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INTERIM REPORT ON THE FORCE PROGRAMME

**- Action Programme for the
Development of Continuing Vocational Training
in the European Community -**

(presented by the Commission under Article 11 of Decision 90/267/EEC)

This Report is presented by the Commission to the Council of Ministers, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training.

INTRODUCTION

This interim report has been prepared by the Commission to set out the development of the FORCE Programme from 1 January 1991 to 31 December 1993.

It was thought advisable to prolong the period covered by the interim report for two reasons: firstly to take account to the greatest extent possible of the results emerging from FORCE's launch phase, and secondly to accompany this report with the findings of the interim external evaluation of the Programme.

Part A therefore reports on the progress made in implementing the activities provided for in Decision 90/267/EEC.

Part B contains the principal conclusions and recommendations of the interim external evaluation of the FORCE Programme, carried out under Article 11 of the Decision. It should be noted that the terms of reference for this evaluation excluded the third FORCE call for proposals and the implementation of the Statistical Survey and reports on the implementation of the common framework of guidelines.

PART A :

IMPLEMENTATION OF FORCE

1 January 1991 - 31 December 1993

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Interim Report on the FORCE Programme for the Development of Continuing Vocational Training in the European Community

Part A - IMPLEMENTATION

1 COUNCIL DECISION AND CONTEXT

1.1 FORCE was launched on 1 January 1991, for a period of four years, on the basis of Council Decision 90/267/EEC establishing an action programme for the development of continuing vocational training in the European Community.

1.2 FORCE evolved as part of the growing consensus throughout the Community on the importance of continuing vocational training as a decisive factor in the economic and social strategies of Member States, expressed in particular through:

- the meetings of the European Council in 1988 and 1989, which affirmed the importance of improved access to vocational training, and the need for Community action for the development of human resources;
- the Resolution of the European Parliament of 15 March 1989 on the social dimension of the internal market, which emphasized investment in training and making the most of human resources; in particular it considered that vocational training and the management of human resources are decisive factors in the adaptation of undertakings and their capacity to respond to change;
- the Council Resolution of 5 June 1989 on continuing vocational training, in which it requested the Commission to lay before it as soon as possible an action programme on continuing vocational training;
- the Community Charter of the Fundamental Social Rights of Workers, adopted on 9 December 1989 by 11 Member States, and more specifically its point 15 which reads:

"Every worker of the European Community must be able to have access to vocational training and to benefit therefrom throughout his working life. In the conditions governing access to such training there may be no discrimination on grounds of nationality.

The competent public authorities, undertakings or the two sides of industry, each within their own sphere of competence, should set up continuing and permanent training systems enabling every person to undergo retraining, more especially through leave for training purposes, to improve his skills or to acquire new skills, particularly in the light of technical development;"

- the Joint Opinion on Education and Training, adopted on 26 January 1990 by both sides of industry at Community level in the framework of the Social Dialogue, which defines common guidelines to be adopted by European management and labour in promoting quality education and training systems.

1.3 In line with these developments, the Commission proposal of 8 December 1989 was submitted to the Council; on this basis, FORCE was adopted on 29 May 1990 with the aim of supporting and complementing the policies and activities developed by and in the Member States in the area of continuing vocational training.

2 OBJECTIVES AND CONTENT OF FORCE

2.1 The objectives of the FORCE Programme are as follows:

- a) to encourage a greater and more effective investment effort in continuing vocational training and an improved return from it, in particular by developing partnerships designed to encourage greater awareness on the part of the public authorities, undertakings - in particular small and medium-sized undertakings - both sides of industry and individual workers, of the benefits accruing from investment in continuing vocational training;
- b) to encourage continuing vocational training measures by, for example, demonstrating and disseminating examples of good practice in continuing vocational training to those economic sectors or regions of the Community where access to, or investment in, such training is currently inadequate;
- c) to encourage innovations in the management of continuing vocational training, methodology and equipment;
- d) to take better account of the consequences of the completion of the internal market, in particular by supporting transnational and transfrontier continuing vocational training projects and the exchange of information and experience;
- e) to contribute to greater effectiveness of continuing vocational training mechanisms and their capacity to respond to changes in the European labour market, by promoting measures at all levels, in particular to monitor and analyze the development of continuing vocational training and identify better ways of forecasting requirements in terms of qualifications and occupations.

2.2 FORCE is made up of two sets of measures, set out in Article 3 of the Decision:

- firstly, a 'common framework of guidelines' aiming at the promotion of common targets between Member States, particularly as far as incentives to invest in continuing vocational training and wider access to it are concerned (Art. 5 of the FORCE Decision); according to Art. 11 of the FORCE Decision, Member States are required to report to the Commission every two years on the steps taken to implement the common framework of guidelines, including information on current arrangements to promote and finance continuing vocational training.
- secondly, the transnational measures backing up Member State initiatives (Art. 6 and the Annex to the Decision); at the core of the transnational measures is the principle of the transfer of knowledge, innovation, experience and know-how throughout the Community, on the basis of active partnerships between companies, the social partners and research and training institutes.

3 INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES

- 3.1 The Commission is assisted in the implementation of the Programme by an Advisory Committee (since 1 July 1992, on the basis of the Council Decision of 16 March 1992, a Single Advisory Committee for EUROTECNET and FORCE) made up of two representatives from each Member State, usually from the Ministries of Labour and Education, and twelve observers from both sides of industry at European level (UNICE/CEEP and ETUC). This composition helps to ensure effective interplay between Community action and Member State policies and practice, and the Committee has played an active role in advising the Commission on the operational guidelines governing FORCE (including preparation of the VADEMECUM and USERS' GUIDE), the allocation of budgetary resources, and the overall balance between different measures.
- 3.2 To ensure effective implementation of FORCE at national level, the Commission assigned to FORCE Committee members the task of setting up National Coordination Units in each Member State. The Units carry out widespread information and advisory activities on the programme: publicizing calls for proposals, working closely with promoters on the presentation and management of projects, monitoring the projects throughout their implementation, and disseminating results of the programme at national level; in addition, they play a key role in the implementation of the surveys/analyses strand of FORCE, particularly as far as contacts with the social partners and evaluation of the findings at national level are concerned. They meet regularly at the invitation of the Commission to coordinate their activities at Community level.
- 3.3 Most Member States have also set up National Committees composed of the national representatives of the FORCE Committee, representatives of other administrations, both sides of industry, and usually the National Coordination Unit. Their role varies from country to country but involves essentially bringing together the principal institutional actors in continuing vocational training for the approval or validation of FORCE activities and dissemination of their results. Importantly, this implies a two-way information flow between the Commission and the Member States and a forum for the coordination of Community and national priorities.

4 FINANCIAL RESOURCES

4.1 Financial support for FORCE within the three-year period 1991-1993 amounted to 57.4 MECU. While financial resources have increased each year, owing in large part to the continued support of the European Parliament, they have not kept pace with the demand for projects.

4.2 Allocation of financial resources to the different activities of the Programme are summarized below:

	MECU		
	1991	1992	1993
Projects	9.5 ⁽¹⁾	13.3	17.9 ⁽²⁾
Sectoral surveys	0.5	1.2	0.6
Contractual policy	0.5	0.3	0.4
Statistical survey	0.1	0.5	1.5
Managing Chart	0.3	0.1	-
Art. 11 reports	-	0.2	0.6
National Coordination Units	0.9	1.0	2.3
Network activities (Conferences, seminars ...)	0.2	0.5	0.4
Evaluation	-	-	0.3
Technical assistance	1.8	1.8	⁽³⁾
Mini-budget ⁽⁴⁾	0.2	0.5	-
TOTAL	14.0	19.4	24.0

⁽¹⁾ Includes specific budget line of 1 MECU for projects originating in the 5 New Länder

⁽²⁾ Includes 8 MECU allocated to the second year renewal of 1991 and 1992 pilot and qualification projects.

⁽³⁾ 1,080,960 MECU on Technical Assistance "Personnel" budget line (Article A1178 of the General Budget) and 868,500 ECU on the "Operations" line (Article A0238)

⁽⁴⁾ Administrative costs linked to the programme

5 IMPLEMENTATION: TRANSNATIONAL MEASURES

5.1 The transnational measures are described in Article 6 and in the Annex to the FORCE Decision, and comprise the following actions:

- Action I - Support for innovation in continuing vocational training;
- Action II - Analysis, monitoring, assessment and forecasting;
- Action III - Accompanying measures (technical assistance, evaluation, information).

5.2 In practice, the activities described under Actions I and II may usefully be grouped into 'direct' and research projects. After consultation of the FORCE Committee, two types of procedure, described in detail below, were adopted to develop these two distinct strands of the Programme, and set out in the FORCE VADEMECUM. Briefly, the Type 1 procedure, referring to the 'direct' projects, involves publication of an open call for proposals in the Official Journal, and a three-fold evaluation process before consultation of the Advisory Committee and final decision by the Commission. The Type 2 procedure for the research projects operates according to a restricted choice: the members of the Advisory Committee indicate expert organisations to carry out the work and are consulted on approach, content and methodology; findings are submitted to the FORCE National Coordination Units and the Advisory Committee for evaluation at national and European levels respectively.

5.3 Direct projects

5.3.1 So called because application is made directly to the Commission following a call for proposals published in the Official Journal (see OJ Nos C 111 of 26.04.91, C 1 of 04.01.92 and C 92 of 02.04.93), the direct projects cover:

- 1) pilot projects, focused on the development and dissemination of innovative training management, techniques and materials;
- 2) qualification projects centred on the analysis of enterprise skill and training needs;
- 3) exchanges between human resources managers, trainers, workers' representatives, unions and employers' associations, designed to promote the rapid dissemination of innovation in continuing vocational training.

5.3.2 Three calls for proposals have been announced during the life of FORCE, resulting in the selection of 720 projects (out of a total of some 2400 submitted). Priorities have been adjusted from call to call, but have consistently addressed the quality of projects assessed from the point of view of their potential contribution to investment in continuing vocational training by companies and access to it for all groups of workers; the direct involvement of companies in priority, particularly SMEs, and of the social partners; the design, development and implementation of training plans as

part of companies' business strategy; the significance of the transnational partnerships.

5.3.3 Selection procedure

5.3.3.1 The rigorous selection procedure, adopted after consultation of the FORCE Committee, and leading to a final decision by the Commission, involves evaluation:

- by the Commission, with the assistance of the FORCE Technical Assistance Office from the point of view of the Community dimension of projects and their conformity with the priorities of the call for proposals;
- by a group of independent training experts, assessing in particular the real responsiveness to company needs of projects, their innovativeness, and possibilities for transfer;
- by members of the FORCE/EUROTECNET Committee, during a series of bilateral meetings with the Commission, allowing for coordination of overall national and Community interest.

5.3.4 Results

5.3.4.1 Response to the first FORCE call for proposals in 1991 already indicated widespread interest in investment in FORCE from the principal players in the continuing training field; some 800 projects were submitted, of which 170 were selected (budgetary restrictions dictating a high rate of rejection), including 15 '5NL' projects constructed on partnerships involving enterprises and training bodies from the five new German Länder.

The following features of this first call were particularly noticeable:

- the high involvement of companies and their capacity to implement a transnational approach to investment in continuing vocational training;
- the presence of the social partners, acting together to reinforce their role in the development of European training and qualification policy and practice;
- the active participation of countries on the periphery of the Community (Spain, Portugal, Greece, Ireland), promising well for the transfer of training innovation;
- the sectoral dimension; a significant number of projects had a European sectoral focus (automobile, aeronautics, banking, textiles, tourism ...), bringing together partners from at least four different Member States, and including the leading sectoral organisations.

- 5.3.4.2 The second call in 1992 resulted in the adoption of 263 projects, again out of some 800 submitted. The number of partners involved in submissions increased from some 3.500 in 1991 to 4.500 in 1992. Once more, enterprise and social partner participation was high. Increased SME involvement was a stated priority of this call and was a marked feature of the submissions. Well over half of applications were based on partnerships including SMEs or groups of small companies; their involvement as partners in fact more than doubled as compared with 1991, from 420 to 900. Growing interest in future skill needs was also striking. The number of applications for qualification projects based on wide transnational partnerships and linked with the development of enterprise training plans increased from 127 to 250.
- 5.3.4.3 These two calls focused in priority on pilot and qualification projects covering a two-year span. These projects were subject to an interim evaluation (following the procedure set out in section 5.3.3) after the first year of operation. In each case over 90% of projects were accepted for a second contractual period. The final results and products of the 1991 call will be available in the early months of 1994 and will be evaluated mid-1994. 1992 products will be available end 1994.
- 5.3.4.4 The 1991 and 1992 projects also included 88 exchange programmes of from one to three months between some 580 candidates in the different Member States. The specific interest of these programmes on the grounds of the rapid dissemination of experience and know-how in continuing vocational training, of the development and consolidation of networks, and of the transfer of experience between companies - particularly large companies and SMEs - and between the social partners, is undeniable; however, experience has shown that the public concerned - training specialists, human resource managers, workers' representatives, employer and union federations - often found it impossible to absent themselves for the minimum period of one month. A minimum duration of two weeks will be tried out for exchanges implemented in 1994, on condition that a final seminar is held to evaluate and disseminate the results.

- 5.3.4.5 The third call, in 1993, comprised two strands with a specific focus: the first centred on the development of training and qualification in companies as a response to the challenge of industrial changes and the dissemination and transfer of innovative solutions in Member States, the second on dissemination of the results of the FORCE sectoral surveys of continuing vocational training plans and the analysis of contractual policy on continuing vocational training (see below, chapters 5.4.1 and 5.4.2). 600 projects were submitted under the first strand, of which 161 were selected, and 593 projects under the second strand, of which 133 were selected, budgetary constraints making it inevitable that a number of good quality projects had to be rejected. Projects will be carried out over 10-12 months and results and products will be available end 1994 and evaluated early in 1995.
- 5.3.4.6 A brief analysis of the results of the third call will demonstrate how FORCE has built on earlier experience and to what extent it has broken new ground.
- 5.3.4.7 Certain trends, already noted as FORCE has developed and evolved have been confirmed, in particular:
- the growing direct involvement of companies (particularly SMEs, either individually or through groupings) and of the social partners;
 - the significant increase in the number of qualification projects, reflecting growing awareness in European companies of the need to anticipate and analyze training and qualification requirements;
- 5.3.4.8 The focus on **industrial changes** provides concrete evidence of the way in which companies are facing up to change in technology, production systems, work organisation and market and information strategies:
- investment in employees' training and qualifications in the context of industrial change means continuing to invest in traditional sectors of activity already present in FORCE (the motor industry, chemicals, metallurgy, construction, plastic processing, road and rail transport, defence ...). In these sectors the accent is placed either on the introduction of new technologies, or on restructuring, all having a direct effect on the relation between training and work organisation;
 - it also means investing, through training and qualification, in emerging employment sectors (environment and pollution control, the security industry, services for the old and the handicapped, work in new media and communication tools) and in types of activity involving a combination of new technologies and new forms of work (homeworking, teleworking, distance diagnosis, ...) and therefore the development of new qualifications and working skills.

- there is also an increasing interest in transversal themes which already make up an important aspect of existing FORCE projects:
 - total quality, quality control and quality assurance relating both to products and services;
 - middle management training, above all in the sectors which are changing the most rapidly, and in SMEs;
 - training of less-qualified workers, of workers in SMEs, of women, of marginalised workers and of migrants.
 - new themes relating to interpersonal and social skills and individual potential for coping with change: stress-management, team working, team management.

5.3.4.9 Under the second strand of the third call for proposals, an explicit link was developed between the **direct projects and the research strand**. The objectives, structure and content of the surveys of the retail trade, agro-food and car repair sectors and of the analysis of contractual policy are described below in sections 5.4.1 and 5.4.2. So as to ensure the widest possible dissemination, and indeed to test in concrete terms the findings of the surveys and analyses, the call was focused, for the surveys, on transnational projects which

- set up specific arrangements for the dissemination of the significant training and qualification practices identified by the surveys;
- designed responses to the training and qualification needs identified;
- promoted innovative approaches on questions relating to the priority objectives of FORCE (integration of continuing training plans in company strategy, training needs for SMEs, continuing training for the less-qualified or specific target groups, analysis of skill needs ...).

5.3.4.10 Selected projects are of course only in the launch phase, but it was felt during their evaluation that the sectoral focus had promoted well targeted projects involving the major players in the different sectors. The projects bring together large and small companies, the social partners and specialized institutes in sufficient numbers to constitute a critical mass of initiatives with a potential for impact on training and qualification practice in the sectors concerned.

5.3.4.11 Projects based on the analysis of contractual policy were required to implement:

- the transfer and dissemination of innovative collective bargaining agreements, and significant practices identified;

- the design of innovative activities relating to the development of contractual policy concerning the training and qualification of employees;
- the forecasting and anticipation of trends in skill and qualification needs leading to joint or negotiated training activities for employees.

5.3.4.12 The Report appears to have provided an effective basis for social partner participation in continuing vocational training. The projects selected demonstrate their desire for this closer involvement, covering a range of experience concerning the joint implementation of training and qualification initiatives, joint application of skills assessment, administration of training funds, etc. Also perceptible is a move towards the analysis of co-investment between employer and employee, and the validation of skills and competences, key issues for quality continuing vocational training.

5.3.4.13 Perception of what FORCE has achieved is far from complete. However, at this stage it is possible to confirm that the 720 projects selected under the three calls create together a highly significant transnational network of companies, social partners and training institutes (and, since 1993, public authorities) for the transfer of expertise and innovation in continuing vocational training. The network comprises over 5000 members of which over 50% are companies (in large part - 70% - SMEs or groupings of SMEs) and some 15% represent the social partners. It should be noted too that if sufficient budgetary resources had been available, this network could have included at least another 150 high-quality projects.

5.3.4.14 The following figures provide an overall view of participation in the 720 FORCE projects by type of organisation:

- participation by contractor:

Enterprises or groups of enterprises	260
Employers' organisations	60
Trade Union organisations	53
Joint bodies	31
Training organisations	170
Chambers of Commerce	17
Public authorities	4
Other (including UETPs, universities, training consortia)	125
Total	720

- participation by partner:

Enterprises or groups of enterprises	2979
Employers' organisations	335
Trade Union organisations	462
Joint bodies	58
Training organisations	928
Chambers of Commerce	105
Public authorities	83
Other (including UETPs, universities, training consortia)	862
Total	5812

5.3.4.15 Overall distribution of FORCE projects according to the country of origin of the contractor is as follows:

Country	N° projects	Initial Amount allocated (ECU) ⁽¹⁾
B	58	5,039,000
D	76	6,698,500
DK	31	2,720,000
E	84	6,649,600
F	89	6,544,375
GR	72	5,490,500
I	79	6,727,000
IRL	48	3,516,000
L	12	1,026,500
NL	36	2,730,000
P	44	3,421,475
UK	91	7,380,400
	720	57,943,350

⁽¹⁾ It should be noted that these totals do not include the amounts allocated to 1991 and 1992 pilot and qualification projects in view of their renewal for a second year.

5.3.5 Reinforcement by EUROFORM

5.3.5.1 In its Communication to the Member States concerning the EUROFORM Initiative (OJ of 29 December 1990 - 90/C/327/03) the Commission accorded an important place to the reinforcement of FORCE.

5.3.5.2 A technical assistance unit was set up within the Commission and a Guide for Applicants developed to promote this reinforcement, which has been carried out on the basis of pre-existing transnational partnerships through the following measures:

- through the transfer of the results of FORCE pilot and qualification projects: training measures have been carried out in companies on this basis in the framework of EUROFORM, taking account of FORCE priorities and using the joint products designed under FORCE;
- through the reproduction of training products: reinforced FORCE projects have been offered the possibility of financing for the use of information and communication technologies to develop and multiply the products;
- through evaluation of the results of training in a transnational framework: partnerships set up under FORCE have been consolidated through EUROFORM and have been able to continue and extend their joint analyses concerning transnational certification and training and qualification activities for employees;
- through close cooperation between FORCE and EUROFORM National Coordination Units, particularly through jointly organised thematic seminars on:
 - reinforcement at operational level, with the EUROFORM Coordination Unit of the Belgian Flemish Community (March and September 1992),
 - multimedia training products for small and medium-sized enterprises with the Dutch EUROFORM Coordination Unit (June 1993).

5.3.5.3 Further joint seminars are planned for 1994: on training consortia with the Portuguese EUROFORM Coordination Unit in March, and on employment/training cooperation partnerships with the Bundesministerium für Bildung und Wissenschaft in September.

5.3.5.4 These events encourage the Europe-wide dissemination of innovation in the human resources field developed by companies and the social partners and allow the Commission to capitalize on the activities of the FORCE project promoters. Results have also shown up, beyond sector-specific issues, the general preoccupation with seeking new methods of organizing training delivery.

5.3.5.5 Overall, 405 FORCE/EUROFORM dossiers have been identified: that is to say, 405 partners in FORCE projects have benefited from financing to develop their activities in the framework of EUROFORM. Experience acquired under FORCE was rapidly transferred in these cases and the implementation of training measures for employees

in companies promoted in complete conformity with the process of support for national policies which is central to the Community Initiatives and the Social Fund. What has emerged clearly from this experience is the value added contributed by a sequential reinforcement of programmes by the Community Initiatives; it demonstrates the importance of even wider efforts on the part of Member States towards substantial reinforcement of FORCE results by the Community Initiative ADAPT.

5.4 Research projects

The research projects cover the FORCE sectoral surveys of continuing vocational training plans, analysis of collective bargaining of continuing vocational training, the statistical survey of continuing vocational training in companies and related analysis activities. Together these activities provide a concentration of data on national systems and practices and a substantial fund of information for both sides of industry, companies and policy-makers at all levels.

5.4.1 Sectoral surveys

5.4.1.1 The FORCE sectoral surveys of continuing vocational training plans are designed to identify, analyze and disseminate significant continuing training practice.

5.4.1.2 The key points for analysis are the following:

- the existence and nature of company continuing training plans - how are training plans integrated into overall business strategy?;
- skill and qualification requirements;
- personal development plans of workers;
- continuing training for specific groups (women, part-timers, seasonal workers, workers with atypical contracts, ...);
- the cost of continuing training;
- cost benefit analysis of continuing vocational training.

5.4.1.3 The surveys are practical, operational exercises focused on training within companies and carried out through case-studies in the twelve Member States. The procedures followed are described below:

- Choice of sector

Three surveys have been completed so far: of the retail trade sector (selected on the basis of the active Social Dialogue on training at European level, and the Commission's commitment to promoting this dialogue) and of the agro-food and car repair sectors. The latter two sectors were chosen after consultation with

the Member States in the framework of the FORCE Committee on the basis of a number of criteria: in particular, the importance of the sector at Community and national level, the implications for the sector of the completion of the internal market, and the possibility of making a significant contribution to the operational objectives of FORCE (maximizing the economic performance of companies through continuing vocational training, improving the access of specific groups of workers...).

Implementation

The surveys are carried out in each Member State by national rapporteurs nominated by members of the FORCE/EUROTECNET Committee; their reports are validated in national meetings with the social partners of the sector (whose input to the surveys has been crucial in terms of knowledge of the sector and expertise in continuing vocational training) organized by the FORCE National Coordination Units. The work at national level is coordinated by a central team of three or four institutes selected by the Commission from the organisations nominated and findings have been submitted regularly, in the case of the retail and agro-food surveys, to a Monitoring Group comprising Commission services, the social partners of the sector, and CEDEFOP.

CEDEFOP has played a significant role in the implementation of the surveys. It was closely associated with the design of the basic methodology utilised and has acted to maintain methodological consistency within the different research teams. In addition to its contribution in terms of expertise in continuing vocational training, CEDEFOP has been heavily involved in technical coordination of the work.

Results

The quality of the final European reports - based on the findings of the national surveys and made up of examination of the economic, social and institutional context, analysis of +/- 50 case-studies demonstrating the variety of approaches and solutions adopted by companies, and conclusions and key issues for the sector - has been endorsed in all cases by the FORCE/EUROTECNET Committee and representatives of the sectors concerned. It should be noted however that in the case of the retail trade sectoral survey the European employers' federation expressed reservations about the initial set of conclusions, criticizing in particular what it saw as over-generalizations on the basis of the findings of the case-studies. Following a meeting of the Social Dialogue and further contacts, consensus was reached, and the European employers' and union federations issued a Joint Opinion welcoming the survey and underlining the value of the methodology used.

This methodology, adjusted for each survey to take account of differing sectoral realities, has in fact proved effective for placing continuing vocational training in its context (social, legal, national, etc.) and the significance of the sectoral approach has been confirmed through the identification and analysis of

consistent training experience; the sectoral context tends to influence the role of the economic and social players to a considerable extent.

5.4.1.4 Without attempting to summarize the findings of these highly complex surveys, certain key issues which act as triggers for continuing vocational training can be indicated:

- As far as the **retail trade survey** is concerned, the report constitutes a pioneering study, identifying the beginning of new tendencies towards training in a sector where links between training and work organisation have traditionally been limited. In response to an increasingly competitive market, it identifies as a key element the development of training for quality of product or service or to identify the firm with a conspicuous image. Shop assistants have become a strategically important group in the transfer of the sales concept to customers; this implies the involvement of all staff in training activities and particularly those who, unlike management, have usually received little training: part-timers, often women, employees with a lower level of qualification.
- The **agro-food survey** shows that companies in the sector are consistently faced with the need to increase productivity and the flexibility of production processes in the context of growing competitive pressure on prices, quality, hygiene, deadlines; trends in consumer demand; the opening-up of frontiers and establishment of the Single Market. Training has a central role to play in this highly diverse sector, characterized by fundamental changes in structure and work organization. By the nature of the sector the 'quality' aspect has immense importance; quality certification and quality management are identified as key training issues in the development of a more flexible workforce with a higher level of technical, organizational and social skills. A major Conference will be held in Ireland during 1994 to further develop these themes.
- The **car repair survey** contributes significant elements concerning the matching of employee skills and qualifications with changes in tasks relating to the repair and sale of high tech cars. Based on an analysis of methods of work organisation in repair workshops and the considerable impact of these on training and qualification activities, it defines the evolution of the profession towards occupations involving multi-skilling and the consequences of this evolution for the quality service station as a forum for vocational training and qualification. In terms of global competitiveness for the car industry in the broad sense (components, manufacturers, repair/distribution), there is no doubt that the acquisition of skills and qualifications in workshops and garages constitutes a strategic element; hence the importance of networks of 'authorised' repair/distribution companies, and consequently the coordinated definition of vocational requirements and training provision focused on the programmed acquisition of so-called 'mechatronic' skills. The survey raises moreover the question of the adaptation of skills and qualifications in independent workshops and garages, and the role which the components industry, trade associations and the public authorities may play in supplying them with quality continuing training; some national researchers felt that this aspect should have been given

more weight in the final European report.

5.4.1.5 The decision has been taken to launch a fourth survey, of the **road transport sector**, early in 1994. This sector has been selected on the same criteria as the preceding surveys and will be carried out along the same lines. Its terms of reference have yet to be defined, but it will certainly examine the response in continuing training terms to key issues cited in the White Paper on the Development of Common Transport Policy (COM(92)494 final): the emergence of a new, more open market, free from unnecessary red tape, the improved competitiveness, financial performance and efficiency of transport undertakings and improvements in the functioning and quality of transport systems, including safety, reliability and passenger comfort, and measures for the protection of the environment.

5.4.1.6 It should also be noted that on the basis of FORCE direct projects, an examination is underway of key themes in the **tourism sector**: the development of continuing training plans, training in the context of seasonal activities, collective agreements, anticipation of skill needs and the functioning of vocational training consortia for the development of local or regional tourism.

5.4.2 Analysis of Contractual Policy

5.4.2.1 This factual Analysis examines the role of collective bargaining in the development of continuing vocational training.

5.4.2.2 As for the sectoral surveys, the European report has been prepared on the basis of national reports, all validated by the social partners at national level. These reports, based on desk and empirical research, describe the education, training and industrial relations systems of the Member States and examine in depth 'joint action' between the social partners concerning continuing vocational training at different levels (inter-industry, sectoral, regional, enterprise).

5.4.2.3 The European report identifies a wide range of approach based on three scenarios:

- 1) Ireland and the UK where CVT is regarded primarily as the responsibility of the employers and where Government's task is to develop policies to promote training;
- 2) Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands, which consider CVT to be the prime responsibility of the employers and employees, the State playing a subsidiary role, and
- 3) other countries where both the State and the social partners are fully-fledged actors in the CVT area. The role played by the State in Belgium, Denmark, France, Portugal and Spain is of prime importance. It is typical that Governments want to involve the social partners: a reality that is being developed in Greece, Italy and Spain and already a day-to-day reality in Belgium, Denmark and France.

5.4.2.4 Examples of significant collective agreements and formal and informal joint action as identified by the social partners at national and European level are developed within this framework. The Report thus constitutes a valuable basis for closer social partner involvement in the development of continuing vocational training.

5.4.2.5 Complementary research projects are also underway: analysis of the issues of co-investment by employers and employees in continuing vocational training, and of the validation of continuing training through contractual policy; and of the transferability of innovative practice in the contractual policy area in the Member States.

5.4.3 Continuing Vocational Training Statistical Survey and related analyses

5.4.3.1 To date substantial statistical surveys of continuing vocational training in companies exist in only four Member States. The FORCE Decision therefore provides for a systematic, quantitative analysis in all countries on a comparable basis. The survey is jointly managed by the Task Force Human Resources and EUROSTAT, the latter having operational responsibility, assisted by the CVTS Working Party which comprises representatives from national Statistical Offices and vocational training authorities. This survey, which will represent a major breakthrough on the methodological aspect (how to measure CVT) and on the policy development aspects (quantitative indicators for CVT trends), will be implemented by Statistical Institutes designated by the Member States.

5.4.3.2 In view of the complexity of this subject, two pre-tests were carried out in 1993 in all Member States to check on data availability, data collection methods, concepts and definitions to be used and reaction of companies. As a result, the final decisions on implementation have been taken and in spring 1994 over 30,000 enterprises will be asked to take part in the survey. Data will be collected on a range of training activities in enterprises including off-the-job training courses, training in the work situation, open and distance learning, conferences and seminars and the use of work as a learning experience, i.e. through planned job rotation. Information of a qualitative nature will also be collected on whether enterprises have training plans and budgets, how they assess their skill needs and on other issues bearing on the management of training. In each Member State a representative sample of firms will be approached covering all corporate sectors except for agriculture, forestry and fishing and all sizes of enterprise with more than ten employees.

5.4.3.3 The Community specification of the methods to be used in the survey has been designed to ensure that data are collected on a consistent basis across the Community and up to a minimum quality standard, while being flexible enough to cope with the different systems for data collation in different Member States; the latter are free to design their own methods in line with a number of basic criteria or principles. These are set out in three documents:

- Main Features of the Community Survey (Doc E1/840/93)
- Community Outline Questionnaire (Doc E3/841/93)
- Definitions (Doc E3/842/93)

- 5.4.3.4 First results, in the form of basic tables and the data tapes to be used for subsequent analysis, are due to be sent to EUROSTAT by the autumn of 1994, with a first report available by year-end.
- 5.4.3.5 A valuable accompaniment to this Survey has been the implementation of comparative work on national vocational training mechanisms: in particular information on the data available in the area of continuing training and the development of comparable concepts across the Member States. This work gave rise in 1992 to the **Synoptic Tables** prepared for the Task Force Human Resources by the FORCE Technical Assistance Office, in close cooperation with the Member States. These focused on qualitative information relating to the strategic themes of continuing vocational training, and on descriptions of Member State training mechanisms according to key concepts: acquired rights, legislation, recognition, etc. In a synoptic form, this information provides an access point to the information available within the different Member States and illustrates through a number of common indicators what has been achieved and what is in evolution in regard to the national policies and practices of training for company employees.
- 5.4.3.6 The so-called **Managing Chart on Continuing Vocational Training**, currently being updated, is also a result of this work, focusing more specifically on quantitative data, and progressively establishing points of comparison between the Member States. The Managing Chart aims to establish a more effective and widely shared means of collecting data, resulting in a more efficient identification of comparable national situations and methodologies. It highlights areas of convergence in terms of data collection, structures, concepts and practices in continuing training, as well as special characteristics and innovative features specific to the training mechanisms of each country. Results will be disseminated in the autumn of 1994.

5.5 Accompanying measures

5.5.1 Measures under this action comprise technical assistance to the programme and activities designed to disseminate information about its procedures and products.

5.5.2 Technical assistance is provided at European level by the **FORCE Technical Assistance Office**, numbering 18-20 persons. The TAO is responsible to the Commission for a wide range of, in particular, project-based activities, involving:

- technical advice and assistance to project promoters,
- organisation of the project selection procedures adopted by the Commission,
- preparation of the Decision lists of projects, following adoption by the Commission,
- contractualisation and financial management of projects,
- close cooperation with the FORCE National Coordination Units in such areas as partner search, project monitoring and the organisation of information events;
- specific expertise and advisory activities.

5.5.3 The **National Coordination Units** constitute by their nature a network for the development of the programme and transfer of knowledge and experience at national and European levels; they play in fact a pivotal role between national and Community structures.

5.5.4 Concerning the direct projects, they are responsible for the organisation of launch conferences and information and advisory activities for each call for proposals. Projects underway are monitored both on an individual and a collective basis. The former allows for identification and adjustment of potential problems; the latter constitutes a meeting point for national and European partners and permits the creation of national and European synergies between projects.

5.5.5 Their specific responsibility for the implementation of the research activities also enhances their central role in the development of the programme.

5.5.6 Over their three years of operation, these activities have implied a gradual and effective decentralisation of promotion, information and dissemination activities towards the National Coordination Units. (This is reflected in the increase of credits allocated to the NCUs - see the table in Chapter 4.) The transnational continuing training events listed below in para. 5.5.7 were, with the exception of the Social Dialogue meeting in Berlin and the Qualification Symposium in Stuttgart, all organized by NCUs. In addition, frequent thematic or sectoral events are organised, and a wide range of information material published. Such activities demonstrate how national and Community priorities can effectively be coordinated in cooperation between the Commission, the Advisory Committee and national structures.

5.5.7 The Commission participates in or contributes directly to a large number of **transnational continuing training events** which underpin the transfer of FORCE products and research; examples from 1993 include:

- the meeting of the Social Dialogue in the retail trade sector organized for the Commission by CEDEFOP in Berlin on 11 and 12 January for discussion by the social partners at national and European level, the research team, the Commission and CEDEFOP of the conclusions of the retail trade sectoral survey,
- the Franco-German FORCE/EUROTECNET symposia on qualifications (Lyon 18 and 19 February and Stuttgart 4 and 5 October), the aim being to consider in depth qualification and training approaches on the basis of two different national contexts,
- the Retail Trade Conference, of 4 and 5 October, organized in Segovia in partnership with the Spanish authorities and attended by companies which took part in the sectoral survey, the social partners and research institutes. It provided the occasion for debate on the internal/external organisation of continuing training, innovative training methods, access to training and the role of the social partners,
- the Benelux Conference (Luxembourg), of 7 and 8 October, whose thematic content concerned the training of in-house instructors and new qualifications/analysis of training needs,
- the Contractual Policy Conference, of 14 and 15 October, organized in Rome with the Italian authorities to examine the results of the Analysis of Contractual Policy, in particular as far as they concerned financing systems, SMEs and training delivery at sectoral level;
- the European Conference on the role of the social partners in the continuing vocational training of workers, held under the Belgian Presidency in Brussels on 29 and 30 November 1993.

5.5.8 **FORCE publications** also constitute an important means of dissemination of the procedures, aims and results of the programme.

5.5.9 The **VADEMECUM**, discussed in detail with the Advisory Committee when the programme was launched, sets out guidelines for the development of the measures defined in the Council Decision.

5.5.10 The **GUIDE**, also discussed at length with the Committee, represents the basic information document for promoters, and has been updated in accordance with the priorities of each call for proposals.

5.5.11 Detailed methodological documents have been produced by EUROSTAT for the statistical survey, as detailed in section 5.4.3. These documents were presented to

the EUROSTAT Working Party on Education and Training Statistics and the FORCE/EUROTECNET Advisory Committee before finalisation.

5.5.12 The basic methodological document for the sectoral surveys was prepared in association with CEDEFOP, and also cleared with the Advisory Committee. Detailed methodological documents have been prepared on this basis by the research teams according to the specific characteristics of each sector.

5.5.13 As far as project outputs are concerned, FORCE has produced:

- Compendia on the direct projects selected under the 1991 and 1992 calls for proposals, which describe the types of partnership, aims, methodology, content and expected products for each project,
- European reports on each of the Sectoral Surveys (retail trade, agro-food and car repair sectors) and on the Analysis of Contractual Policy. The national reports have also in the great majority of cases been published by the Institutes concerned, in association with the FORCE National Coordination Units. CEDEFOP will also publish the European reports on the Sectoral Surveys in the nine Community languages, and the national reports in an English version. PEETERS of Leuven will publish the Analysis of Contractual Policy early in 1994.

5.5.14 The Synoptic Tables, prepared for the Task Force Human Resources by the FORCE Technical Assistance Office, provide basic data on continuing vocational training mechanisms in the Member States.

6 REPORTS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMON FRAMEWORK OF GUIDELINES

6.1 Art. 11(2) of the FORCE Decision calls for the Member States to provide the Commission every two years with a report on the steps taken to implement the common framework of guidelines laid down in Article 5, including information on current arrangements to promote and finance continuing vocational training.

6.2 National reports are being prepared in accordance with this requirement on the basis of a common structure: Part I which describes the current situation of continuing vocational training and major developments and perspectives (legal and political context, financing, access, the interface between supply and demand, quality assurance, certification and accreditation) and Part II concerning activities undertaken to meet the common targets, set out in Article 5 as follows:

- a) to promote the European dimension in continuing vocational training in order to improve the conditions for workers' mobility;
- b) to facilitate constant adaptation to new demands and social advancement by means of continuing vocational training and to strengthen the preventive function of continuing vocational training;
- c) to enable the least qualified workers, whatever their status, to benefit from continuing vocational training measures, enabling them to obtain a basic qualification;
- d) to promote effective equality of opportunity of men and women as regards access to continuing vocational training according to conditions to be laid down by each Member State;
- e) to strengthen incentives for undertakings, particularly small and medium-sized undertakings, to invest in continuing vocational training;
- f) to seek to improve at all levels the forecasting of trends in qualifications and to achieve greater convergence between the objectives of vocational training and employment;
- g) to improve, by procedures adapted to national laws and practices and, if necessary, in stages, the supply of continuing vocational training and to reinforce existing arrangements for continuing vocational training, in order to meet the specific needs of small and medium-sized undertakings and the demands of labour and management at all levels;

- h) to ensure that all workers who are nationals of Member States are afforded equal treatment as regards access to continuing vocational training;
- i) to make effective, in accordance with requirements and for all those concerned, access to continuing vocational training and the benefit thereof.

6.3 A Steering Group has been set up to prepare a European Report on the basis of Member State reports (which will be submitted for validation to the national authorities and social partners). This will concentrate on three key areas for the FORCE Programme: access and participation, supply of continuing vocational training, and planning (anticipation, quality assurance and certification).

This body of work will increase significantly the knowledge base about continuing vocational training and the convergence of initiatives within the Community, and will furthermore create a valuable reference point for the analysis of trends in national systems and the consequent orientation of Community action.

7. OUTLOOK

- 7.1 The final phase of FORCE will be devoted to the successful completion of its activities and to the development of a strategy for capitalizing on the results.
- 7.2 The products of the 1991 pilot and qualification projects are now becoming available and will be evaluated early in 1994. A product catalogue will be published mid-year. Together with the Member States the Commission is examining the most effective ways of systematically disseminating the information and expertise available, and of monitoring the 1992 and 1993 projects. The results of the surveys and analyses will continue to be maximised through further study and dissemination to the appropriate target groups. The ongoing activities described above will be pursued and the findings published.
- 7.3 The Commission will continue to support information and dissemination activities based on programme results and perspectives. In particular, each Member State will hold towards the end of 1994 an Impact Conference and associated Products Fair to examine the effects of FORCE projects and research on national systems, policies and practice. The major players in the continuing vocational training field - public authorities, companies, social partners, research and training institutes - will be present at these events to examine the question of FORCE's value added at national level.
- 7.4 Looking beyond the end of FORCE, it is clear that the experience acquired will provide significant input to the new Action Programme for the implementation of a European Community vocational training policy.
- 7.5 The volume of survey material already in place constitutes an important source of information and experience on the continuing vocational training systems and practices of the Member States. This will be considerably enhanced by end-1994, particularly through the availability of the results of the Statistical Survey and Article 11(2) reports.
- 7.6 The 720 direct projects form the basis for constantly evolving and widening networks for the transfer of expertise and innovation in continuing vocational training.
- 7.7 Analysis and consolidation of experience acquired under FORCE can therefore inform the development of Community strategy in key areas. In particular FORCE can offer a wealth of possible responses to such questions as the anticipation of skill and qualification needs in companies, and the role of the different players in continuing vocational training. FORCE can in short provide a substantial contribution to a new phase of activity, building on what has been learned to date to achieve a new responsiveness to the evolving continuing training needs of the Community.

PART B:

**THE INTERIM EVALUATION
OF
FORCE**

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**A Report of the 1993 Interim External Evaluation
of the FORCE Programme**

The Tavistock Institute

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1. CONCLUSIONS - AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND RECOMMENDATION

1.1 Scope of these Conclusions

This report of the interim evaluation of the FORCE programme has considered the programme in terms of its organisational structures and preliminary results. The evaluation has, because of its timing, necessarily emphasised *processes* of implementation and results in terms of *intermediate* outcomes rather than final results or impacts. The evaluation has also been conducted within the scope of the FORCE Decision: it has examined the programme in relation to its objectives and not made an assessment of these objectives.

1.2 Conclusions to be drawn by different actors

Within these parameters the broad conclusions of the research team are positive, although there are, of course, questions that need addressing and recommendations for improvement that can be made. However it needs to be emphasised that the evaluation approach adopted with a full reporting of data allows conclusions to be drawn by many different actors at a European level and within Member States and not only by those responsible for this evaluation. The conclusions highlighted in this section which are those of the evaluation team, should be read from this standpoint.

1.3 Conclusions and Recommendations for FORCE and future Programmes

This section is in two parts. In the first part, global conclusions are drawn together based on material presented both in this report and in the accompanying source documents (see Appendix A for full list of available reports). The second part of this section highlights possible areas of improvement, raises a number of questions and offers recommendations. These recommendations are both directed at the present FORCE programme and at subsequent related programmes at a European level.

2. GLOBAL CONCLUSIONS

2.1 New divisions of labour between Member States and European Union

FORCE has coincided in time with emerging debates about subsidiarity: about what should be the respective roles of European and national actors in European programmes. The programme has pioneered a number of new approaches to programme delivery and to the division of labour between European Union and Member States. FORCE therefore offers a positive model for Member States wishing to cooperate about CVT in a European context. The FORCE 'model' appears to be both consistent with the principle of subsidiarity whilst still offering an added transnational and European dimension

2.2 European Structures work well and are adapted to Member State circumstances

The programme's organisational structures appear to work well and to be well articulated at a European level (FORCE/EUROTECNET Committee, TAO, TFHR, Social Partners). This conclusion like others represents a 'snapshot' at a particular point in time and there has been a continuous adaptation and learning process since 1991. There have been some indications of the difficulties that can occur when two programmes - FORCE and EUROTECNET - are combined in a single Committee. This is an area that it is recommended should be examined in greater detail, possibly as part of the final FORCE evaluation (see para 7.13 below). At Member State level the programmes organisational structures (NCUs, National Committees) are generally well adapted to national circumstances. Though as is further discussed below there still remain opportunities to improve these structures.

2.3 Organisational arrangements and FORCE objectives

FORCE organisational arrangements have contributed to achievements consistent with programme objectives. For example, the promotion and selection of transnational projects, the involvement of Social Partners and relevance of FORCE measures to the needs of enterprises have been strengthened by the organisational structures established by FORCE. Final judgements as to the adequacy of these organisational arrangements and their contribution to FORCE objectives will only be possible during the next phase of FORCE activity, i.e. when results of projects and surveys and studies are disseminated.

2.4 Transnational Projects

Transnational projects had only begun to produce results and complete their contracts during the period of the evaluation. To that extent it is not yet possible to draw firm conclusions about project outputs. However projects appear to conform with the programme 'design criteria', such as transnationality, and enterprise and social partner involvement. Furthermore positive conclusions can also be drawn in terms of CVT outcomes anticipated by FORCE projects and the work groups these projects see as likely to benefit from FORCE initiated measures. The availability of more projects outputs and a consideration of how these are used and disseminated will be available for the final evaluation of FORCE, when more conclusive judgements will be possible.

2.5 Reinforcing CVT policy in Member States

Whilst FORCE cannot claim widespread and unilateral influence on CVT policy and practice in Europe, it has already in particular sectors and Member States been responsible for innovations - especially in relation to the transfer of 'good practice' between European regions. The potential of FORCE in terms of reinforcing CVT policy in Member States occurs because the programmes aims are generally consistent with the concerns and objectives of most of the key actors involved in vocational training. There is a broad consensus among Europe's employers, trade unions and training bodies as well as Member States, that CVT needs to be enhanced in order to promote competitiveness and employment opportunities in the single market.

2.6 Sectoral Surveys and Studies have generated new knowledge

Surveys and studies sponsored by FORCE (in the Retail, Agro-Food and Car Repair Sectors) have generated new sectoral knowledge about CVT. In some Member States and in some sectors there were already surveys and studies available, but in others FORCE has helped generate such knowledge for the first time. More consistently FORCE surveys and studies have generated sectoral knowledge *at a European level* for the first time. These sectoral surveys and studies have begun to open up new debates about CVT policy and practice - and have the potential to do so to a much greater extent once study results are disseminated at Member State and European levels.

2.7 Contractual Policy Analysis: an innovative field of inquiry

An essentially new field of enquiry, collective bargaining in relation to CVT has been pioneered by FORCE. Because of the current stage of development of this domain the analysis of contractual policy conducted so far has to be seen as exploratory in nature. Methodologies have been innovative, requiring inputs from legal and industrial relations as well as CVT sources of expertise. Furthermore only limited aspects of contractual policy regarding CVT have been analysed so far. There is therefore scope for the Commission to consider additional studies as part of future European programmes as well as more fully utilising material arising from the analysis already completed. (This is taken up and elaborated below.)

2.8 The Evolution of FORCE: learning through experience

An important criterion for the evaluation of an innovative programme such as FORCE, as it is not possible to anticipate all eventualities when the programme is designed, is its capacity to evolve, learn through experience and refine its practice. In terms of this criterion FORCE can be judged positively. In a number of areas - such as the process of project promotion and selection, articulating the efforts of European and Member State structures, forging links between sectoral studies/surveys and transnational projects, and adapting methodologies from one sectoral survey to another - FORCE would appear to have demonstrated a capacity to learn lessons and apply them.

Finally it should be noted that there are some important questions which this interim evaluation was not able to address in sufficient depth. Sometimes these questions lay outside the terms of reference for the evaluation. When this occurred it was because the evaluation has been mainly concerned with how FORCE performed *in terms of its objectives and agreed policies*. It was not asked to subject these objectives and policies to critical scrutiny. More often important questions were not sufficiently examined because the timing was not right. For example the results and outcomes of FORCE projects fall into this category.

It will be necessary to ensure that these important evaluation questions are included in the final FORCE evaluation. In particular this final evaluation should address:

- *Funding strategies for FORCE.* What are the benefits and drawbacks of the way FORCE budgets have been distributed between and within elements of the Programme? For example is the balance of expenditure between surveys and studies, transnational projects and organisational structures suitable? Within the transnational projects under what circumstances is it effective to distribute funds among many projects and are there

any circumstances when more could be achieved by concentrating funds in fewer projects?

- *The membership and responsibilities of the FORCE/EUROTECNET Committee.* The evaluation team is aware that both Social Partners had originally wanted full membership rather than 'observer' status on the Committee. To what extent has the decision not to grant Social Partners full member status been problematic? A second issue concerning the Committee is the merger of FORCE and EUROTECNET responsibilities within a single structure. This is a potential problem that can also be foreseen within the new 'LEONARDO' programme. It may therefore need to be considered separate from and prior to the final FORCE evaluation.

- *The outcomes and impacts of FORCE transnational projects.* This evaluation has only been able to consider preliminary results - often couched in terms of target groups and anticipated beneficiaries. The extent of CVT 'innovation' within FORCE has also not been examined in any depth. Nor have wider impacts on sectors or between regions been considered. One of the central questions for the final evaluation will be to examine such outcomes and impacts.

It will be important to connect outcomes and impacts with intended targets and beneficiaries. There is a need not only to demonstrate the programme's effectiveness, but to see how far the FORCE selection process and project plans are in any way predictive of project outcomes. However it is also important to realise that some key questions about CVT outcomes and results cannot be adequately evaluated within a single programme such as FORCE. In order to understand how enterprises have become more innovative in their CVT practice it may be necessary to look across more than one European or national vocational training programme.

3 AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section possible areas for improvement are identified, grouped under five main headings:

- 1) FORCE organisational structures;
- 2) Project promotion and selection,
- 3) Results of FORCE projects,
- 4) Results of FORCE studies,
- 5) Capitalising on FORCE.

These areas for improvement are each briefly discussed and recommendations are then made. These recommendations are intended to identify possible ways forward rather than to offer firm blueprints for action. They raise the kinds of questions that in the opinion of the evaluators TFHR should be addressing.

3.1 FORCE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES

3.1.1 *The division of labour between Member States and the European Union*

It has been noted that the existing organisational structures appear to be effective at both Member State and European levels. However the division of labour between these two levels and in particular between TFHR/TAO on the one hand and NCUs on the other still requires attention. As the programme evolves new 'down-stream' tasks are required, such as project monitoring, network animation, and product dissemination. There has been an interest in the Commission to encourage more of these 'down-stream' tasks to be located within Member States and in particular in NCUs. This raises a number of points:

- Where are these tasks best located: which should be located at Member States and which at the level of the European Union?
- What skills are needed to monitor, animate and promote dissemination and how can it be ensured that they are consistently available in all NCUs?
- Are resource allocations - at a national and European Programme level - geared to the future as well as present division of labour between the different actors?

3.1.2 Recommendations

These questions should be addressed both by TFHR and the FORCE/EUROTECNET Advisory Committee.

Changes in the division of labour should be more finely differentiated; i.e. which *aspects* of animation are best located where - rather than assuming that broad functions can be simply relocated.

It should not be assumed that all Member States will be able simultaneously to deliver new tasks requiring new skills. A gradual process may be more realistic, with payments geared to the availability of skills and competences within NCUs.

3.1.3 Linking European and Member State policy and practice in CVT

There are a number of ways links are made between national and European CVT within FORCE. national committees are one effective channel, especially when they bring together public authorities and Social Partners. Another channel is a well functioning NCU. This evaluation has suggested that for NCUs to make a contribution to linking national and European CVT action, they need to meet certain criteria. For example they need to be well connected in the labour market - e.g. acceptable and credible to SMEs. They also need to have CVT know-how. Paradoxically in some Member States to make a contribution to CVT policy, NCUs need to be seen to have independent status - even independent of the responsible public authorities. This is especially so when national CVT policy is not yet well developed.

On the other hand it is essential that national FORCE representation and FORCE national committees are closely connected to those authorities and agencies with direct responsibility for CVT policy. This can be problematic when decentralised or regionalised systems for planning and delivery of national vocational training are being put in place. Moves towards such decentralisation are now common in many European countries.

3.1.4 Recommendations

FORCE national representation and national committees should be closely linked to those agencies with direct responsibility for CVT.

When national systems are decentralised or regionalised then this needs to be reflected in the composition of national committees.

Key criteria for the selection of NCUs should be their CVT competence, acceptability and credibility to enterprises, employers organisations, trade unions and training bodies.

A degree of independence from national authorities can be an advantage for NCUs - especially in the early stages of formulating national CVT policy.

3.1.5 Devolution of Responsibilities and Cross-national links between national bodies

In a transnational programme, nationally based actors are at a disadvantage if they continue to operate solely in their national contexts. For example if the role of NCUs in project monitoring is to be extended this cannot be confined to project activities in one Member State. FORCE projects (whether Pilot, Exchange or Qualifications) are transnational and their overall performance has to be understood transnationally. Similar considerations apply to animation - of present and past projects and of sectoral networks possibly arising from surveys and studies.

In order to NCUs to take on such monitoring and animation roles they will not only need to develop new capacities (see above) but also develop new *transnational* capacities. This could take a number of forms. For example as a minimum NCUs could be encouraged to communicate with each other more about project operating in their countries with their opposite numbers in Member States where these same projects also operate. More ambitiously NCUs or other nationally based organisations including Social Partners could be encouraged to work together in 'consortia' across national boundaries to support certain kinds of Programme level activities. One example might be to support a network of existing and past FORCE projects in a particular sector. Some forms of cooperation between nationally based organisations, might best be implemented on a regional basis - an example might be if the transfer of know-how within regions was the focus of future programmes.

It should be understood that cross-national links can be weaker or stronger. Thus greater communication and information exchange as already suggested is a relatively weak form of cooperation whilst consortia that take on responsibility for a programme functions have to be far stronger if they are to do their work.

This may appear a truism but as a design principle it has considerable implications: the greater the responsibilities to be devolved in a transnational programme, the stronger must be the co-operative links between nationally based actors.

3.1.6 Recommendations

A review should be initiated of the possible role of nationally based bodies in activities such as project monitoring and the animation of sectoral or inter-project networks.

This review should encourage inputs from Member State representatives, NCUs and other nationally based organisations about the kinds of activities that can be devolved to or at least shared between European and Member State level.

In addition the review should consider the means and mechanisms (institutional and financial) by which nationally based organisations might take on additional Programme responsibilities.

The outcomes of this review should be incorporated into planning for future EU programmes such as 'Leonardo'.

3.1.7 The FORCE/EUROTECNET Committee

The FORCE/EUROTECNET Committee has maintained a good overview of the Programme and provided a forum in which FORCE policy and implementation could be debated. Certain features of the Committee have not been considered in detail in this evaluation such as the consequence of incorporating responsibilities for two programmes (FORCE and EUROTECNET) in a single Committee; and the role and status of Social Partner representation (both trade unions and employers had requested full membership rather than observer status). Arguably these might be considered further in the final evaluation of FORCE, they will certainly need to be revisited as part of preparation for future European vocational programmes.

However some of the difficulties in the FORCE/EUROTECNET Committee noted in the course of this evaluation can be addressed in the shorter term. In particular a number of logistical and procedural problems could be remedied. These include the pre-circulation of papers to Committee members sufficiently in advance of meetings and greater clarity about the status of agenda items - e.g. whether submitted to the Committee for its opinion or whether for discussion or information only. Some of these matters can be substantive as well as procedural. For example the involvement of members in Committee proceedings is influenced by their involvement in meetings and their sense of ownership of the Committee agenda. Greater involvement and an enhanced sense of ownership would probably require changes in member's activities outside of Committee meetings as well as changes in the way the Committee itself was organised. One example of this would be if members undertook joint work prior to meetings in preparation for future agenda items.

3.1.8 Recommendations

The TFHR should review the procedures for pre-circulating Committee papers, including agendas, with the aim of providing more time for consideration of matters prior to meetings. If this were to happen it would be easier for Committee members to give considered opinions on agenda items and related papers at meetings. This would also make referring back less necessary thus also improving the efficiency of Committee discussions.

Members of the Committee should have a more active involvement in shaping the agenda and preparing for meetings. The greater involvement of Committee members and observers in preparation for agenda items is also desirable. This might take the form of drafting of joint papers by two or more Committee members or the prior gathering of relevant information.

The status of particular agenda items should be made more explicit at meetings and in advance, e.g. are they 'brainstorming' or consultative items; are opinions expected with prior guidance therefore being needed by Members State representatives; and which are the major items for discussions and which are more matters of information.

3.2 Project Promotion And Selection

3.2.1 Targeting of Project Promotion

The FORCE programme has succeeded in attracting large number of applicants of a generally high quality. As the Programme has evolved it has become concerned with more targeted promotion, for example in circumstances of industrial change and in SMEs. Project promotion that is more targeted will require different strategies in order to attract suitable applicants. For example, NCUs and TAOs may need to work through different networks and offer different kinds of assistance to reach specific segments of the CVT market. At present this is not widely recognised as an issue. It is nonetheless an area where some NCUs have accumulated valuable experiences that might be usefully exchanged.

3.2.2 Recommendations

Consideration should be given to more differentiated project promotion strategies at the same time as calls for proposals are made.

These strategies should include consideration of different forms of technical assistance and communication through different channels.

NCUs should be encouraged to document and exchange the experiences they have already acquired regarding projects promotion within targeted segments of CVT.

3.2.3 Sources of Advice and Assistance

The FORCE approach to project promotion and selection has maintained two distinct sources of information and advice for project applicants at a European and Member State level, through the TAO and the NCUs. This has been acknowledged by project applicants and others as being of value, particularly in the pre-application stage. It has enabled project applicants to have either multiple sources of advice or to choose to access one of these main sources according to their own criteria.

3.2.4 Recommendations

The value of retaining this dual structure has been demonstrated by FORCE. A source of advice and assistance at both national and European levels should continue to be a part of any future programme design.

3.2.5 Improving Project Selection

Project selection procedures in FORCE have generally been effective in identifying applicants that conform to the Programme's policies and operational criteria as specified in the FORCE *Vademecum*. However three areas for improvement have been identified.

First, there is the question of the interface between European and Member State priorities. An examination as part of this evaluation of the process of project selection generally demonstrated consistency between the assessment ratings of all parties: the Commission, individual experts and Member States. However, there remained some instances where discrepancies between European and Member State priorities came to the fore during the process of project selection. For example the one party may emphasise national relevance, and the other the transnational strengths of a potential project. It appears that the issues of how to balance national and European priorities in the selection process have not always been fully addressed in FORCE.

It may be possible to incorporate certain national criteria for selection more explicitly into a European programme if such criteria were agreed, for example, at the FORCE/EUROTECNET Committee (or its equivalent) at an early enough stage. Another possibility is that Member States are able to prioritise certain types of projects, provided they otherwise satisfy programme eligibility criteria. An example of this might be if there is likely to be synergy between these prioritised projects and national, regional or sectoral initiatives within a Member State.

A second issue is the need for any project selection process to be seen to be independent and open to all potential applicants. Whilst there is no evidence that the selection process is not independent and open, perceptions of the process vary. NCUs need to be independent of special interests and independent experts have to be seen to be independent. Such high standards of independence are difficult, especially because FORCE has been relatively successful in involving so many of the relevant national agencies and sources of expertise in the programme.

In some Member States anxieties were expressed about the independence of NCUs seen as too identified with particular labour market groups and in other instances the independence of experts was questioned when they had been closely involved with vocational training or public CVT bodies, or even with FORCE national representation.

Third, whilst the FORCE selection process appears successful in selecting projects, there has been dissatisfaction among those who unsuccessfully applied for FORCE funding. In particular, applications which were not assessed as being of a high enough quality (as opposed to those for which funding was not available) were not given advice which could enable them to reshape their proposals. This may make it particularly difficult for organisations or enterprises new to European programmes to make a first step to transnational involvement in this, or another European project.

3.2.6 Recommendations

The Commission should consider the appropriate balance between Member States and programme criteria for selection, with a view to deciding whether better linkage can be achieved between national and European priorities for project selection.

When choosing bodies and individual to act on behalf of programmes such as FORCE, consideration should always be given to the need for Programme actors to be seen to be independent and open to all appropriate labour market interests who might wish to participate in the programme.

Feedback mechanisms are needed to ensure that those who are **not** successful in their application are given sufficient feedback to enable them to learn how they might participate in this and similar programmes in future.

3.3 Results of FORCE Projects

3.3.1 Marginalised Groups in a CVT Programme

Force projects are concerned with a broad range of target groups and potential beneficiaries of CVT. In line with FORCE objectives newer technologies and less stable employment circumstances are targeted by FORCE, as are SMEs. Whilst the beneficiaries of FORCE projects include a wide range of different skill and occupational groupings, they are more likely to be skilled and semi-skilled workers than the unskilled, clerical or supervisory grades. However, a feature of FORCE projects is that they have multiple targets and beneficiaries and are unlikely to concentrate on training materials, products or assessments relevant to only one occupational group.

Groups more marginal to the labour market, for example women, ethnic minorities, seasonal and part-time workers are less well represented amongst the objectives and target groups of projects. This lack of representation occurs at two levels. First, the targeting of these groups occurs less frequently within FORCE projects, and second, where it does occur it is not likely to be the focus of the project itself but only one of a number of objectives pursued. Case study material in particular demonstrated that whilst the outcomes of the projects may be seen as relevant to disadvantaged groups, the needs of these groups do not constitute a focal point for the development of products and/or needs assessment. In a programme which is enterprise-led this is perhaps an expected outcome as needs identified by enterprises are unlikely to focus on groups marginal to the labour market in this way.

3.3.2 Recommendations

The Commission should consider whether generic employer led CVT programmes are a suitable vehicle for training of marginalised labour market groups. This is a decision that will have to be confronted in future programmes as the experience of FORCE suggests that marginalised groups are not adequately dealt with by those who currently apply for programme funding.

Strategies to improve the prospects of marginalised labour market groups could include:

- the creation of a new class of projects that particularly target disadvantaged groups as their primary objective; and,
- the inclusion of new classes of applicant, such as training bodies and other intermediary organisations able to represent the needs of groups at present marginal to the labour market.

3.3.3 Enhancing the Transferability of FORCE Products

FORCE has succeeded in sponsoring transnational measures which appear to be producing new CVT related products with considerable transfer potential, in particular between the different European regions.

The evaluation has demonstrated that the extent to which FORCE products are transferable depends on the type of product, how the partners collaborate and the context in which they operate. The transfer potential of products is likely to be enhanced where transnational partners set joint objectives and priorities and work together collaboratively. There is also evidence to suggest that the less specific forms of product are, the more transferable. Products which are highly contextualised become difficult to transfer to another context. Hence training methodologies and infrastructures are easier to transfer than actual training materials and assessment systems. Transfer will also be affected by the stage of development of the sector vocational training within different Member States.

Accepting that there are limits to transfer of products, the evaluation, and particularly the case study material, suggests that the transfer potential and the development of transfer strategies could be strengthened in FORCE projects. Projects do not always address the issue of transfer, and budget cutbacks often lead to initial plans to disseminate products being scaled down or withdrawn altogether. In addition, the issue of copyright has been given by some projects as a particular barrier to dissemination leaving it unclear as to the ownership of products and the responsibility for transfer strategies.

3.3.4 Recommendations

FORCE and similar CVT project should be encouraged to specify the contribution of each transnational partner to product development and dissemination at start-up and reflect this within project resource allocation.

TFHR needs to specify its own checklist of factors likely to enhance transferability and include such checklists in guidance to applicants and in technical assistance offered to projects. Understandings about transfer that now exist in FORCE need to be built into projects at an early stage and not added once projects are well advanced.

Copyright and intellectual property rights issues should be clarified and appropriate model contracts devised to remove this potential barrier to the transferability of training products.

3.3.5 Strengthening the Transnational Dimension of Projects

Transnationality is a key feature of FORCE project partnerships. Whilst this was sometimes weak in the first round of FORCE applications it has been strengthened in the second and third calls. These FORCE projects demonstrate partnerships based primarily on transnational - as opposed to predominantly national or cross-frontier arrangements. However, there are two areas for some concern, first in the degree of real involvement of partners; and second in relation to funding cutbacks.

Evidence from the survey of projects and the case studies indicates that many projects do not involve partners in defining objectives or substantial collaboration. This reduces the potential of transnational involvement and European value-added. Cutbacks in funding that arise over selection and contract negotiation also seem to weaken the transnational basis of FORCE projects. Often cutbacks in funding lessen the role of transnational partners and result in less collaboration or transnational dissemination.

One contribution to strengthening transnationality taken by the FORCE TAO in cooperation with national NCUs has been to provide a list of potential transnational partners for those not already in touch with other EU partners. However this action cannot of itself fully deal with the needs of those enterprises (and other CVT actors) entering in to European cooperation for the first time. The evidence of this evaluation, mirroring other research, is that strong partnerships take time to build up and cannot simply be created for the purposes of a particular CVT project. This suggests that TFHR needs to consider steps that allow new partnerships to evolve.

3.3.6 Recommendations

TFHR and TAO need to be aware of the importance of internal project management arrangements and the allocation of funds between partners in ensuring effective transnational cooperation. Particular attention should be given to the effects of budget cutbacks, ensuring that transnational elements are adequately resourced.

Where enterprises and other CVT actors have little transnational experience, opportunities should be created that allow such experience to be strengthened. One approach might be to use exchange projects as an explicit stage in the progression towards stronger links, that were later capable of supporting more ambitious pilot and qualifications projects.

3.3.7 Social Partner Involvement in Transnational Projects

Where Social Partners have been involved in FORCE projects this is regarded by project coordinators to have had beneficial effects. Social Partners active in FORCE tended to be those who were previously involved in CVT and other vocational training activities. Although this would need to be confirmed in any final evaluation of the FORCE programme, the evidence suggests that FORCE has tended to replicate rather than extend Social Partner involvement.

Use of the general category, Social Partners, in FORCE sometimes serves to obscure which Social Partners are involved. Case material and interviews suggest that as an enterprise based programme, FORCE is likely to facilitate the involvement of employer led associations rather than employee led associations and trade unions. This probably reflects the greater experience among employers, initiating CVT activities and measures. Survey results suggest that there is untapped demand for greater Social Partner involvement in CVT - from both employer and employee organisations - than FORCE has been able to respond to.

In order for any group or organisation to participate in a transnational project they need to have a clear role and an identifiable contribution to make. Anecdotal evidence from this evaluation suggests that a number of positive roles can be identified. For example, employer associations can use innovations in CVT to promote sectoral and regional development; and trade unions can encourage an interest in CVT among their members whilst also disseminating findings and results.

In very few cases have trade unions taken a lead in transnational projects, but where this has happened it has also been positively regarded.

3.3.8 Recommendations

A review should be undertaken of the extent of active Social Partner involvement in FORCE. One purpose of this review should be to identify the kinds of contributions that both employer and employee led bodies can each best make to transnational CVT projects. This will be of value in preparing guidance for future CVT initiatives within the scope of LEONARDO.

Any attempt to increase active Social Partner involvement will require the pursuit of several strategies at the same time. These might, for example, include: more careful targeting during promotion of projects; working with umbrella organisations to reach other Social Partners; and strengthening further the support of networks among Social Partners so that they can provide a channel of communication and recruitment.

A monitoring system might also be instituted at the selection stage. This should keep track of the level of Social Partner demand for participation and the extent to which an acceptable level of quality projects from employer and employee led organisations are included in the Programme.

3.4 Results of FORCE Studies

3.4.1 Studies and Surveys

Sectoral surveys and studies are in two parts: sectoral overviews and case studies. Potentially these two parts are mutually reinforcing, however this potential has not so far been fully realised.

Case studies are intended to represent 'innovative' and 'significant' practice, and not necessarily to be representative in a statistical sense of national CVT. However in order to select case studies that are both significant and transferable instances of training practice, sectoral overviews would need to be more systematic and focused.

Research teams need to explain the dynamics shaping CVT innovation as well as describe current enterprise level practice. On this basis criteria for case selection will be easier to derive: at present these selections rest heavily on nomination by Social Partners and researchers.

It may also be useful to phase the two parts differently, i.e. to allow sufficient time to elapse between the two parts. The results of sectoral overviews can then be fed into the location of suitable case studies.

3.4.2 Recommendations

Sectoral overviews should attempt a more explicit focus on innovations in CVT at an enterprise level.

Any required outcome of these overviews should be criteria for the selection of innovation case studies in each national context.

Greater elapse time is needed between sectoral overviews and case studies for the results of the former to feed into the latter.

3.4.3 Quality Assurance for Surveys and Studies

Whenever research is deployed in a complex policy environment such as the FORCE programme, there is a potential for tension between two sets of interests: the research/methodological on the one hand, and the policy oriented on the other. In such a setting it is advisable to put in place quality assurance mechanisms to satisfy policy makers (eg. national representatives) that research studies are properly

balanced and at the same time ensure that researchers are able to produce independent work to a high standard. In the judgement of the evaluation team existing quality assurance mechanisms for studies and surveys in FORCE should be strengthened. Such mechanisms are especially needed in two areas: that of research team selection and the processing of research findings and reports. Selection of research teams has, as at present, to be based partly on competence criteria (eg. knowledge of CVT and sectors) and partly on acceptability to enterprises and Social Partners. Selection has also to embody open access for potential research teams to study possibilities; and research quality criteria, such as professional and scientific reputation. The existing 'nomination' of research teams by Member State representatives does not necessarily guarantee these aspects of the selection process.

Research findings and especially the conclusions derived from such findings in programmes such as FORCE will always be subject to intense scrutiny by policy makers, Social Partners and Commission officials. There is no current mechanism for the independent scrutiny of study findings and reports, nor mechanisms that protect the independence of researchers and their conclusions.

3.4.4 Recommendations

Stronger mechanisms should be put in place to assure the technical quality of Studies/Surveys and the independence of research teams.

Such mechanisms are advisable in particular when research teams are selected and when reports and conclusions are being prepared. Among the mechanisms that should be considered are: open tender procedures for major studies/surveys; a research/study role or office within TFHR to advise on technical standards and methodologies and possibly assist with research management, and peer-review processes.

The above mechanisms are likely also to be relevant across a number of future programmes within 'Leonardo' and 'Socrates'.

3.4.5 Research Management

European sectors surveys and studies bring together teams of multi-national researchers to undertake a complex research task. This research task needs to respect diverse national contexts but still be capable of integration within a common framework at a European level. Research of this kind requires sophisticated research management skills. The coordinators of studies need to be capable of animating large teams, and willing to invest time to do so, in order to ensure coherence across the research teams in different Member States. They also need to be able to integrate inputs from Social Partners appropriately. A range of solutions is needed to strengthen

research management both at the time researchers are selected and subsequently.

3.4.6 Recommendations

The selection of research teams and in particular coordinators should be made according to criteria such as sectoral and CVT expertise; research management and animation capability at European level; and ability to work with company management, employer organisations, and trade union inputs.

Frameworks should be required of all research coordinators at the beginning of studies to facilitate cross-study integration. These frameworks should be used as the basis of agreements with national research teams.

Animation activities coordinators should animate and manage their studies to ensure that research teams based in Member States continue to work within the agreed starting frameworks.

General 'advisory notes' should be prepared by the TFHR for research coordinators and team members highlighting good practice in the management of cross national European research.

3.4.7 Contractual Policy and CVT

Contractual policy analysis in FORCE to date has been described in this evaluation as essentially exploratory in nature. Contractual policy was narrowly defined (collective bargaining, joint action and agreement between Social Partners); studies were descriptive rather than evaluative; and only limited progress was made in comparing the strengths and weaknesses of different systems operating in different Member States. It may well be that because of political sensitivities, such exploratory research is all that can be envisaged. However there is undoubtedly scope for further studies insofar as there is evidence that contractual policy and the way trade unions, employers' organisations, and enterprise management conduct negotiations within such policy frameworks - is one important factor influencing the adoption of innovative CVT practice at the level of the enterprise. Should there be a willingness to investigate this topic further, the evaluation has identified a number of directions for future research. However because of the undoubted sensitivities that surround the topic, it is important that multiple criteria and pluralistic models of contractual policy are the basis of any further research.

3.4.8 Recommendations

In order to encourage an exchange of good practice in contractual policy and CVT further work is needed to develop common terminology and classifications. One starting point could be to classify good

practice examples of contractual policy already identified in greater detail, e.g. in terms of form, content and apparent outcomes.

These 'outcomes' should include the benefits of identified arrangements, i.e. in what ways good practice contributes to better investment in CVT, and greater access to CVT for the less qualified.

Evaluative rather than descriptive studies will need to be based on some set of criteria. Should this type of study be continued in future, Social Partners - at sectoral, national and European levels - and Member State representatives should be encouraged to identify *their* priority domains and criteria. This will allow different criteria to be incorporated into the evaluation of future case studies and the design of future projects led by the Social Partners.

It is unlikely that a single European model of good practice in contractual policy and practice can be identified. Different models reflect the different institutional, industrial and economic circumstances of Member States. However it would be desirable to further clarify the basic 'models' of contractual policy and collective bargaining that apply to CVT in different Member States and sectors. It is also desirable to investigate common themes - such as co-investment, mutual fund management and training needs of Social Partner representatives.

3.5 Capitalising on the Achievement of FORCE

3.5.1 *FORCE Projects as an Innovation Resource*

The completion of the first generation of FORCE projects in 1993 with the second generation to follow in 1994 raises the question: What further can be expected from these projects? On the assumption that FORCE has successfully tapped into and reinforced innovative practice in Member States, completed projects should be regarded as an innovation resource for CVT at a European level. In particular completed projects constitute a distinctly European resource because of the expertise they have acquired in transnational collaboration. The value of such an innovation resource is unlikely to be static. Experience suggests that innovators tend to continue to innovate. The TFHR is therefore in a position to capitalise on the networks of expertise arising from completed FORCE projects as a 'gateway' into CVT innovation linking Member States, sectors, regions, enterprises and Social Partners.

There are a number of ways in which these networks could be organised. For example all existing projects could be seen as the core of a network, or alternatively links could be established across completed projects - perhaps focusing on labour market groups, skill segments, sectors, training technologies, etc.

Given the costs incurred in transnational exchange and the need to maximise enterprise and SME participation it will be necessary to meet the marginal costs of travel and attendance at workshops if these are required.

3.5.2 Recommendations

TFHR should devise a strategy that capitalises on the innovative capacity and transnational experience of completed FORCE projects.

Such projects should be regarded as a vehicle for continuing exchange about innovative CVT practice.

Some financial contribution to the marginal costs of transnational exchange should also be considered.

3.5.3 Surveys and Studies through FORCE Projects

FORCE projects have until recently been regarded as separate from studies and surveys, although there has been some convergence in the third 'call' for projects in 1993. Given the number of FORCE projects now underway or approaching completion it becomes possible to regard them as a valuable source of data in their own right. Transnational projects constitute a series of 'action experiments' which to a greater or lesser degree have generated new understandings about CVT across the EU.

In order to maximise the yield from the data now accumulating, TFHR should put in place appropriate monitoring systems. If properly implemented such a monitoring system, perhaps organised as a project database, could provide valuable lessons for future CVT programmes at a European level. In this way a yield is more likely to be obtained from both successful and less successful project experience.

3.5.4 Recommendations

TFHR should maximise the CVT research potential from existing and completed FORCE projects.

A monitoring system/database should be created with the aim of deriving lessons from the experience of FORCE projects and partners.

3.5.5 Enhancing Dissemination

The volume of survey/study material generated by FORCE is now considerable. If the above recommendation is followed a similar volume of material can also be generated from the projects strand.

A comprehensive dissemination strategy is now needed, if this existing material is to be made available to those who can use it best. Specific audiences will require different formats and different 'editions' of material. In the sectoral surveys and studies for example much of the material in the European reports is written in a style and at a level unlikely to be accessible to sector based trainers and managers. In addition there is a wealth of material in national sector reports that have not been fully utilised in European reports, but would be of potential use by CVT actors.

Experience in FORCE also focuses attention on wider possibilities for dissemination. Effective dissemination cannot rely entirely on the efforts of TFHR or Member state agencies. If the project networks of information exchange recommended above are developed, they too can become a vehicle for dissemination. In the longer term and in future CVT programme, targeting particular enterprises, sectors, or labour market groups at the project promotion and selection stage could also enhance dissemination. Ideally dissemination 'systems' should be created at the same time as projects are selected.

3.5.6 Recommendations

TFHR should prepare a comprehensive dissemination strategy that is intended to gain maximum yield from material already generated by FORCE studies/surveys and by FORCE projects.

This dissemination strategy should differentiate between different target audiences and re-edit and reproduce existing material in formats suitable to these audiences.

In future EU CVT programmes dissemination 'systems' and networks should be set up at the earliest possible stage, i.e. when projects are selected.

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