the sub-themes that were included in the online questionnaire: these include the current GROW sub-themes plus several others suggested by the GROW partners. We have graded these 1-5 according to our perception of their implicit match to the Interreg IVC priorities, and 1-3 in relation to the others. In addition, we have also attempted to assess the 'additionality' of each sub-theme at regional and European level, ie the extent to which these activities are already a central policy/funding focus at regional level (by which we mean regional and local public agencies), and European level (ie non-Interreg IVC) programmes and policy areas.

NOTA that we do not claim unique knowledge on the question of regional additionality. We suggest that the GROW community might use this (or a similar) technique to harness the knowledge of a wider range of experts.

In brief our conclusions would be that the following have the highest level of relevance under Interreg IVC:

- Resource Management
- Environmental Management Systems
- Technology transfer
- Environmental Technologies
- Urban Renaissance
- Sustainable construction

The following have the highest level of relevance under FP7

- Climate Change
- Environmental Technologies
- Environmentally friendly means of travel
- Flood Risk Management
- Resource Management
- Waste management
- Water Management

The following have the highest level of relevance under EIP

- Cluster development
- Culture of Entrepreneurship
- Incubation
- Technology transfer
- Trading

The following have the highest level of relevance under LIFE+

- Climate Change
- Flood Risk Management
- Resource Management
- Waste management
- Water Management

The following have the highest level of relevance under PROGRESS

- Demographic change & ageing population
- Integrating marginalised and excluded groups

### Views of the project-partners: operational issues

In our questionnaire we asked a deliberately open question: *"If you were to be involved in GROW2, what ONE THING would you recommend to be done differently? (this can be about GROW or about Interreg)"*. The responses (for details see Annex 2) were overwhelmingly about administrative matters. In summary:

**Communication:** [4 comments] Develop a chatroom or similar so that partners can exchange experiences between each other; ensure a comprehensive understanding of the programme's aims

**Dissemination:** [2 comments] Target the private sector and the Regional Authorities

**Interreg:** [3 comments] Extend the range of activities; GROW as a model of good project management; Include non-EU partners

**Management:** [11 comments] Simplify the approach to audit and administration (this mentioned by 5 respondents); Targets should emphasise quality rather than quantity; Stronger emphasis on delivery; Meet partners before applying; More formal clarity of partners' responsibilities

**Member states:** [2 comments] address IT timelines, PL employment regulations

**Money:** [10 comments] Audit requirements should better match the scale of spending; address the problem of cash-flow for small organisations; reduce the demands for external auditing (disproportionate for small organisations); speed up payments; reduce the cost of internal conferences

**Time:** [6 comments] more time to resolve/avoid contract issues; for implementation; for reporting

### Operational issues

From conclusions drawn elsewhere in our evaluation, we would highlight the following:

- GROW's current funding finishes on 31 December 2007, and the operational activities well before then. This presents real problems of continuity for all projects, especially those where staff have been employed on fixed-term contracts. This has two consequences:
  - For GROW 2 there will be a loss of momentum; the termination of fixed-term contracts will result in the loss of capacity, skills, experience and possibly goodwill within the organisations involved in GROW.
  - For the 'at risk' projects there will be the loss of all activity at a moment when their work under GROW is beckoning further action
- It appears that many GROW projects are expecting that their lives will be extended via GROW2. This is not guaranteed.
- A much longer timeline is required in order for projects to develop and deliver their impacts properly. This includes a longer period of time for project development and partner recruitment. GROW2 should encourage its 'sub-projects' to run for at least 2 years if not longer.
- Small organisations, both private and NGOs, require a special financial regime to help to avoid cash-flow problems. This is not merely a 'non-negative' issue; it is also positive in that there is some evidence that the Interreg IIIC format has not allowed the recruitment of truly innovative organisations. Suggestions include providing funding upfront or involving small organisations under the umbrella of larger ones, which could 'host' the upfront costs. SEEDA have done as much as they can under Interreg IIIC, and we recommend that the new Interreg IVC Secretariat is alerted to this issue so that as much attention as possible can be given to this action - although we recognise that the die is mainly cast, as financial regulations etc are already in place.
- "SEEDA have done a great job; organised well, it would be a great loss of experience if they weren't in the lead for the next programme"
- To support the "learning" partners GROW2 should include a developmental aspect, to enable the relevant organisations to develop their capacities to deliver.
- The activity and budget of GROW is substantially concentrated in the SE England region: this should be reduced in GROW2; in Chapter 2 we suggest as a general rule the range should be no more than 50%, ie the budget, project-partners and project leaders of the least-represented region should be at least 50% of the most represented region (this could be pro-rata according to population).

**Table 7.1: Questionnaire Answers to Q48 "What project ideas do you have in mind?"**

<p><b>A.1.1.1. Building for the future</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ continuation of current project to improve sustainable building in colleges. Or to influence curriculum development</li> <li>▪ The current project has a natural follow on which is documented in the SGM-6 meeting notes.</li> </ul>
<p><b>A.1.1.2. SusPurPol</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ developing the ideas of sustainable construction more through best practice and education (eg. energy resources management, sustainable design) than through policies approach</li> <li>▪ Follow with the cooperation with these and include new partners to continue working for a sustainable construction in Europe. - Entrepreneurship - business cooperation - Other environmental projects</li> <li>▪ Use Spain's construction waste infrastructure methodology in UK to develop new business opportunities for SMEs.</li> <li>▪ Create training and support network for local authority planners and procurement officers and SME developers so they can implement the sustainable development policies as well as the Code for Sustainable Homes.</li> <li>▪ Develop ideas from GROW1 to commercial stage.</li> <li>▪ Link procurement with development for truly sustainable outcomes.</li> </ul>
<p><b>A.1.1.3. Pilot Programme for Sustainable Construction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To continue in the development of best practices on sustainable construction and renewable energies.</li> <li>▪ encourage more sustainable construction and waste management in construction within the business sector with more of a direct policy impact</li> </ul>
<p><b>A.1.7.1. Florispre</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Considering issues of awareness of flood risk and what these will mean to people living and working in these areas</li> <li>▪ analysis of the natural and caused by the human activities environmental risks and elaboration of addresses for the future planning of the suburbs.</li> <li>▪ Sustainable energy and transport.</li> </ul>
<p><b>B.2.1.1. GROWENTERPRISE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Technology transfer. Clustering SMEs from different regions. Promotion of self-employment.</li> <li>▪ Entrepreneurship development, innovation promotion, full support program for start-ups in key business areas like marketing etc., best practice exchange support.</li> <li>▪ Continuation of GROW Enterprise and developing and building upon the results and contacts made in GROW 1</li> <li>▪ Developing a European Funding Escalator</li> <li>▪ Completion of the launch of a seed corn fund for the UK.</li> <li>▪ Developing a European Knowledge Transfer system. These are only thoughts at present and can be developed further to include inputs from other partners in the UK and Europe.</li> </ul>
<p><b>B.2.4.2. BBAS - Bridging Business And Science</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ development of an interregional multidisciplinary graduation project where students and researchers can bring their ideas, help them get business knowledge and create high-tech start-ups</li> <li>▪ Stimulating Technology Entrepreneurship Research into best practices of Education Technology Entrepreneurship</li> <li>▪ It would be good to be able to continue in a somewhat different format the Bridging Business and Science idea using the experience learned from the first GROW-BBaS. In the next stage, I would prefer to concentrate on quality and results of networks, rather than the quantity of persons involved, with more time for regional preparatory work, starting with surveys of synergies between the regions in very specific scientific fields and possibilities of co-funding of such collaborative R&amp;D projects.</li> </ul>

#### **B.2.5.1. Growing Trade and Innovation**

- knowledge workers across Europe to exchange knowledge and knowledge workers between SME and Universities.
- Continuation of business cooperation with an innovative angle

#### **C.3.4.2. Social on Business**

- A project to address the problems of engagement with disadvantaged groups and design of methods with will solve the problems that exist.
- The development of entrepreneurial figures and networks
- - development of new initiatives for inclusive society, - familiarising people with various models of social and professional activation, - bridging business with social activation, - building clusters, - new functionalities for the labour market

#### **D.1.2.3. RELECOM**

- A follow up of the Relemcom project, perhaps more focussed on industrial sites A follow up of the Ramea project but then more focussed on the relation between the economic performance of a region and the social performance ( A SESAME)
- sustainable refurbishment of housing or commercial property best practice on use of sustainable materials

#### **D.1.5.2. RAMEA**

- Further development and application of tools to understand issues of sustainable production and consumption on the regions.
- Promoting the sustainable development, environmental accounting, cost internalisation
- Extend the RAMEA with social data to generate something like social accounting matrix incl. environmental accounts. Given this information it would be possible to judge about the efficiency of alternative policy measures.
- RAMEA is a pilot project. The tool can be further developed in order to take into consideration more environmental themes (waste, water, energy...) and to be applied more effectively to local/regional policies.

#### **D.2.2.3. EEA - Enterprising Exchange Academy**

- business development, supporting local development and civic society
- Anything that helps to support young people in developing their enterprise skills and so helps in the creation of more local small businesses.
- the further development of youth enterprise wish possible linkage to retired/semi-retired people who could "buddy" up with young people to impart their knowledge and experience of the world of business.
- Look at the further development of youth enterprise training to provide young people with the skills to effectively access the various sources of funding available to them to set up and expand businesses from the ideas that they have.
- The development of and support of immigrant populations in assisting them to develop their enterprise skills and ideas to contribute to their local economy.

#### **D.2.3.1. GrowHealth**

- - soft landings for companies wanting to test markets in partner countries
- more strategic analysis of clusters and supply chains between regions
- more opportunities for companies to be supported in attending partnering events in partner regions
- more 'international match-making' between companies and universities between regions

#### **D.3.1.2. FEW!**

- Develop the project in the direction of more networking of female entrepreneurship on international level
- support and facilitate a Noord-Brabant network of business women of diverse ethnic backgrounds
- develop innovative combinations like connecting ethnic care entrepreneurs with the women in agricultural businesses
- Produce a long-term documentary on ethnic entrepreneurial women ( what do they make of it?)
- Direct consciousness raising courses to intermediary employees of banks and Chambers of

Commerce.

- Research on new kinds of business growth: like professional networks
- Focus on women or young people would be of interest. Projects focusing on economically inactive people. Based on some of the findings from this project, looking at ways of helping people intensively to prepare a business plan to start or grow their business. This seems to encourage a train of behaviour that leads to fundamental changes in the way in which people address their business, potentially leading to better focus and leadership thereafter.
- Transnational Mentoring Project to encourage trade expansion between the GROW regions and beyond
- Women only Transnational Entrepreneurial Peer Mentoring Project to encourage female owned businesses to expand transnationally and to share experiences in a structured format
- Transnational Female funding project for female only growth businesses

#### **D.3.1.3. Learning Reps**

- Comparative analysis of the participation of the workers and their representatives in the environmental management of their companies.
- Ways to promote the role of the delegate for environmental issues.
- Occupational risk prevention for workers of companies which use waste processing as a source of energy (cement works, incinerators and blast furnace)
- Comparative analysis of voluntary work aimed at social inclusion in different regions of the EU. Detection and dissemination of good practices.

#### **D.3.2.3. Championing Neighbourhoods**

- We would like to develop under Grow2 the pilot project we will design in this project which is a kind of assistance to the people of the community encouraging the citizen participation through the associations of the area, offering guidance, training...
- Development of social skills training leading to improved opportunities of employment.
- Development of a wider awareness of Green Growth issues and resource management (recycling) in local social projects.

#### **D.3.4.1. EcoSocial**

- We are interested in joining in projects concerning social inclusion. We are developing some projects linked to intercultural dialogue, exchange of good practises concerning the way to approach of second generation theme, permanent learning addressed to social inclusion.

**Table 7.2: GROW2: potential relevance of various European funding opportunities**

Sub-theme	Additionality REGIONAL <sup>2</sup>	Additionality EUROPEAN	Interreg IVC priorities <sup>3</sup>	FP7 <sup>4</sup>	EIP	IEE	LIFE+	PROG RESS
Resource Management	High	High	5	3	1	1	3	1
Environmental Management Systems	High	High	5	2	1	1	2	1
Technology transfer	Low	High	5	1	3	1	1	1
Environmental Technologies	Low	Low	5	3	2	2	2	1
Sustainable construction	Medium	High	4	1	1	1	2	1
Urban Renaissance	Low	High	4	1	1	1	1	1
Brownfield regeneration	Low	Low	4	1	1	1	2	1
Environmentally friendly means of travel	Medium	Low	4	3	1	3	2	1
Incubation	Medium	Medium	4	1	3	1	1	1
Culture of Entrepreneurship	Medium	Medium	4	1	3	1	1	1
Cluster development	Low	Medium	4	1	3	1	1	1
Trading	Medium	High	3	1	3	1	1	1
Climate Change	High	Low	3	3	1	1	3	1
Flood Risk Management	Low	Low	3	3	1	1	3	1
Water Management	Medium	Low	3	3	1	1	3	1
Waste management	Medium	Medium	3	3	1	1	3	1
Human Resource Management	Low	High	2	1	1	1	1	1
Integrating marginalised and excluded groups	Medium	High	2	1	1	1	1	3
Education and training to young people	Low	Low	2	1	1	1	1	2

<sup>2</sup> Reflects the extent to which other programmes already address this action: 'HIGH' indicates Interreg IVC could make a material difference

<sup>3</sup> 5: very likely (implicitly integrates Lisbon and Göteborg)

4: yes, but more likely if well integrated

3: yes, but only if well integrated

2: possible if well integrated

1: very unlikely

<sup>4</sup> 3: high

2: possible

1: low/nil



Sub-theme	Additionality REGIONAL <sup>2</sup>	Additionality EUROPEAN	Interreg IVC priorities <sup>3</sup>	FP7 <sup>4</sup>	EIP	IEE	LIFE+	PROG RESS
Sustainable Public Procurement	Low	Medium	2	1	1	1	1	1
High Quality Workforce	Low	Medium	2	1	1	1	1	2
Labour market functionality	Medium	Medium	2	1	1	1	1	1
Public/Private partnerships	Low	High	1	1	1	1	1	1
Demographic change & ageing population	High	Low	1	2	1	1	1	3
Social Enterprises	High	Medium	1	1	1	1	1	2

## 8 RECOMMENDATIONS

### Chapter 2: Projects & Participants

*Recommendation 1:* We suggest that for GROW2 three partners should be set as an absolute minimum size. In addition and to increase interregional cooperation we suggest that for GROW2 three regions should be set as an absolute minimum.

*Recommendation 2:* We suggest that for GROW2 a balanced regional profile is sought; as a general rule the range should be no more than 50%, ie the budget, project-partners and project leaders of the least-represented region should be at least 50% of the most represented region (this could be pro-rata according to population).

### Chapter 3: Development and Evaluation of the Project

#### Project Generation:

*Recommendation 3:* Given the strategic aim of the programme and its strong link with national development policies, we suggest that the Steering Committee exercises a stronger top-down steering of the proposals, in order to reduce/focus the selection on the quality of solutions proposed for tackling shared problems/issues.

*Recommendation 4:* Some project-partners were recruited via their 'European liaison' staff, with project delivery staff brought in at a late stage. This should be discouraged; the actual implementation team should be involved right at the beginning during the design phase of the project.

#### Project development:

*Recommendation 5:* If the GROW partnership is confident that it will receive a high number of proposals for each call and theme, GROW2 could adopt a 2-step procedure in order to focus the assessment on high-quality proposals: STEP 1 selection by the Steering Committee on the basis project outlines, in line with the call criteria; STEP 2 Secretariat appraises the short list of fully developed project applications. We recognise that this might create a higher central cost, but it will be less onerous for potential applicants.

*Recommendation 6:* Study visits should be an essential element in all projects because they allow a direct understanding of policy issues in other contexts. Future applicants serious about co-operation should consider investing forward funding for this initial study visit at the project preparation stage.

#### Project Selection

*Recommendation 7:* Approval conditions (changes in partnership and/or in the budget) were a source of concern to several partners. We appreciate that this is often necessary in order to achieve an overall balance to the programme as a whole. For GROW this was necessarily a concentrated activity given the timescale. With more time for the application process (and, as we suggest, a two stage process if resources are available) this issue may be easier to handle in GROW2; we would argue that it is often better to reject a bid if the weakness is not solved before a full application is submitted. Amendments made after the basic design is agreed are, in our view, never entirely satisfactory.

### Chapter 4: Management of the Programme

#### Project start up and management:

*Recommendation 8:* Partnership Agreement (among lead partner and project-partners) has to be approved by the GROW Secretariat and Regional Correspondents before signing the Subsidy Contract, in order to check if all the details are fine-tuned for a smooth implementation;

#### Project implementation monitoring:

*Recommendation 9:* the on-line monitoring system is an excellent tool and widely accepted as a good way to manage GROW, but needs a more user-friendly interface to make it more accessible. It could then be used more extensively by a wider range of project-partners. This should be supported by a training programme that overcomes the twin difficulties of language and IT-competence.

*Recommendation 10:* Make binding a Face to Face meeting of lead partner with the GROW Secretariat (or relevant – depending on lead partner nationality – Regional Correspondent) before/after the submission of each report, to check the concrete advancement of the project if resources permit

*Recommendation 11:* detailed instructions are needed for the “Traffic Light System”.

#### Financial aspects:

*Recommendation 12:* Where possible, each project-partner should appoint a financial manager, separate from the project manager, in order to assure tough control on budgeting and cashflow: we recognise that this may be unrealistic for small organisations, but the issue often applies even more to them.

*Recommendation 13:* Both the Interreg IIIC and GROW management systems should allow more flexibility on budget amendments, however we recognise that this must be limited in order to ensure proper control and accountability.

*Recommendation 14:* Cashflow at start-up can be a real deterrent to small organisations, even a risk to their existence. Ideally the provisions of Interreg IVC should allow for this. If not, then GROW2 should provide a proactive mechanism that gives priority to particularly exposed project-partners: for example, partner-organisations with an annual turnover of (say) <€150,000 budget whose GROW2 budget is >25% of turnover should automatically qualify for front-funding where possible.

*Recommendation 15:* The Interreg IIIC audit requirements are very demanding on project-partners with small budgets. Interreg IVC or GROW2 should find a creative way to overcome this. For example, a regional partner could take out an ‘umbrella’ contract such that a single auditor then works on the accounts of a number of organisations, at reduced cost.

#### GROW branding:

*Recommendation 16:* The programme strategy could even better coordinate itself with actual output delivery and dissemination actions of the projects; GROW should promote itself even more at some major European events.

### Chapter 5: Partnership Working and Level of Innovation

#### Project development

*Recommendation 17:* Pre-project meetings must be held in order to save time and difficulties later, by defining tasks, roles, responsibilities; and specifying objectives and outcomes. Serious potential applicants for future funding should provision for this.

#### Project management competencies

*Recommendation 18:* Ensure, as much as possible, that project management competencies will remain in place for the duration of the project, and in a consistent way, for example by ensuring that an induction pack is available, and that induction-training is regularly available. In GROW, some projects suffered due to a delayed start, itself caused by changes in the partnership make-up or internal re-structuring.

#### Local partnerships

*Recommendation 19:* Pre-agreements of local partnership once a project is submitted. In some cases the absence of this pre-agreement has caused important delays because it

takes a lot of time to make contacts, sign agreements especially if it has to be with a public administration.

## Chapter 6: Impact and Outcomes of the Projects

### Local strategic fit: influencing policy

*Recommendation 20:* Involving public administrations and local/regional government could help to ensure that policy influence is pursued and delivered. In this respect, securing an influential policy partner may be beneficial. However, in some case, a possible drawback is the lack of dynamism and adaptation to change of such institutions. They could instead be brought in as observers.

### Policy impact

*Recommendation 21:* Ensure that programme participants have a clear and common understanding of the terms of reference, particularly in the field of policy.

*Recommendation 22:* the programme aims of influencing policy have to be tightly defined: in GROW, projects appraisals included an evaluation of how the project fitted in the strategic framework. Although it may not be achievable all the time, the criterion of capability to influence policy may be more relevant: this would include strategic fit, as well as the project's capacity for introducing change, either because of the level of innovation embedded in the project for some partner regions, or because of public administrations being involved (as active or observing partners)

*Recommendation 23:* It seems difficult to expect effective policy impact in statutory strategic terms. But the role of the GROW and GROW2 projects could be precisely: to create a new culture of awareness in different themes, to suggest tools for policy makers, to support existing policy objectives and the improvement of good practices, to make recommendations to improve local/regional/national strategies.

### Achieving outcomes:

*Recommendation 24:* It is crucial that the application asks for and subsequently project-contract includes achievable objectives rather than a long list of outcomes and results.

*Recommendation 25:* Allowing time and funding for project development will help to ensure maximisation of outcomes, good partnership working, and policy influence. Study visits should be an essential element in all projects because they allow a direct understanding of policy issues in other contexts.

## Chapter 7: THE FUTURE

### Future Funding

*Recommendation 26:* Interreg IVC offers a serious opportunity for a 'GROW2', but will require the GROW concept to be reworked so as to demonstrate added-value over and above that shown under the Interreg IIIC funding.

*Recommendation 27:* Interreg IVC priorities will mean that inclusivity is an implicit priority and certainly lower than green- and business- growth. We suggest that once the Interreg IVC Operational Programme is approved, close liaison with the Secretariat will define the precise opportunities for inclusive-growth activity in a GROW2 funded under Interreg IVC: as many of the GROW "inclusive-growth" projects say they have a strong "business growth" component there may well be a case to be made.

*Recommendation 28:* The 3P model is a helpful construct. We understand from TELOS that the model can be used in a proactive manner (to set targets), and we suggest that for GROW2 it could be used to set both selection and evaluation criteria.

*Recommendation 29:* The Interreg IVC OP makes it clear that the Commission will look favourably on actions that will assist regions "under rapid development"; this implies that

the GROW partnership might be well served by recruiting the involvement of another new Member State region.

*Recommendation 30:* There is some evidence that some GROW partners assume that their projects can continue under GROW2. This needs to be verified and addressed. The GROW partners should consider planning an exit strategy for the 'inclusive growth' projects that are unlikely to find favour under Interreg IVC. We have in mind some advice about continuation-funding opportunities. Please note that this suggestion is not meant to suggest that the project-partners should not be taking their own steps, rather that the GROW partners have a different perspective and experience to contribute

*Recommendation 31:* The GROW Secretariat could also consider a different funding route for GROW2. The Regional Operational Programmes of the 5 GROW regions under the Structural and Cohesion Funds may provide such an opportunity (interregional working should be a theme in all OPs); or more specifically for opportunities under the ESF for the 'inclusive growth' projects. Other options include current Calls under the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (projects typically c€2m) and FP7.

#### Relevant Future Sub-themes

*Recommendation 32:* We have undertaken a 'relevance test' of the current and proposed GROW sub-themes. We very tentatively conclude that the following have the highest level of relevance:

- Resource Management
- Environmental Management Systems
- Technology transfer
- Environmental Technologies
- Urban Renaissance
- Sustainable construction

#### Operational Improvements

*Recommendation 33:* In addition we have been made aware of a range of operational improvements that could improve the life of project-partners. These concern a number of matters over which the GROW Secretariat itself has little control, but some may be worth raising with the new Interreg IVC Secretariat in the next few months. These include: cash-flow protection for small organisations; audit requirements for small-budget operations.