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Deliverable 7.2.

Task 7.2: Exploitation Plan

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Executive Summary (INK)

This deliverable has been written in a collaborative way by all partners, similarly to Deliverable 6.1 "Best practices report an Dissemination actions" and 7.1 "Swot analysis and user analysis". INK began the process by opening a page in the BONy wiki space, after that all partners included their thoughts and opinions in the various chapters.

This document constitutes the first stage of the business plan. BONy consortium has analysed the market with a comprehensive study of the competitors in different sectors: professional & social networks, e-learning courses providers and project cycle management courses providers. On the other hand, BONy partners have identified the potential clients and the benefits of using our platform. Finally, each partner has explained how they are going to exploit the results of the project. In September 2009, BONy consortium is to deliver the Business plan for the BONy results commercial exploitation.

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1. Introduction

This deliverable has been produced collaboratively by all partners as it was done for Deliverable 6.1 "Best practices report an Dissemination actions" and 7.1 "Swot analysis and user analysis". INK began the process by opening a page in the BONy wiki space, after that all partners included their thoughts and opinions in the different chapters.

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EU educational and culture programmes and initiatives currently incorporate more and more five strategic levels for dissemination and exploitation:

- clear rationale for and objectives of dissemination and exploitation;
- a strategy to identify which results to disseminate and to which audiences – and designing programmes and initiatives accordingly;
- determining organisational approaches of the different stakeholders and allocation responsibilities and resources;
- implementing the strategy by identifying and gathering results and undertaking dissemination and exploitation activities;
- monitoring and evaluating the results of the activity.

2. Market analysis

2.1 Competitor analysis

As related activity of the broader process of benchmarking, the Competitors Analysis can help seeing, through the monitoring of similar businesses, in which way the specific market is moving, how it is performing in the light of demand trends and what the areas to expand and/or modify are. Benchmarking indeed opens organizations to new methods, ideas and tools to improve their effectiveness, and to avoid resistance to change by demonstrating other methods of doing business and/or solving problems, and that they work, because they are being used by others. More specifically, we shall refer to *Strategic benchmarking* – which involves observing how others compete, and among methodology-focused activities, we shall:

1. identify other industries that have similar processes and identify organizations leaders in these areas;
2. survey companies for measures, practices and products;
3. implement new and improved business practices.

Competitor analysis consists therefore in an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of current and potential competitors. This analysis provides both an offensive and defensive strategic context through which to identify opportunities and threats. Competitor profiling combines all the relevant sources of competitor analysis into one framework in the support of efficient and effective strategy formulation, implementation, monitoring and adjustment.

In the light of a proficient Competitors Analysis, it is interesting to look firstly at the **Trend in Offer** of digital contents, in order to detect and explore the environment where BONy intends to collocate its business operations.

a. Professional Social Networks

Social networking, popularized by teens on websites such as Facebook Inc., is now blooming in the business world thanks to new social networks enabling professionals and executives in industries such as advertising and finance to rub virtual elbows with colleagues. Millions of professionals already turn to broad-based networking sites like LinkedIn to swap job details and contact information, often for recruiting purposes - people with more than twenty connections in LinkedIn, in fact, are thirty-four times more likely to be approached with a job opportunity[1]. Business executives also have turned to online forums, email lists and message boards to sound off on information related to their industries, as they see networking as the new business/relations-making environment: not accidentally, all 500 corporations of the *Fortune 500*[2] are represented in LinkedIn, with 499 of them represented by director-level and above employees[3].

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[1] http://blog.guykawasaki.com/2007/01/ten_ways_to_use.html

[2] Annual list compiled and published by *Fortune* magazine ranking the top 500 American public corporations as measured by their gross revenue - http://www.uspages.com/fortune500.htm

[3] http://blog.guykawasaki.com/2007/01/ten_ways_to_use.html

Now, online services are trying to promote a more personal type of business networking. Unlike relatively simple message boards that are open to all, these new sites - including Xing.com and ecademy.com for professionals and INmobile.org for the wireless industry, for example - have features such as profile pages showing professional credentials; personal blogs functioning like a kind of online diary; links to "friends" online; electronic invitations to real or online events and instant-messaging.

Moreover, social networking turns into business when investors and networks managers 'exploit' users' profiles and their provision of info/interests/actions to launch targeted advertising[4]. Social networking indeed represents the future of online activity, and advertisers are attracted to these properties because they offer an opportunity to aim ads to particular users interested in their products or services.

A significant event related to this 'new' market is the 'Facebook-Microsoft-Google' affair. Microsoft has in fact recently won a high-profile technology industry battle with Google and Yahoo to invest in the social networking upstart Facebook, by investing $240 million for a 1.6 percent stake in Facebook. The investment values the three-year-old Facebook, which will bring in about $150 million in revenue this year, at $15 billion. The deal ends two months of competition among three major Internet players for the right to invest in and forge close ties with Facebook.

The astronomical valuation for Facebook is evidence that Microsoft executives believed they could not afford to lose out on the deal: Google appears to be building a dominant position in the race to serve advertisements online, and fearing it might lose control over the next generation of computer users, Microsoft has been trying to match and in some cases block Google's plans, even if that effort is costly[5]. Therefore, the key fact here isn't even the $15 billion dollar valuation that Facebook now commands. That is ultimately a measure of Microsoft's fear.

As part of the deal, Microsoft will start selling ads for Facebook worldwide. By investing $240 million, Microsoft is not really going to have any control over Facebook or even any better chance than anyone else to acquire it if its backers decide to sell. It validates Facebook's astounding sense of its own worth but Microsoft isn't risking as much if that value should drop. But the benefit to Microsoft, in addition to more ad inventory to sell, is that Facebook may have a better chance to cause trouble for Google[6].

b. E-learning courses providers

The e-learning service market includes private or public bodies (companies and universities) which develop and offer their own e-educational services and products. These products and services are often of a "standardized" kind, since they must meet the training needs of a variety of users. Of course, this has business logic: producers cannot afford to produce "tailored" contents, so they necessarily invest on standardized products which appeal to a larger audience. However, the business environment requires several and up-to-date professional and linguistic expertises, often with very specific skills.

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[4] http://it.youtube.com/watch?v=ef98Q623pn8&feature=related
[5] http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/25/technology/24cnd-facebook.html?ex=1350964800&en=c27e6c86844c7723&ei=5088&partner=rssnyt&emc=rss&pagewanted=all
[6] http://bits.blogs.nytimes.com/2007/10/24/microsoft-wins-one-in-the-war-against-google/

Being a competitive training/up-skilling institution (SME included) in the e-learning global market entails the capacity to offer new and up-to-date e-courses able to satisfy the growing lifelong learning demand and to face the rapid changes of the vocational training market. The private and not-collaborative e-learning courses production involves high costs in terms of special expert recruitment for new courses production or updating, multilingual courses development or translation, marketing strategy development and new product promotion.

At the same time, companies are increasingly producing content on their own. In fact, another important shift of the current situation is represented by the voting of 65% of the 50 e-learning experts interviewed at LEARNTEC 2007, that believe in the scenario that the applying company produces most of their needed content on their own. But also content sharing is a significant trend to share and save training costs.

Ellen Wagner from Adobe Systems lists in her whitepaper "Keeping the promise of e-learning"[7] reasons why e-learning is important for employees and companies competitiveness but provides also practical guidance to improve digital learning processes; that catch the interest of the learner and create motivation for learning. She mentions among others games and game based trainings as an important new trend in the learning industry. It is considered to be one of the most successful strategies to support learning in the 'internet generation' (aged between 16 and 25).

c. *Project Cycle Management courses providers*

A drive for accountability in public administration throughout development agencies has been manifested in the adoption of tools of strategic planning and *ex post* evaluation. The result has been the adoption of a planning, implementation and evaluation tool known as the Logical Framework (LF).

Previous training assistance in Project Cycle Management (PCM) provided assistance primarily sought to transfer basic information on LF completion in order to achieve the pragmatic objective of receiving documents that would get past the *ex-ante* check of the European Commission and thus become eligible for funding.

Good governance, in a western democratic interpretation, requires accountability, manifested throughout western development agencies in the adoption of managerialist tools of strategic planning and *ex post* evaluation. In development terms, in fact, it is no longer sufficient for donors or their agents to have good intentions and to be sincere in pursuit of those intentions: it is necessary to demonstrate to funding agencies that the use of such funds has been carefully thought through to achieve maximum impact[8].

The provision of PCM courses becomes therefore imperative in the administrative and business domains, with the initial strategy to provide training and consultation in the preparation of project applications, addressing deficiencies in the implementation of such tasks. It is evident that the Logical Framework is an irreplaceable tool for the proper management of the whole Project Cycle, but as people need to be empowered in its use through the promulgation of a participatory process, more training is sought. In logical framework terms, the goal is to increase the impact of

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[7] http://www.adobe.com/government/pdfs/promise_elearning_wp.pdf
[8] http://www.wlv.ac.uk/PDF/cidt-article6.pdf

projects through the use of project cycle management (PCM) techniques as indicated by improvements in both the relevance and general quality of project design among community partners. The purpose of such training is to embed the use of PCM as widely as possible by providing tools to analyse and understand the context in which partners work and to forge community partnerships more effectively. In a few words, PCM courses foresee, as outputs, a mechanism fostering the use of PCM as a means of designing, implementing and evaluating projects, also building the capacity to pass this expertise from entity to entity, in the light of stronger and more effective cooperation.

2.1.1   Strategic Competitors Examples

The strategic rationale of competitor profiling is powerfully simple: superior knowledge of rivals offers a legitimate source of competitive advantage. Business competitors are:
- Organizations currently offering the same product or service;
- organizations currently offering similar products or services;
- organizations which could offer the same or similar products or services in the future;
- organizations which could remove the need for a product or service.

The raw material of competitive advantage consists of offering superior customer value in the firm's chosen market, where the definitive characteristic of customer value is given exactly by the adjective, *superior*.

Customer value is in fact defined relative to rival offerings making competitor knowledge an intrinsic component of corporate strategy, and profiling facilitates this strategic objective in three important ways.

First, profiling can reveal strategic weaknesses in rivals to exploit. Second, the proactive stance of competitor profiling will allow the firm to anticipate the strategic response of their rivals to the firm's planned strategies, the strategies of other competing firms, and changes in the environment. Third, this proactive knowledge will give the firms strategic agility. Offensive strategy can be implemented more quickly in order to exploit opportunities and capitalize on strengths. Similarly, defensive strategy can be employed more deftly in order to counter the threat of rival firms from exploiting the firm's own weaknesses.

There are four stages in monitoring competitors - *the four "C"s*:
- collecting the information (with a first stage - deciding what to collect);
- converting information into intelligence *(with three steps: CIA -Collate and catalogue it, Integrate it with other pieces of information and Analyse and interpret it)*;
- communicating the intelligence;
- countering any adverse competitor actions - i.e. using the intelligence.

Here follows an analysis of the major providers of the services outlined above.

a. *Professional Social Networks:* **LinkedIn** *and* **Xing**

LinkedIn is an online network of more than 20 million experienced professionals from around the world, representing 150 industries. Built upon trusted connections and relationships, LinkedIn has established the world's largest and most powerful professional network, including executives from all five hundred of the Fortune 500 companies, as well as a wide range of household names in

technology, financial services, media, consumer packaged goods, entertainment, and numerous other industries. LinkedIn is backed by world-class investors including Sequoia Capital, Greylock, the European Founders Fund, and Bessemer Venture Partners[9]. Between 2007 and 2008 only, LinkedIn increased its unique audience a whopping 271%, reaching 7.4 million in Feb., compared with 2.0 million a year earlier - and challenging the well-established network of *Windows Live Spaces*[10].

LinkedIn is free to join: free personal accounts offer robust features, including the ability to maintain a trusted professional network, build professional profiles and request and provide recommendations. Besides the free basic account, LinkedIn also offers a variety of premium accounts (from 60 to 2000$ a year) which give more ways to reach or be reached by the right people on LinkedIn - no matter if users belong to the same network or not – including better communication, more powerful search tools, and enhanced access to decision makers and other resources on LinkedIn.

LinkedIn has recently announced a new Corporate Solutions product, LinkedIn Recruiter: this offers premium features and services designed to work intuitively to fit individual corporate staffing departments' needs. LinkedIn Recruiter allows users to group candidates in folders and tag them with comments. By increasing collaboration, LinkedIn Recruiter helps teams know immediately whether someone on the team has reached out to a potential candidate. In addition to the new collaboration features, LinkedIn Recruiter introduces powerful new search capabilities, giving staffing departments unique reach into LinkedIn's network of over 20 million professionals. Now users can search by title, company or keywords to find more contacts that best fit their search criteria. Corporate staffing departments with LinkedIn Recruiter can view up to 1,000 search results instead of the 500 available in other accounts. Along with LinkedIn Recruiter's premium features, users enjoy professional account management, priority service and training. By leveraging the new features in LinkedIn Recruiter, staffing professionals can see more leads, reduce their third party spend, increase their talent pipeline, save time and increase their visibility. Unlike other recruiting tools that only enable users to reach active inbound candidates, LinkedIn Recruiter also gives users the unique advantage of being able to find and communicate with passive candidates[11].

Far more than a directory of business contacts, **XING** enables its members to discover professional people, opportunities and privileges through its unique discovery capability and advanced contact management tools. Besides Headquarters in Hamburg, XING AG is also represented with offices in Barcelona, Istanbul und Beijing[12].

The Internet-based business network XING has become one of the leading professional online networking platforms. At January 2008, the number of registered members of the company totaled more than 5 million.

Business professionals use XING to find useful contacts, important information, new business opportunities, employees, jobs and ideas. The XING network can be accessed all over the world

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[9] http://www.linkedin.com/static?key=press_releases_032108

[10] http://www.marketingcharts.com/interactive/top-10-us-social-network-and-blog-site-rankings-issued-for-feb-3851/

[11] http://www.linkedin.com/static?key=press_releases_031008

[12] http://corporate.xing.com/?L=1

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via Internet, all smart phones including the iPhone, PDAs and Blackberrys. Due to the multilingual nature of XING's user interface and communication system – which supports 16 languages (English, German, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Dutch, Swedish, Finnish, Chinese, Russian, Hungarian, Polish, Korean, Italian, Japanese and Turkish) – XING AG has successfully and rapidly expanded around the world, with approx. 2.9 million visitors per month (month of March 2008, including the subsidiaries Neurona and cember.net; ComScore, Media Metrix 2.0 Reports[13]).

XING AG runs XING based on a contribution-based, scalable business model, complemented by revenues from commerce and advertising. Users can choose between a free "Basic Membership" and fee-paying "Premium Membership". In September 2006, XING started the new bonus program "PremiumWorld". XING Premium Members have access to special offers and deals from partner companies, such as financial services and travel companies. In May 2007, the XING "Marketplace", on which members can post offers to the XING community, was launched with job listings[14]. 400,000 XING members (February, 2008) already use the fee-paying Premium Membership with its enhanced service package for €5.95 a month[15].

With the successful IPO of XING as the first Web 2.0 company to go public, XING AG has had a long-term impact on the social networking trend amongst professionals. By focusing on the target group "business people worldwide", the company is able to offer tailored features, thereby making networking and contact management simpler. Based on the theory that "No two people are more than six degrees apart", XING enables members to grow their trusted network by making their contacts' contacts visible to them. Moreover, the integration of Google Maps into the XING platform gives members a new perspective on their personal network, visualizing geographic locations of their direct business contacts on a map or satellite display. The new service gives members an additional advantage in their daily professional lives: XING members can see which countries and cities are represented in their network and which are not. The map view is also an easy way to find regional experts or arrange business meetings when travelling[16].

XING has also teamed up with Yahoo! for the European launch of Yahoo! Go 3.0. Along with other popular websites including eBay, MySpace, Dopplr and Eurosport, XING will be accessible via the mobile application Yahoo! Go 3.0 and via Yahoo!'s mobile home page (http://beta.m.yahoo.com) by means of a widget[17].

Nevertheless, what many expert users appear to show is that, regardless of what these huge social networks can offer, the future path of professional networking must pursue the "use of smaller, more focused, niche social networks catering to a particular interest, hobby or vocation. These smaller sites will allow like-minded individuals and groups to connect, exchange ideas and receive genuine and useful support"[18], rather than simply connecting people everywhere and with great numbers. Moreover, these kinds of sites will result in being even more attractive to advertisers as they can provide targeted, focused demographics to spend their online advertising budgets on.

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[13] http://corporate.xing.com/english/investor-relations/basic-information/facts-figures/

[14] http://corporate.xing.com/english/investor-relations/basic-information/q-as/#c455

[15] http://corporate.xing.com/english/investor-relations/basic-information/

[16] http://corporate.xing.com/no_cache/english/press/welcome/news-detail/article/pressemitteilungbrxing-visualisiert-geschaeftskontakte-mit-google-maps/138/6bcaea6563/

[17] http://corporate.xing.com/no_cache/english/press/welcome/news-detail/article/deutsch/138/146e874400/

[18] http://networks.silicon.com/webwatch/0,39024875,39170190,00.htm?PROCESS=show&ID=20095109&AT=39170190

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So it is important to maintain a system which allows people to gather unique and valuable information, contact and communicate and manage their relationships in a very scalable way[19] – making, in other words, the professional more productive. But at the same time it is necessary now to look at the specific needs of niche markets, in order to diversify the services, the expertise and the contents offered and consequently allure members' participation, turning their membership into a 'sense of belonging' to the network.

b. E-learning courses providers: The Open University and Multimedia Campus

The **Open University** has retained its top five ranking of UK universities in the latest national table for teaching quality. The OU's teaching quality – together with its expertise in supported learning methods – continues to help thousands of students develop their skills and further their careers, and also provides leadership for distance learning[20]. The Open University is the UK's only university dedicated to distance learning, with around 150,000 undergraduate and more than 30,000 postgraduate students, and 10,000 of disabled students. About 11,000 people are currently studying for OU Higher Degrees and more than 25,000 OU students live outside the UK.
The Open University's style of teaching is called supported open learning. It promotes educational opportunity and social justice by providing high-quality university education to all who wish to realise their ambitions and fulfil their potential. Through academic research, pedagogic innovation and collaborative partnership it seeks to be a world leader in the design, content and delivery of supported open and distance learning.

Nearly all students are studying part-time. About 70 per cent of undergraduate students are in full-time employment. More than 50,000 students are sponsored by their employers for their studies.
Most OU courses are available throughout Europe. Some of them are available in many other parts of the world[21].

As well as being a member of key organisations, the Open University has a long tradition of working with other organisations and a proven track record in developing and maintaining partnerships. The Open University also offers an awarding body service for higher level National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) in a number of sector-specific occupational areas. The OUAB is committed to working with sector bodies, employers and professional institutions to ensure VQs are implemented as widely as possible and to offering relevant advice and support for potential candidates wanting to undertake a VQ. Open University Validation Services [OUVS] offers a comprehensive institutional approval and programme validation service for providers of higher education worldwide, enabling organisations to gain recognition for its HE learning programmes.

Partners working strategically with the OU include the *Curriculum Partnerships Advisory Service* (CPAS), *learndirect*, the *National Institute of Adults Continuing Education* (NIACE), *unionlearn*, and the *Workers' Educational Association* (WEA)[22].

Multimedia Campus is the first Italian joint venture between a public university and a private entity. Its objective is to develop an offer of postgraduate multimedia courses, starting with

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[19] http://networks.silicon.com/webwatch/0,39024667,39170190,00.htm

[20] http://www3.open.ac.uk/events/1/2004914_42701_nr.doc

[21] http://www.open.ac.uk/about/ou/; http://www.open.ac.uk/about/ou/p2.shtml

[22] http://www.open.ac.uk/about/ou/p4.shtml

Italian-language degrees and courses, and expanding later with English-language courses. The rationale behind this new venture shows how new e-learning providers are rising in competencies and offers.

Founding partners of Multimedia Campus are the *University of Pavi*a and *Opera Multimedia*, whose contribution is determined by their respective competences: the century-old experience, high-specialised lectures and well-known professors of University of Pavia, and the skills in the design and development of multimedia courses of Opera Multimedia.

The objective of this operation is the development of a new offer of multimedia postgraduate courses available without space and time constraints. Registered users can access the contents in any moment of the day, anywhere there is an Internet-connected PC. Those who have problems in attending a traditional course because of time (e.g. workers) and space (e.g. residents abroad, disabled people) constraints could easily access an innovative offer of highly specialised multimedia courses[23].

The idea behind Multimedia Campus arises from the growing popularity of e-learning services in the Italian university world. Because of the need for continuous updating and maximum flexibility, the request for online content and courses is increasing. An Italian legislation decree issued in spring 2003 states indeed the equivalence between traditional and online university teaching in order to acquire a university degree. The decree describes precisely all the features defining online courses. The legislator especially focuses on the aspects which represent an advantage compared to traditional classroom lessons: the massive employment of new technologies, also in the faculties in which information technology literacy is not properly updated; complete freedom from presence and time constraints, in order to privilege asynchronous communication; the continuous monitoring of the students' learning level. The so-called e-universities, state and public, are due to deliver a "Paper of services" containing the teaching methods, the syllabuses and the rules of delivered services. Moreover, every online course has to be approved by a ministerial appointed academic committee[24].

This set of rules for the delivery of university courses at a distance and the so called "Distance Universities" is met by the activity of Multimedia Campus, which contains the most relevant aspects of today's university education. The response of the University of Pavia comes from an ancient institution with a well-established fame that wants to combine technological innovation and century-old strong teaching basis[25].

The innovation in technologies and methods is founded on a sound cultural basis, built in centuries of teaching and direct contact with students, while tackling the current requests of the job market, which is more and more dynamic and demanding. For this reason, Multimedia Campus courses are very practical and focused on competencies most required on the job market[26]. In fact, the awareness about the importance of education does not characterise only the employers anymore, but also the employees, even in more traditional educational settings like the Italian one. Since the decline of the myth of a fixed place, workers have been learning to invest on themselves: they

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[23] http://www.multimediacampus.it/eng/corporate/corporateDefault.htm

[24] http://www.multimediacampus.it/eng/news/law.htm

[25] http://www.multimediacampus.it/eng/corporate/contesto.htm

[26] http://www.multimediacampus.it/eng/offerta/offertaDefault.htm

know that they will be competitive on the job market only through constant updating and self-study. In this way, and with their employers satisfied of their work, they will gain competitive advantage, in comparison to other colleagues or competitors, and with employers in the light of rises, benefits and promotions[27].

c. *Project Cycle Management courses providers:*

PCM has proved to be a consistent planning methodology capable of supporting a variety of stakeholders in designing and delivering multi-actor and integrated interventions in a sound way. Furthermore, this methodology is observed to be widely applied across different Programmes. EQUAL research findings indeed confirm that: a) "*This planning method can be widely applied among projects with different scope or budgets or with different kinds of partners*" and, b) "*In general, (...) there are few alternative project management systems which offer participative approaches*"[28].

The **European Institute of Public Administration** is the leading centre of European learning and development for the public sector. With over 25 years experience, EIPA is the place where people who deal with European affairs can learn in a multi-cultural environment benefiting from our unique combination of practical know-how and scientific excellence. With its headquarters in Maastricht, antennae in Luxembourg, Barcelona, Milan and Warsaw and a presence in Brussels, EIPA is alert to developments across Europe and responsive to administrators and civil servants' needs and interests, helping to meet the challenges of Europe and the complexities of modern public management.

It has already organised an intensive three-day training course (fee €850), introducing Project Cycle Management, and targeting public officials, staff of international organizations, NGOs, project managers, desk officers and interested parties involved in EC-funded programmes and projects[29]. It intends to explain PCM approach focusing on theoretical and practical analysis of all project phases, focusing on two main parts: all project phases including the relevant tools, and the Logical Framework Approach, as basic tool for project development. The method, based on the EC Project Cycle Management Guidelines, sees a combination of theoretical explanations and practical exercises, with examples of approved proposals and working groups with question and answer sessions.

Pursuing better quality projects and more effective Programme delivery is a strategic objective which has informed the second Round of **EQUAL** in Italy: the Single Programming Document, the applicant's package and the core TA service provision. In keeping with the logic of the new ESF, the Italian Managing Authority, **Equalitalia**[30], has delivered a set of capacity building actions aimed at upgrading the skill base of project and programme managers in EQUAL, and possibly beyond. To this end, a strategic investment was made to promote Project Cycle Management (PCM)[31], an integrated approach successfully tested in a number of EU-funded programmes and international organisations.

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[27] http://www.multimediacampus.it/eng/news/mercato.htm

[28] http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal/news/200608-msf-it_en.cfm

[29] http://www.eipa.eu/en/activities/show/&tid=2751

[30] http://www.equalitalia.it/english

[31] http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal/news/20051125-vilnius_en.cfm

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The Italian MA therefore chose to provide the EQUAL community with an introductory course in English language on this integrated method (http://www.sns-equal.it/) in order to assist DPs in project planning, design and management, but also monitoring and evaluation. The course objectives are two-fold: a) transfer key concepts and tools of Project Cycle Management for project/Programme planning and management purposes; b) promote the adoption of a common approach and "language" within and beyond EQUAL[32].

The Italian MA has been quite active in promoting PCM at European level as well: in January 2005 it joined the EQUAL "Capacity Building Group" (CBG), a working group aimed at promoting the use of robust planning methodologies across the Member States. The CBG's objective is to validate and mainstream the lessons learnt under EQUAL as regards key principles of good governance, such as strategic orientation and coherence, stakeholder engagement, and capacity building. CBG members are establishing a Community of Practice for programme managers to promote mutual learning and knowledge creation on PCM[33]. In essence, the Community of Practice is a network of practitioners that help each other in solving everyday problems, develop and disseminate best practice, and to further develop effective tools and methodologies. A number of different learning tools are already available, such as the afore-mentioned on-line training course on PCM. This platform also includes key documents and tools such as the common Toolkit, Success Stories on sound planning, and the national surveys on the advantages of using the toolkit, etc. The platform – accessible to everyone - will allow users to share collective know-how and to foster mutual learning and support.

Formez brings together the Public Administration Department of the Prime Minister's Office and representatives of regional and local administrations (National Association of Italian Cities, Union of Italian Provinces, National Union of Municipalities and Mountain Communities). The institute's efficiency and effectiveness are monitored by the Public Administration Department. Formez conducts research, training, consulting and technical assistance activities throughout Italy for central, regional and local administrations. It responds with targeted services to needs identified by public administrations and delivers services to the public administrations training system, and designs and tests new services. Therefore it drives innovation in public administrations by introducing, testing and disseminating new approaches and methods and fostering the sharing and emulation of successful experiences[34]. It provides courses in e-learning, among which various formative paths on PCM, although all targeting Public Administration officers and managers.

MDF (Management for Development Foundation) Training & Consultancy is a worldwide operating management training and consultancy bureau registered and located in the Netherlands, Sri Lanka, Belgium, Tanzania and Vietnam. Its mission is to enhance management capacities of professionals and organisations in the development sector. MDF provides courses, workshops and facilitations & consultancy services for individuals and organisations, especially designed to strengthen the managerial and organisational capacity required to perform effectively (to achieve set objectives) and efficiently (at minimum costs)[35]. Training courses and consultancies courses have been clustered in seven main management topics and themes, including PCM courses of various kinds, all targeting organisations involved in the supervision, co-

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[32] http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal/news/200608-msf-it_en.cfm
[33] http://soundplanning.esflive.eu/
[34] http://www.formez.it/docs/brochure_formez_en.pdf
[35] http://www.mdf.nl/index.php/page/15

ordination or monitoring of development projects and programmes, such as project and programme officers, desk officers, task managers, country or regional directors. These may include either government staff, staff working for international agencies or staff of NGOs[36].

MDF delivers its services to a wide variety of clients. They include donor organisations, co-funding agencies, national and regional government organisations, projects, international and national non-government organisations and consulting firms. MDF has carried out assignments in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Central and Eastern Europe and, of course, in the Netherlands and Belgium, and among clients are: the EC, Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, swiss Swiss Development Cooperation, World Bank, UNDP, local NGOs and national Ministries.

The International Labour Organization and the Italian Government established the **International Training Centre** in 1964 in Turin, Italy, as an advanced vocational training institute. It has since matured into a focal point for high-level in-service training. This takes place in Turin, in course participants' home countries or via the Internet. The Centre provides training and related services that develop human resources and institutional capabilities. We thereby contribute to achieving the ILO's goal of decent work for women and men[37].

To reach more and more people, the Centre has designed a series of distance training programmes, some complemented by face-to-face sessions, and other courses for training organizations intending to improve their methodology and their technology in the field of distance learning.

The PCM course, nevertheless, does not belong to the distance learning catalogue, and like many other examples found in this sector, is still taught traditionally, in a 2-week course, under the section of Management of Development, at €2090 plus subsistence costs, and targets national project coordinators, project managers and staff, national development planning officials and NGO officers[38].

These few examples show how the field of PCM training is largely explored, but the means applied are still to undergo further developments: PCM e-learning provision is yet to be affirmed widely, especially at the European level, where vocational institutes still exploit conventional formative schemes such as seminars, courses, workshops, and the few e-learning courses available mostly target PAs.

This suggests a two-fold chance of development: on one hand, strengthened e-learning provision of PCM training, especially regarding the European arena, rather than general best practices on the matter, accompanied with more innovative and varied services (multilinguism, PDA application, social network, user profiling, expertise transfer, etc. *as seen in BONy's objectives*). On the other hand, we can pursue a widened 'targetisation' of users, as the domain of EU projects has acquired extreme importance not only in public and institutional/no profit domains, but also among consultancies, private entities and professionals in general, more and more engaged in the preparation and management of projects. Moreover, the collaborative asset of BONy definitely increases the current expertise provision and comprehension: users learn, but

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[36] http://www.mdf.nl/index.php/page/80/project-cycle-management-course?mod[MDFCourseCalendarModule][item]=23

[37] http://www.itcilo.org/en/about-the-centre

[38] http://www.itcilo.org/calendar/2627/?searchterm=None&language_id=1

they also provide data and competencies, widening the perception and consequent absorption of learning tools impact.

Some PCM courses and e-learning courses providers are already exploring means of collaborative work and teaching such as social network and users' interaction within a set community, so the innovation must really focus on these aspects, yet to be widely affirmed in the vocational training scenario. In fact, only a few entities have already combined the potential of e-learning schemes with the increasing achievements of professional networking.

The collaborative work, alongside helping bring down the physical boundaries and high costs of traditional means of training, must pursue users accessibility and involvement through the multilinguistic element proposed in BONy: it is evident indeed that current formative schemes are only in national languages or in English. This aspect underlines the lacking of a vocational system which is really accessible to all and which can therefore target different users with different social, geographical and also managerial backgrounds, to be shared via community interaction.

At a closer evaluation, promotion of PCM for development work and introduction of new PCM tools and techniques constantly increase; however, a growing literature exists documenting the "failures" of current PCM *in practice*, as there seems to be a paradox when examining the PCM literature. While at the center of its approach is the idea of a "learning cycle," the normative PCM manuals appear remarkably robust against such learning: not enough attention is indeed given to the influence of organizational culture on PCM[39] and very frequently PMC courses are too general and do not meet the specific requirements of single cases. It appears vital for BONy, therefore, to proceed with building new learning frameworks allowing the multilingual provision of content and collaboration among diverse entities, making it possible to diversify the offer of the vocational path.

2.1. Potential client analysis

The potential clients of BONy system are the users of the system described in Deliverable 7.1.
  a) End-users: people who will use the e-learning platform for having their learning experience.
  b) Product providers: organisations which can offer the e-learning platform to end-users.
  c) Decision-markers: territorial or institutional government which could facilitate the use of BONy e-learning platform.

  a) End-users: People interested in International cooperation, European projects, mobility or international stages.
  • People in mobility thanks to Leonardo da Vinci (Vocational education) and Grundtvig (Adult Education) programmes
  • University students interested in European collaboration
  • Researchers University
  • All project managers involved in one of the European cooperation programmes: LLP, 7FP, CIP, Catrene, ITEA, EuropeAid, etc...

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[39] http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?_ob=ArticleURL&_udi=B6VC6-49DN5FJ-1&_user=10&_rdoc=1&_fmt=&_orig=search&_sort=d&view=c&_acct=C000050221&_version=1&_urlVersion=0&_userid=10&md5=832ee0190dc3696c1e4b62a63f64a865

- All kind of professionals in mobility
- Unemployed
- Professional trying to change their career

b) Product providers
- Training institutions
- Companies involved in European projects
- Consultancy companies (EU, informatics, strategy)
- Organisations involved in European projects
- Language Training schools
- ICT companies
- Content providers (e-learning companies)

c) Decision-makers. Public authorities promoting the training in European Project Management.
- Local government
- Regional government
- National government
- European institutions
- Industrial associations
- Commerce chambers

3. Product analysis

In brief, the BONy e-learning platform will have the following characteristics:

- Collaborative environment: BONy consortium is developing the learning objects on Project Cycle Management, but after this first step, users will be able to generate and add content (like *Wikipedia*).
- Semantic web: BONy platform will offer the possibility to conduct semantic queries (rather than key words query)
- Automatic definition of a formative path depending on trainees' objectives and pre-existent knowledge; there will be different user levels and different learning paths.
- PDA: users will be able to interact with the platform from their PC or a PDA.
- At the end of the project, there will be a social network specialized in project management, so the user could keep in contact with others users and professors in order to help each other.

The core technology proposed by the BONy's project is based on the most recent advancements from the Artificial Intelligence, Social Networks and ICT technologies:

- Adapted to users level, behaviour and language:
BONy system allows users to find and to learn the units strictly requested and necessary to achieve their training experience. BONy supplies a multilingual access to information (English, Italian, Greek, French, Spanish, Catalan, Polish, German, Hungarian, Slovakian, Czech).

- A Collaborative system:

BONy project aims at motivating users to create the educational content in a collaborative way, but first BONy consortium is creating the e-course in European Project Management.

- Semantic web:

BONy involves an ontological approach to knowledge and an interconnection among formative contents and interactive multimedia thanks to the semantic web methodology.

- PC, PDA or other Mobile devices:

BONy e-learners' community will interact using a PDA phone or (other devices such a PC or a portable).

- Social network:

BONy is a social network where users can play a double role of students and/or teachers according to theirs skills and requirements. BONy intends to provide a social network experts fully dedicated to the European cooperation in the domains of research and project management

4. Exploitation of BONy results by partners

INK would like to use BONy system to offer an e-learning platform to its clients in different kinds of learning content: languages and ICT skills.

4system point of view:
- Extend of e-learning courses offer available on PDAs.
- Thanks to getting known needs (market analyse) improvement of work envelop regarding products.
- Projection of new functionality for e-learning course tool.
- Gaining experience in training realization using mobile technology.
- Opening of new department of m-learning.
- Extend of authoring LMS platform: new functionality which allows managing PDA courses.

IDEC perspective:
- IDEC will use the BONy system to enhance the e-learning courses already developed by our company.
- IDEC sees it as an opportunity to join the new market of m-learning and to acquire the necessary knowledge for the use of PDA and cell phone in the learning process.
- The project offers IDEC the chance to use the PCM course created, in the training of our own personnel since one of our main activities is European Projects Management.
- The expertise gained by the project team will allow IDEC to cooperate again in the future, outside European Projects framework, in order to develop various courses based on the BONy platform.
- The cognitive learning, the Semantic Web and finally the BONy system are very good foundations for future EU funded projects. IDEC is willing to participate as a partner and use the expertise gained from this project.

PMF point of view:
- User-profile-based Advertisement.
- Consulting on social network technology.
- To broaden the variety of the educational services currently offered to our clientele (diversification of tools and content).

- To widen access of customers to e-learning course by attracting them via multilinguistic tools (the linguistic divide is still strong in Italy and the English language is not mastered by everyone).
- To gain expertise in the provision of up-skilling content (smart info, tests, data retrieval, etc) via innovative tools (PDAs support to learning and networking, anytime, anywhere).
- To expand business chances as professional networking provider and therefore to enlarge scope of target-customers.
- To exploit database of users in order to detect new potential areas for services and products creation; using learners community feedback and requirements as a pool for suggestions on new goods and tools to develop and market.

5. Business plan

In September 2009, BONy consortium is to deliver the Business plan for the commercial exploitation of BONy results.

The plan will present overall the following chapters, still to be developed.
   a. Business model: new company, partners companies could offer a new product, other e-learning content providers could adopt BONy platform in their business portfolio, etc.
   b. Marketing strategy
   c. Production
   d. Sales forecast
   e. Management and control
   f. Financing needs