

Qualification profile “Second Hand” on the basis of work process-related standards



Proposal for development of networks
for a sustainable implementation of the products
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Content

Introduction.....	4
1. Proposals for Germany.....	5
1.1 Status quo of the Second Hand sector in Germany	5
1.2 Activities for sustainable implementation of the project products	7
1.3 Proposals for a further sustainable implementation of the projects products	9
2. Proposals for Austria	10
2.1 Status quo of the Second Hand sector in Austria.....	10
2.2 Activities for sustainable implementation of the project products	14
2.3 Proposals for a further sustainable implementation of the projects products ..	15
3. Proposals for Belgium.....	15
3.1 Status of the Second Hand sector in Belgium.....	18
3.2 Activities for sustainable implementation of the project products	20
3.3 Proposals for a further sustainable implementation of the projects products ..	21
4. Proposals for Bulgaria	21
4.1 Status quo of the Second Hand sector in Bulgaria.....	21
4.2 Activities for sustainable implementation of the project products	22
4.3 Proposals for a further sustainable implementation of the projects products ..	24
5. Proposals for Finland.....	25
5.1 Status of the Second Hand sector in Finland	25
5.2 Activities for sustainable implementation of the project products	27
5.3 Proposals for a further sustainable implementation of the projects products..	28
6. Proposals for Slovenia.....	30
6.1 The status quo in the Second Hand sector in Slovenia.....	30
6.2 Activities for sustainable implementation of the project products	31
6.3 Proposals for further sustainable implementation of the project products	32

Introduction

It is expected in the future that the European Second Hand sector that is heterogeneous both structurally and with respect to its employees and product ranges will grow. The sector analyses that were carried out by the previous Leonardo da Vinci-project “QualiProSecondHand” within the European Second Hand sector have clearly demonstrated that the sector especially will grow in the fields textile, CD/books, furniture and electrical equipment. This is due to changes in customer behaviour, environmental awareness and future European environmental regulations. Even today, the sector offers plenty of potential for employees, especially for disadvantaged people. Increasing quality standards entail inevitably a need for qualification. Since the currently available, mostly punctual and not sector-specific qualifications cannot meet the requirements, it is necessary to develop a sector-specific qualification. Future requirement can only be met through appropriate qualification initiatives as well as learning methods and concepts that are adapted to the specifics of the sector and that can help people acquire the necessary know-how.

Based on this background the Leonardo da Vinci-project “QualiProSH II” was aimed at the transfer and sustainable implementation of selected sector-specific qualification modules of the qualification profile which was developed on work-process related standards in the previous project. Furthermore were implemented work-process based quality standards, an instrument to identify the need of qualification of employees and an instrument to evaluate the quality of the qualification. All products were tested three times with target group – employees and qualifier in the Second Hand sector – further developed, adapted, optimized and implemented. By means of the implementation of the products will be aimed a sustainable improvement of the qualification of the employees and higher acceptance of their work. In addition, it can be created by Europe-wide uniform sector-specific and on work process-related standards based qualification modules new employment prospects in the labour market. Furthermore the mobility of the employees can be improved, their competencies and know-how is more comparable and finally the quality within the companies will be improved and their professionalization will be advanced.

The testing and implementation of single selected sector-specific qualification modules and the additional products can be only a further step towards a sustainable total qualification, e.g. in a form of further training for the Second Hand sector in Europe. To reach this aim as well as the above mentioned aims it is necessary to build up networks that support the sustainable implementation. Relevant networks, e.g. cooperation between associations and companies or companies with each other, offer themselves as a optimum basis for a sustainable implementation of the project products. They have on one hand sector-specific know-how and relevant experiences in qualification that is necessary to go on with the development of the qualification and on the other hand they have good contacts to the user, the employees and companies, of the sector. To reach a sustainable implementation of the project the project partners have already carried out different kind dissemination and implementation activities during the project time. But to ensure that the products not only will be implemented after the projects end, but their development is further driven forward, it is important to develop visions and ideas in this regard. In the framework of the following document each partner country first briefly presents the currently situation of the national Second Hand sector, so that the country-specific

proposals for a sustainable implementation can be better classified in the overall context. Then, in the respective second chapter of each country, the already done implementation activities will be explained. In the third final chapter of each country, the project partners present based on the county-specific conditions and possibilities proposals how to go on with a further development of a whole sector-specific qualification and how to build up networks for a sustainable implementation. In this regard the partners develop visions and ideas and also obtain their view what actors should be involved in such networks.

1. Proposals for Germany

1.1 Status quo of the Second Hand Sector in Germany

Since a number of years, the trade with used goods and recycling has been in the public spotlight. This development is due to different ecological, economic and social reasons. Nevertheless the processing of and the trade with Second Hand merchandise is not a new phenomenon. Starting with the late Middle Ages up to modern times, for example, the trade with and the handling of used clothing in Germany has been clearly defined in terms of the kind of goods, the quantity of goods and an indication of the places where trade was permitted. In addition there were stipulations on the qualification and the properties of the merchants¹. These formerly established regulation systems disappeared over the centuries and finally became obsolete.

Because of the heterogeneity of the Second Hand sector it is more than essential to first focus on the definition of “Second Hand sector” and its limitations in this project. In addition, it is also important to define the concepts such as *sale/retail* as well as *re-use and recycling* which are closely related to the concept of Second Hand. The Second Hand sector as the focus of the previous project “QualiProSecondHand” was delimited and defined (after consultations with all project partners) as follows:

„The Second Hand sector includes the commercial trade and the non-profit sale of a range of consumer goods of any kind as well as the main tasks involved such as the procurement of goods, their processing and the refeeding of the merchandise into the closed loop of goods with the aim to make the used goods available again for their original purpose of use. So the focus should be on the traditional trade of used consumer goods, which therefore excludes auction portals and companies as well as exchange markets. In order to avoid any overlapping with other sectors and to decide on a clear delineation with regard to the traded goods, capital goods as well as real estate, cars and antiques are excluded. The trade (e.g. the real estate market) with such goods represents partly a sector of its own or is covered by other sectors (e.g. automotive trade).”

Besides the presented definitional delimitation of the Second Hand sector within the framework of the Leonardo project “QualiProSecondHand”, the flea markets were only taken into consideration to a very limited extent. Although flea markets traditionally play a very important role in the field of trade with used goods in many European countries, these markets could only be considered in the study as a platform for commercial traders who either exclusively operate there or who make

¹ Reinhold Reiter (2003): Referat „altgewerker, lumpler, kannenplecker“; Tagung „Recycling in Geschichte und Gegenwart“, Bergakademie Freiberg / Sachsen.

use of their flea market stalls as an additional sales opportunity apart from a shop or online sales and distribution.

According to the figures provided by the Statistisches Bundesamt (German Federal Statistical Office), the number and the turnover of taxable companies dealing with used goods increased from 4,519 (1,84 billion Deutschmark) in 1998 to 4,632 (1,1 billion Euro) in 2000. The association of Second Hand traders “*Second-Hand vernetzt e.V.*” in Münster knows more than 6.000 Second Hand companies. According to cautious estimations, however, the number of such companies is said to amount to at least 12.000 decently managed enterprises. The estimated number of unreported companies is likely to be considerably higher (Second-Hand vernetzt e.V., 2007). Overall the German Second Hand market is composed of privately owned companies and of companies assigned to the social economy. The Second Hand trade in terms of social economy is often part of the business fields of the respective enterprises.

In Germany as well as also in other European counties the number of Second Hand offers is higher in cities and areas with a high population density than in rural regions. The reasons for this may be the higher number of inhabitants in the cities and even a higher acceptance of used goods compared to rural regions. Above all two parallel trends can be observed in municipal areas. On the one hand the trend towards the purchase of used goods is increasing due to the worsening economic situation of many private households. On the other hand there is a big community (above all younger people) who consider Second Hand items as “trendy” and modern. Compared to municipal areas, the rural population is rather reluctant to use Second Hand goods or even rejects them completely.

The Second Hand sector is a particularly diverse industrial sector comprising a wide range of products and services covered by individual sellers, charities, enterprises and multinationals. The Second-Hand market is fundamentally part of the retail market where goods are sold for re-use. In Germany around 60% of the privately operated companies employ up to 6 employees with a turnover of around € 1 Million in 2005 (Compared to this, only 4% of the German enterprises employ more than 60 persons and have an average turnover of €5 million). In Germany, for example, there are not only pure retail businesses (and/or partly specialized retail shops for Second Hand merchandise) on the privately operating market but also limited companies (*GmbH*), retail commissioners and franchisers.

Prior to a further characterization of the two forms of enterprises, the definition of not-for-profit enterprises as a basis of the project QualiProSecondHand will be further explained. A company in the narrower sense is a unit performing an economic or charity task activity regardless of the respective legal form of the company. Not-for-profit enterprises are organisations acting freely and charitably or privately and economically. In addition to the state and the market, these companies take over specific tasks of acquisition, promotion and/or representation of interests/ influence for their members (self-help) or for third parties. They do not pursue commercial (profit) interests but serve the charitable, social, cultural or scientific objectives of their members. This has been laid down in a charter and is generally approved within the framework of a recognition process at the time of the application for the status of public utility. The project QualiProSecondHand makes use of the description of a non-profit/ not-for-profit company for those enterprises which are recognized as charitable companies in the respective European country. Non-profit (ore better not-for-profit) enterprises thus encompass

- *companies pursuing charitable, beneficent or parochial purposes, i.e. the activities must be aimed at supporting the public on a material, mental or ethical level in an altruistic, exclusive and immediate way.*

As societies, associations, self-managed bodies, charitable societies (gGmbH or gAG), cooperatives or foundations, the board of managers may be elected or – for example in the case of foundations – certain persons or institutions may be appointed. The non-profit enterprises finance their services via membership fees, donations, allowances and/or prices and fees. Any surpluses may not be directly distributed as return on capital to members/ institutions. A certain amount of reimbursement in relation to the rendered performance is, however, possible².

Above all in the field of social work/ support for handicapped people there is a variety of organisations pursuing different charitable purposes for different motives. The not-for-profit enterprises in the Second Hand sector are often

- *social enterprises or employment companies creating work, employment and qualification for handicapped people, disadvantaged persons or other target groups of the labour market policy. The companies are either employment institutions offering qualification and a temporary employment or integration companies which are already assigned to the general labour market by the legislator.*

A final look at the Second Hand sector in Germany reveals that there are both profit oriented and not-for-profit enterprise in the field of social economy. The orientation depends on the objectives and the tasks of the respective enterprises or institutions behind them. The bigger part of the not-for-profit enterprises in Germany are companies which apart from the trade with Second Hand goods also take over other social tasks. Similar to other countries their main objective is the re-integration of disadvantaged and long-term unemployed persons into the labour market. Similar to all other countries, big organisations such as the Red Cross, Caritas etc. are operating on the German Second Hand market as well.

Apart from the simple sale in shops or department stores, non-profit enterprises also feature workshop sales or sales from stock. These enterprises are often organised in a way that the reception of goods, the sorting warehouse and the sales rooms are on the same premises. The purchased or collected goods are offered for sale after having been checked, cleaned and repaired if necessary. Interested customers can seek advice from the sales persons. In case of a reclamation the products are repaired, returned or a voucher is issued. Used electrical and electronic equipment and furniture is offered both in stores and warehouses whereas clothing or children's items, household articles, books and sound storage media are mainly sold in shops and department stores.

1.2 Activities for sustainable implementation of the project products

The project "QualiProSH II" was realized in the environment of the enterprise QAD mbH. From there, the products and results were transferred to the network partners of the company – the Network Second Chance Ost - and implemented. The basis of the implementation was the continuous exchange of information and the transfer and presentation of the products. The modules themselves as well as complementary

² vgl. <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Non-Profit-Organisation> (06.12.2007)

products were tested, adapted and optimized in the social goods hall / social department store of the company QAD mbH with employees who are working in the Second Hand field.

The transfer to the network Second Chance Ost was done against the background of a sustainable implementation of the products in other companies. Therefore this network was very suitable because it is a coalition of partners in eastern Saxony who all operate in the second sector on one hand and on the other hand they all have a focus on employment and qualification. To the partner of the network belong

- QAD Dresden mbH – Qualifizierungs- und Arbeitsförderungsgesellschaft Dresden mbH (training and employment promotion company mbH Dresden)
- Netz-Werk e.V. Mittweida
- GAB Glauchau – Gesellschaft für Arbeits- und Berufsförderung Glauchau mbH, (Society for Labour and Vocational Training Glauchau mbH)
- GAB Weißwasser – Gesellschaft für Arbeits- und Berufsförderung Weißwasser mbH (Society for Labour and Vocational Training)
- OAI GmbH Neustadt – Ostsächsische Ausbildungs-, Arbeitsbeschaffungs- und Investmanagement- Gesellschaft mbH (east Saxony training, job creation and Management Investment-company)
- ABS WeTexbau Chemnitz mbH (- Society for Employment Promotion, Employment and Development Ltd. structure, tools and textile machinery)
- SAQ Zwickau GmbH – (Saxon construction and qualification mbH)

Beside the network Second Chance Ost and its enterprises the results and products were also disseminated in the Umweltzentrum Dresden (environmental centre) and in the Trägerverbund Dresden (carrier composite) to implement sustainable. In the following this institutions should be explained:

Second Chance Ost

The company is based on different theories like

- We strengthen the social infrastructure by continuously and offer competent social services.
- We provide social and related quality standards and the appreciation of our customers and employees.
- We assure sustainability by creating regional product cycles.
- We are always looking for innovative solutions in our region to keep pace with developments in society and realize our step above principles for action in the future can be.

Within this network, the project's results were presented on a regular basis. There are a lot of interests for re-use of the developed modules and products.

Environmental Center Dresden – (Umweltzentrum Dresden)

Environmental Center in Dresden, there are people together who are committed to nature and the environment, education, social and environmentally friendly products and technologies. The Environment Centre Dresden combines a large spectrum of associations, initiatives and small businesses under one roof. The Second Hand goods market is interesting from an ecological perspective for the

environmental center. With the management of the Environmental Center, there was a regular experience. They are also in perspective, a key contact point for further stabilization and professionalization of the Second Hand range. Therefore, they operate as a multiplier for a sustainable implementation of the products in other enterprises and institutions.

Carrier composite Dresden – (Trägerverbund Dresden)

The carrier assembly "Publicly funded work Dresden" is a voluntary association established in 1998 by legal persons, the labour market services to meet the regional needs of the city of Dresden, the partners of the region, offering particular the City Council and the Labour Office, voted. The QAD mbH is a member of the carrier network and has informed members of the carrier assembly about the Leonardo project results and products. They also operate as a multiplier for a sustainable implementation of the products.

1.3 Proposals for a further sustainable implementation of the projects products

The QAD mbH plans to include the modules into the regular qualification of their target group. The participants of the employment measures are long term unemployed people. These people are recruited by the company and employed for half a year - at the current funding conditions – with the aim to make them fit for the job market.

Furthermore the modules and products should be sustainable implemented in the companies of the network Second Chance Ost. These are social enterprises in the whole region of Saxonia – including structurally weak areas - who acting in the Second Hand sector and have the aim to qualify and to employ their employees to bring them back into work after the end of the employment measure as well as to open them a new vocational perspective. Furthermore exist a close connection to the regional employment offices and job centres, which are the decision-makers regarding the decision who of the unemployed people will be supported by qualifications. To sensitize them for a funding of a qualification in the Second Hand sector is a further basis for a sustainable implementation of the products. Thus the target group on one hand can be reached easier and on the other hand, the qualification can be carried out by skilled workers or instructors in the companies themselves during the daily work. Beside their experiences they can use the products and described teaching and learning methods (e.g. coaching, learning-by-doing) as well as the didactic concepts and the numerous training materials of the modules to implement them in their qualification programme. The objective is the sustainable implementation of the developed modules and complementary products as a further training / qualification for a limited time employees in social enterprises, which operate on the Second Hand market. Therefore the area of East Saxonia plays a pioneering role in Germany.

Beyond this region the products will be disseminated in whole Germany by the German project advisers, the BAG Arbeit eV and the association Second Hand vernetzt e.V. Both of them bring the products close to their members. The practical and verifiable implementation of the individual products will enable enterprises in the socio-economic field, which mostly offer qualification, to implement them sustainably.

For employees of the private economic sector the qualification can be currently established as a free training offer. As qualifiers on one hand consultancies and on the other hand different associations as well as free qualification institutions are suitable. How far they sustainable offer such a qualification depends on the future demand for a sector-specific qualification. Because of the expected growth of the sector and the desire of the companies to be more professional and to offer a better quality, it is expected that an appropriate qualifications will establish sustainable in the future.

To achieve a sustainable implementation it is necessary, however, that the labour authorities and social partners accept the qualification for the Second Hand sector as an official training and education. For this purpose it is necessary to take numerous bureaucratic hurdles. These are not insurmountable. This would be also the first step toward the development of an initial training for the Second Hand sector.

2. Proposals for Austria

2.1 Status quo of the Second Hand sector in Austria

In the scope of the first project QualiProSecondHand the then Austrian project partner "die umweltberatung" (Eco Counselling Austria) carried out in 2007 an analysis of the Austrian Second Hand sector³. The document that consolidated the results made detailed information available for download on the project website **www.qualiprosh.eu**. The most important characteristics of the sector are again briefly consolidated and listed for understanding the following pages. They will be expanded by the experiences during the project running time of QualiProSecondHand II and findings of the Austrian Partners Association RepaNet - Reparaturnetzwerk Österreich.

The figures quoted in this section of the document come from the mentioned sector analysis and relate to - as far as no others listed - to the year 2007. Now the Second Hand sector has surely changed by the alterations of the legal regulations - keyword: EU Waste Framework Directive (abbreviated in text to WFD2008) - and the implementation of some initiatives concerning this, on which is later more precisely elaborated, the 2007 figures are still suitable to convey an impression of the structure of the Austrian Second Hand sector. At this point it is maintained that the RepaNet Association makes no claim on completeness in the production of this document, but reflects its influences and knowledge gained in the scope of project implementation and other tasks.

In addition to private people, who sell their goods primarily in flea markets and/or the internet, in the year 2007 around 880 businesses were involved in the Second Hand sector in Austria. In the business community private and socioeconomic companies must be differentiated. The sector analysis has revealed that this economic sector is regionally organised and that approx. 68% of the businesses involve scrap dealers and antique dealers. The proportion of second hand shops occupies about 22%, approx. 10% belong to the socioeconomic business circle.

³ Hackel A., Leutgöb J.: Sektoranalyse für den Second Hand Sektor in Österreich. Leonardo da Vinci programme of the European Union „QualiProSecondHand“. A project for the professionalization of the Second Hand sector, Vienna 2007

In 2007 in Austria, on average, one second hand business existed per 9 400 inhabitants, although a steep town-country gradient can be identified. Furthermore during the course of the project phase of QualiProSecondHand II, RepaNet additionally registered a difference between East and West Austria. In East Austria a significantly larger proportion of second hand businesses exist, primarily in the private sector. In comparison to this, the mostly socioeconomically organised West Austrian business can consistently come up with a noticeably earlier company founding. The experience resulting from this is reflected in the size of the company, the comparatively high amount of employees, the level of professionalism, and the quantity of sales.

In the private economic sector sole traders operate primarily with little or no staff, usually less than 10 employees. The companies are very often run as family businesses and generate only small profits.

As these businesses - just as the socioeconomic businesses - acquire most of their goods from house clearances the barrier between antiques, scrap and used goods is fluid in Austria. By law second hand trade is considered to be so-called "Free trade", to the practice of which no training and qualifications are linked. The knowledge gain and the further training are results of individual initiative.

Fewer businesses operate in the socioeconomic area of the Austrian second hand sector which are just as regionally organised. Their task is the preparation of people in difficult life situations for reintegration into the job market. This is achieved by providing relatively secure jobs limited from 6 to a maximum of 12 months for this so-called "transitory work force". The essential social work care and/or technical instruction are carried out by the securely employed so-called "key workers". In the Austrian second hand sector the socioeconomic companies may have an amount of employees, incl. "key workers", of over 50 people. They receive state subsidies for the implementation of their tasks and they must raise the rest of the amount by a self-generating funds quota.⁴

The socioeconomic companies' entry into the second hand branch took place initially on the basis of the cheap possibility of acquisition of goods and the numerous qualification fields offered there for the transitory workers. A clear change in responsibilities took place here in recent years. The increasingly scarce funds corresponding to the strained economic situation lead to a constant increase in the self-generating funds quota. At the same time the demand for second hand products grew due to socially disadvantaged parts of the population. The gradual implementation of the WFD2008, happening since the end of 2010, additionally clarified which economic, social and ecological potential is appropriate to the second hand sector (waste prevention, retention of cultural goods, redistribution of wealth, etc.) that is valid to be used by the socioeconomic companies.

The business fields which are involved in the second hand sector have remained the same since the sector analysis of 2007. Two legal regulations from the EU exerted a great influence in recent decades on the development of the economic branch and lifted its social significance. The so-called WEEE Directive⁵ specifies a free take back

⁴ Meissner M., Bernhofer G., Pladerer C.: Re-Use Shops Steiermark Businessplan. Österreichisches Ökologie-Institut (Hg.), Vienna. November 2010

⁵ WEEE Directive 2002/96/EC – Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment

requirement from old devices which in part are resold as second hand devices. Details on this decision are to be checked in the European report of QualiProSecondHand I⁶.

Since the publication of the mentioned sector analysis, the WFD2008⁷ outlines the most significant alterations. Austria ratified it in January 2011. It is considered to be precedent-setting basis for the future of the EU internal second hand sector as the reuse of used products (Re-Use) adjudicates a decisive role as a measure for the prevention and management of waste. Out of the three-tier waste hierarchy that was valid until then and which determines prioritisation, a five-tier one was developed in which, after "waste prevention on the first place, the "preparation for re-use" can be found even before recycling. The directive obliges all member states to take measures to the promotion of re-use.⁸

The Austrian second hand market has received a lot of attention because of the pilot project ReVital, started in Upper Austria in July 2009.⁹ The idea of a nation-wide networking of socioeconomic companies with the communal waste management was initially implemented here in Austria, of course with voluntary participants. The public authorities are additionally integrated into this network as funding bodies.

ReVital is a brand name for used products, with which the guarantee is linked that the purchased product is in good condition, reliable, functioning properly, safe and hygienic. Consumers recognise the ReVital certified objects with the help of the clearly recognisable stuck on logo. The aim of the project is to establish a network of collection, treatment and sales outlets for second hand goods in Upper Austria. The partners working together in the umbrella campaign benefit regarding exterior design and goods presentation, public relations and advertising material which is accompanied by a professionally designed marketing concept. A further benefit is the clearly defined quality criteria passed on to the consumer, which are checked. The following five collection categories are offered as product range:

- WEEE small
- WEEE big
- House hold contents
- Small furniture and sport and leisure equipment
- Big furniture

The areas of activity are regulated inside the network by the following measures:

The communal waste collection centres offer product procurement. A publicly owned company (LAVU AG) manages the logistics between the collection, processing and sales outlets. The quality assurance and preparation for sale take place at the socioeconomic companies. Sale of products takes place in cooperation with the non-profit employment projects that can decide whether to run a ReVital shop, in which

⁶ Arold H., Koring C.: Europäischer Bericht. Eine Untersuchung und Analyse des Second-Hand-Sektors in Europa. Leonardo da Vinci-program of the European Union „QualiProSecondHand“. A project on the professionalization of the second hand sector, Bremen 2007, p. 53f

⁷ Directive 2008/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on waste and repealing certain Directives

⁸ Meissner M., Bernhofer G., Pladerer C.: Re-Use Shops Steiermark Businessplan. Österreichisches Ökologie-Institut (Hg.), Vienna. November 2010

⁹ www.revitalistgenial.at

exclusively certified products may be sold, or whether they want to take part as a so-called "ReVital partner". The latter runs a clearly indicated department with certified objects in their local shop along side their own trade goods. The possibility of direct donations of possible Re-Use products is available at all locations. At this current point in time 4 ReVital shops and 5 ReVital partner companies exist in Upper Austria.¹⁰

The cooperation with socioeconomic and non-profit organisations shall not only achieve ecologic benefits, but also positive political effects on the job market. This message will be conveyed to the target group as a part of the entire marketing concept.

Within 18 months over 156.000kg of ReVital products were sold and in part the sales revenue tripled according to the feedback from the project partners. The project can record a reuse quota of 78%, based on pre-sorted stock. In addition 32 employment places were created¹¹.

The development in Upper Austria strengthens the timely, nearly parallel chosen route of another federal state, Styria. In their state waste management plan 2010 the objective can be found that in each RegioNext region¹² at least one socioeconomically run Re-Use Shop for the sale of used (repaired) goods will be available by 2015¹³. Under the incorporation of the stakeholder necessary for the implementation, the "Styria Re-Use Network" was set up and a business plan created as a directive that contains the "implementation concept Re-Use Styria 2011-2015".

The project is at the moment in the first of the three implementation phases¹⁴. 2011 is about the realisation of pilot activities in three areas:

- Expansion of the cooperation between the (communal) waste collection centres and the socioeconomic and Re-Use companies
- Expansion of the cooperation between the socioeconomic and Re-Use companies themselves in the areas
 - Goods exchange
 - Logistics
 - Specialisation
- Development of a cooperation between Styrian socioeconomic and Re-Use companies and furniture stores through the development of an offer packet for this sector of the private economy

At the beginning of the year 2011 the Styrian state government decided to economise 25% of its social budget. The implementation of the Styrian Re-Use network was nevertheless able to be started as it shall replace the less lucrative

¹⁰ www.revitalistgenial.at [accessed on 15. August 2011]

¹¹ Presentation by managing director Thomas Anderer on the RepaNet Infoday on 26. January 2011 in Altmünster, accessible at www.repanet.at

¹² www.regionext.steiermark.at – an initiative for the strengthening of the regional habitats. Styria comprised of the 7 RegioNext regions Liezen, Upper Styria East, Upper Styria West, East Styria, South East Styria, South West Styria and Styrian Central Region.

¹³ Meissner M., Bernhofer G.: Pladerer C., Re-Use Shops Steiermark Businessplan. Österreichisches Ökologie-Institut (Hg.), Vienna. November 2010, p. 4

¹⁴ Details and more specific information see: Meissner M., Bernhofer G., Pladerer C.: Re-Use Shops Steiermark Businessplan. Österreichisches Ökologie-Institut (Hg.), Vienna. November 2010, p. 38 ff

employment fields of some socioeconomic companies and maintain the work places of the otherwise economised employees. Furthermore the Re-Use centres enable a year round economy instead of the until now often seasonal economy of most socioeconomic organisations. As a result more market revenue and a higher self-generating fun quota is expected.

In the business plan of the Styrian initiative the availability of goods and wares and their quality, amongst other things, were defined as definite factors for economic success. The latter can be reached by clearly defined quality standards and acceptance criteria. Equally as essential is the development of the marketing concept with a consistent brand presence towards customers. The already described project ReVital had to confront the same challenges and coped - looking back from today - successfully with them. For this reason it was decided to use the ReVital label for the Styrian Re-Use network.

On a national-wide level the WFD2008 brought just as much movement in the Austrian Second Hand sector. The so-called "Re-Use Platform", an expert group from politics, the public and private waste management, social partnership, some of the well-known producers and external subject specialists, initiated in 2008 by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management (BMLFUW), works on questions of waste laws and quality assurance, amongst other things, in this context in work groups, in order to submit proposals for solutions in detail regarding these matters. One possible result discussed at the time can be the establishment of an umbrella organisation for the Re-Use sector on a national level. The Ministry sees the implementation of the directive, amongst other things, in the acquisition of the ReVital label by all nine federal states, which along side the state of origin Upper Austria is considered to be fixed for Styria, Burgenland and Tyrol. Discussions are still underway with the remaining five states.

The initiatives described here illustrate the significance of Re-Use, not only for the Austrian and European Second Hand sector, but also for other economic branches, such as e.g. waste management and social economy. The implementation of WFD2008 within the EU leaves an exciting and eventful next few years to be expected in the area of used goods.

2.2 Activities for sustainable implementation of the project products

The realisation of the training essentially added itself to the implementation of the project product as in the scope of which the contents and instruments of the participants were made known and available, which they were able to immediately check for applicability in their work environment.

Equally as fundamental are the so-called "dissemination activities" which are an intrinsic part of the project execution. Therefore two further project websites are available along side the official website for the Austrian partners (**www.repanet.at**; **www.arge.at**), which bring interested people information and results in further detail even after the project completion.

RepaNet is an umbrella association of organisations from the repair, dismantling and recycling area and the sustainable development for the purposes of agenda 21. Its

main activity lies in the promotion of developments through distributing information and networking of different organisations with each other and with the responsible authorities. The implementation of the project product therefore takes place via the association of available networks.

Two examples of illustration are given here:

As visible in the first part of this document, WFD2008 is the dominant theme of the Austrian Second Hand sector and RepaNet is significantly involved¹⁵ in its implementation. The association can let influence the results at the central location. In the mean time the findings are considered to be undisputed, that the qualification of the employees is essential for the success of the Re-Use initiatives and fortunately it was taken into account in the various implementation plans¹⁶.

For a wider product distribution RepaNet organised an information day in January 2011 on the topic "Re-Use: new impulses for social businesses", which, amongst other things, offered the possibility to introduce QualiProSecondHand II. The contents were aimed primarily - besides all the interested people - at the business managers and leading employees from socioeconomic organisations. The participation was fortunately close to 50 people, the BMLFUW was also represented. The feedback concerning the project was very positive and confirmed once more the large interest in the qualification possibilities as since the sector analysis produced during QualiProSecondHand I there were no noteworthy improvements for the essential structure. Besides their participation in the QualiPro training series, many organisations use the opportunity to convey their requests and requirements to RepaNet. The training structure, which was designed according to the project specifications and the available resources, was only applicable for a few participants and therefore their number remained small. Now, however, the dialogues came into operation which, together with the initiatives on the occasion of WFD2008, raise confidence that the qualification structure in Austria is further promoted.

2.3 Proposals for a further sustainable implementation of the projects products

Visions and ideas

The realisation of the QualiProSecondHand II project was the first step towards the professionalization of the European Second Hand sector through sector-specific qualifications.

At the same time one can see that it is still a long way to uniform EU-wide sector-specific training. National differences on the levels of market and business structure as well as the job market and promotional policy are still too great. Therefore the

¹⁵ As an example: Neitsch M., Spitzbart M., Hammerl B., Schleich B.: Implementation concept for the implementation of the "re-use" bid in accordance with WFD2008 in Austria. Verein RepaNet – Reparaturnetzwerk Österreich (Hg.), Vienna. April 2010, on behalf of the BMLFUW dept. IV/6, accessible at www.repanet.at; in chapter 5.2.7 Advice for the necessity of the professionalization of the Re-Use sector.

¹⁶ As an example: Meissner M., Bernhofer G., Pladerer C.: Re-Use Shops Steiermark Businessplan. Österreichisches Ökologie-Institut (Hg.), Vienna. November 2010

acquisition of, for example, the products tested in the first phase by the subsequent partner state was only very limitedly possible.

It was furthermore clear to the Austria project partner that very big differences exist within the sectors of the individual state. Although the central problems are often very similar (questions of acquisition of customer and goods, pricing, etc.) the methods of resolution must be individually adapted on the basis of strong regional differences. Therefore it made it extremely difficult to create a training series with the available resources that were, at the same time, as nation-wide as possible and suitable to the many and various requirements of potential participants, which was expressed in the number of participants.

Despite these "starting difficulties" the feedback from the socioeconomic part of the sector regarding the case of a qualification offer was very positive. The interest in further training and networking (learning from experiences of other people, use of common resources, etc.), and in general professionalization among it is very big. The experiences of the last two years are summarised by the following findings: Purpose can only be and remain the strengthening of the Second Hand sector through further Europe-wide but also through national networking!

Therefore RepaNet suggests the following steps:

At the beginning, the focus has to be more on the fact that sector-specific qualification possibilities are generally available on the national levels. Therefore it is important to specially develop trainers and make them familiar with the particularities of this branch.

In the design of the training structure it is recommended for Austria out of experience to use small module and lesson units with a large practical part, ideally with one special subject each training day (e.g. "methods of quality assurance", "Internet trade", etc.) Furthermore, not to be ignored is the consideration of the regional components which influence the company to be trained. Guided tours through second hand companies essentially add to the networking of the sector and bring meaningful, practically oriented influences, which is why they are always popular with the training participants.

In order to approach this goal of EU-wide uniform sector-specific training with a common curriculum, RepaNet recommends at the present time the promotion of networking on a European level and of the contents exchange and advanced training of the sector-specific qualifiers and coordination people of the national Second Hand networks. These are provided with experiences and new ideas and then teach systematically in their states according to the already existing structures, conditions and target groups. In doing so, the forms of a branch, which are still so different today, are able to be gradually adjusted to one another.

Useful networks and partners

RepaNet works together with numerous organisations in the implementation of the project product, of which the full list would go beyond the scope available here. Those named here only represent an excerpt. If interested RepaNet is available for further information.

In the first part of this document the initiatives *ReVital*, *Styria Re-Use Network* and the *Re-Use Platform* of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management are already described.

On a national level RepaNet works with, amongst others, the following organisations, which are active in the Second Hand sector and the domain of sustainable development:

„die umweltberatung“ Österreich (Eco Counselling Austria):

The partner in the QualiProSecondHand I project is the umbrella association of Austrian environmental counselling centre and represented in five of the nine federal states.

www.umweltberatung.at

Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, national board Sekundärrohstoff- und Altwarenhandel (Secondary Raw Materials and Second-hand trade):

In Austria the Second Hand dealers are organised via the committee Secondary Raw Materials trade within the national board.

www.sekundaerrohstoffhandel.at

Gemeinnütziger Verein ARGE Müllvermeidung (ARGE Waste Prevention Association):

Just like its subsidiary company, ARGE Abfallvermeidung, Ressourcenschonung und nachhaltige Entwicklung GmbH (ARGE Waste Prevention, Resource Conservation and Sustainable Development), ARGE Müllvermeidung (ARGE Waste Prevention Association) is involved in the area of environmental education, creation of work places in the environmental area, and with appropriate ecological issues.

www.arge.at

Österreichisches Ökologie Institut (Austrian Institute of Ecology):

This research and advice institution is active in the areas of ecology and sustainability and works therefore with policy and administration, economy and lobbies as well as private people.

www.ecology.at

Bundesdachverband für Soziale Unternehmen (bdv Austria):

Nation-wide lobby of non-profit social organisations offers the networking of around 250 organisations and projects.

www.bdv.at

On an international level RepaNet is networked with the following initiatives amongst others:

RREUSE:

This international network with its head office in Brussels represents and supports national networks and associations of socioeconomic companies from 10 European countries who operate in the area of reuse and recycling.

www.rreuse.org

ACR+:

The objective of this international network is the promotion of the sustainable handling with resources and waste management through avoidance, re-use and recycling. The more than 100 members come from local and regional authorities and national networks but also from NGOs and other public and private institutions.

www.acrplus.org

CERREC – Central Europe Repair & Re-use Centres and Networks:

CERREC is an EU project authorised in the CENTRAL EUROPE programme that tracks the implementation of WFD2008 and aims at implementing repair and re-use centres and networks. It started in April 2011 and has a run time of 40 months. The nine project partners come from seven European countries. The Austrian leading partner is the Abfallwirtschaft Tirol Mitte GmbH.

www.cerrec.net

3. Proposals for Belgium

3.1 Status of the Second Hand sector in Belgium

The following description of status of the Second Hand sector in Belgium will be based on what was written in Leonardo da Vinci project „QualiProSecondHand”, and will be continued by a review of the situation in Brussels and Wallonia.

In Belgium exists two big networks in the Second Hand sector. RESSOURCES and KVK federate the (social) reuse centres in the three Belgian regions. These federations see their activities highlighted within the context of the Network RREUSE in which they are part of. The Network guarantees the exchange of information on available partnerships within the framework of the European area countries.

At first RESSOURCES has to be named. RESSOURCES constituted in 1999. It regroups 65 social economy enterprises with activities in reuse and recycling. RESSOURCES federates its networked organisations (committed to environment and social economy) on the basis of the activities they carry out, the stream sector they focus on and by the geographical where they work. This network employs 1500 persons on a full time equivalent basis. It gains support from several environmental and social economy organisations and grants from the Environment Ministries of the Wallonia and Bruxelles Capital regions.

As far as the Flemish network KVK is concerned, it seems worth to recall it was established in 1994 and now federates all the (social) reuse centres in Flanders. KVK supports members' mission (reuse, employment for low-skilled and long-term unemployed people) through mutual collaboration to guarantee the realisation of the mission of the sector. It defends the interests of the sector towards local authorities, government and stakeholders and sustains the members by developing project related support and mutual collaboration to guarantee the realisation of the mission of the sector. Consultation of members, exchange of ideas and information, development of common vision and strategy are the means KVK network acts and the result is a constant growth of sector and customers, positive perception of public towards reuse and second hand, reuse sector seen as best example of social economy.

Although similarities in the structure of the designs can be easily spotted (common objectives, focus on specific areas of interest, etc.), the difference that permits to choose the Network instead of the other proposed solution memberships is, in addition, awarded by the way the cooperation within the network members is guaranteed. Freedom of action and inputs from any organisations concerned are the keys for the success of the Network. As written before, what is needed is, however, a good executive secretariat which could collect, update, manage and disseminate the inputs on which the organisations are concerned, so to create a bulky visible field of action for the network.

Beside this two main networks that focus on reuse in social economy in Belgium other networks exist such as Cash Converter, Troc International, plus a lot of individual shops, from 10 m² to 1000 m², and personal or associative initiatives, in the whole country. It also worth to mention an Internet initiative: www.2ememain.be ; this is not a second “e-bay”, one can feel the „community“ spirit, and the announcement is free.

Cash Converter: Cash Converter is the Belgian subsidiary of an Australian company funded in 1984 that has corporate philosophy: bring what you want, we pay it cash and we will sell it. They have subsidiaries in Australia, UK, South Africa, France, Switzerland and Belgium. Cash Converter does not sell clothes nor big electro appliances or furniture. Their catalogue is composed of watches/jewellery, heating devices, small electrical appliances, phones, HiFi, kids toys, computers, music, video games, tools, photo & video, sport, TV entertainment. In total exists 21 shops in Belgium, which are all on the same model and working under a franchising system.

Troc International: It is a pan-european company which stores the products someone has to offer and it sells it then by giving back a percentage of the sale price to the “seller”. In total exists 190 shops in France, Spain, Germany, Switzerland and Belgium.

These two initiatives have nothing to do with the “social field”, despite the fact they say “we sell you things at affordable price”. In fact, they surf on the consumption “need” (one “needs” cash to buy other things, one “needs” to fill one's house with commercial stuff...). They do not repair anything. They just act as “brokers”.

In the French speaking Belgium RESSOURCES asbl is the only network of social enterprises working on Second Hand market. The qualification of the workers is supported through quality improvement programs such as

- Managens: A program focused on environment management dedicated to very small enterprises and associations, with low-skilled people (some of the members of the program have been registered as EMAS or ISO 14001 enterprises)
- ElectroREV: A guarantee system that focuses on the warranty of the refurbished WEEE product: to ensure this warranty, trainees have to follow rules and procedures, so that they get trained to work with quality.
- Rec'UP: A label that certifies that the entire flow of 2nd products respects a list of criteria (120 criteria ranging from recollection to after sales, including efficient sorting and presentation in shops); again no standard training program but a rise in competencies amongst the trainees and workers of the associations and enterprises that comply to the Euc'UP rules.

Plus a number of limited subsidies devoted to quality improvement that some association may use in developing their teaching practices.

3.2 Activities for sustainable implementation of the project products

As the project is time-limited, it seemed necessary to imagine ways of sustainability for it. So far, the project and its products are disseminated:

On the internet, via the website **www.res-sources.be**. A web domain-name has been created : **www.valoriste.eu** where the word “valoriste” refers to the function of a professional in Second Hand enhancement and valuation. This web presence is important because it has two targets: the members of the network of social enterprise, and the visitor, being a private person who discover that quality is managed also in terms of training of the working people, or a public authority that will be reassured that the funding that is spent trough social enterprises is also used to improve the quality of service and the quality of training of the people. Feedback is still modest in numbers, but encouraging in quality.

Furthermore different activities take place in the project to disseminate and to implement the products. These were:

- amongst the members of the RESSOURCES network by preparing:
- articles in the newsletter;
- meetings,
- visits,
- and implementation of part of modules in their own training programmes.

These activities intend to make the members of the network aware of the richness that exists in the network itself: A lot of members of a social federation are used to work “on their own”, trying to re-invent the wheel sometimes. Therefore, a special effort has been put on communication to the network, for the network, to make it clear that dedicated tools and internal competencies exist for training the Second Hand workers to do their jobs with a better and more valuable knowledge. Members appreciate to know they can recount on valuable training material and are willing to appropriate at least part of the module. However, they are not keen to adopt the full structure of the modules, and prefer to adapt it to their specific needs.

To the FOREM, the largest vocational training operator in Wallonia (97,925 people trained in 2009 for a total of 9,135,698 training hours!), negotiations have been undertaken to make use of the modules (or parts of them) in the “operations & environment” training programme. Here, the target is clearly the public authority in vocational training that is solid enough to integrate, teach and develop the tools that have been created in the Leonardo da Vinci-project „QualiProSH II” program. Its own public, mostly composed by people looking for short professional training to have better chances to find a job, is the ideal public for the modules developed in the project. At the time of writing this report, there is a great interest from the Director of the sector “operations & environment”, who will discuss with his colleagues to adapt and integrate parts of the module in their own training of “waste enhancer”.

3.3 Proposals for a further sustainable implementation of the projects products

Till now, the project has been focused in Belgium mainly on the textile field. Because it is a historic flow in Second Hand sector, it is the first necessity. Thus, a good expertise already exists in this domain, and the project „QualiProSH II” has the immense benefit of formalising this expertise, and putting it in a form that can easily be shared. The proposed vision for the development and deployment of the project's products is the translation into other fields of activities, such as WEEE and furniture.

This will bear different advantages:

- capitalization of the work already done
- diversity in the flows, thus diversity in the fields of activities, thus maximizing employment possibilities for the trainees, in the fields that suit them best.

Spreading the content into other fields will invite other organisations to consider the integration of the modules in their training programmes.

Of course, this will need a major effort of “translation”, and a real adaptation to the need of existing companies, and emerging organizations.

In that meaning, it would be also useful to build module for different levels of public: In Belgium, vocational training can be roughly stratified in

- pre-qualification, with the main objective to help people to acquire “functional” working habits (wake up and come to work regularly, accept instructions from an instructor, getting pride of ones own work etc.) That is the level where most of Social Economy organisations work
- qualification or vocational training, where people really learn a trade, a craft
- specialisation or expertise
- diversification trough a change of level: transforming a good craftsman into a manager

For doing this, a change must be operated in the project management, in that meaning that major actors in vocational training are to be “first-line partners” so that the method can be deployed for the different levels (at this time, the program has been developed and tested in the first level, the pre-qualification one). So, the “critical mass” will be reached and the project and its products will be fully sustainable.

4. Proposals for Bulgaria

4.1 Status quo of the Second Hand sector in Bulgaria

In the following we want to explain the main specific issues concerning the Second Hand activities in Bulgaria: The results of the conducted analysis of the Second Hand sector in Bulgaria revealed that there is neither a qualification profile nor adapted vocational education for the Second Hand sector. Because the sector is not such developed as in the counties of Western Europe there is no professionalization of the Second Hand sector and furthermore there exist no kind of qualification profile for vocational education. The process of quality standardization of the sector is currently in its initial stage. At present there are many networks and organisations that are

associated with vocational education, but none of them offers a vocational qualification for the Second Hand sector and its employees. Currently there are no non-profit organisations or social enterprises and as a whole there is no build up social network dealing with Second Hand goods. The companies that are dealing with Second Hand goods in Bulgaria are mainly profit enterprises and a private business. These businesses are especially developed in the field of textile. In fact, there are no enterprises that sell second hand CDs. The market of books doesn't belong to the Second Hand market as we understand it in this project. However, books in Bulgaria are usually offered either as rare editions or as an antique and are sold through internet or by individual sales. Accordingly, the main Second Hand business field is textile. Overall, the Second Hand market in the country is expanding. Besides, the Second Hand sector was one of the few sectors that had a positive performance during the financial crisis. Moreover, during this period the registered Second Hand market was grown and as a consequence more Second Hand shops appeared on the market.

Currently, the majority of the market participants are small family-run businesses and there are only few big companies that are associated with Second Hand sale. Despite there are enterprises that exist and operate in the Second Hand sector for more than ten years there is no kind of co-operation or build up network between firms in the Second Hand sector. The absence of networking, communication and feedback between Second Hand companies, employees and vocational training organisations appear to be another obstacle for the quality standardization and development of vocational qualification in the sector.

The one nationally recognized structure that governs the politics in vocational education is the National Agency of Vocational Education and Training - NAVET. It is responsible for the list of professions, modules for professional education, qualification structure, licensees etc. Therefore at present, there is no licensed vocational qualification for the Second Hand sector.

4.2 Activities for sustainable implementation of the project products

The country-specific survey revealed the Second Hand sector is heterogeneous with no clear stated definition and is hardly assumed as a sector itself. Pursuing the stated project goals we initiated activities which aimed a sustainable implementation of the results of the project. To implement the products sustainable different activities were realized. Therefore were checked the possibility to add a new profession to the existing list of NAVET (National Agency for Vocational Education and Training). We didn't succeed – the experts think this list is already too long. The only possibility is to argument the enlarging of an existing profession. This requires time and efforts and will be achieved probably after the end of the project. Thus at first was organized a separate panel session for second hand during the European Day of Entrepreneur (EDE) in November 2009. On it we presented the project „QualiPoSH II”, its focus and aims, supported with the financial aid of the European Commission. The participants were interested institutions, NGO's, business companies and individuals. In addition it would be presented a similar panel session for the project also on the next EDE in October 2010. During the session were presented the achieved so far results. Through this activities could be reached a big group of stakeholders of the sector as well as from the field training, qualification and VET.

Furthermore in 2010 were contacted interested institutions and invited to a round table discussion on the problems and perspective of the Second Hand sector in Bulgaria. Therefore TTO created a special info-sheet presenting the goals of the project, the expected results and the proposal to create a co-operation in this business in Bulgaria with point to the advantages of such cooperation. This was distributed together with a questionnaire form via mail. The interest for such an event was not as the expected to be. The reasons for this are a combination of economical reasons (the companies are small and are simply interested in their economical survival) and psychological reasons (mainly because they do not see the advantages of such cooperation). It is sure that some kind of cooperation-starting with organization in associations/federation, network or other form will be good for those companies. But before seeing some results from our project their position will be passive.

To support the sustainable implementation TTO started in the end of 2009 a special internet site for the project. This site is a part of the internet portal of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". The link to the project site is <http://nis-su.eu/qualipro/>. It is bilingual (Bulgarian and English) and contains valuable information concerning the project, its documents and results and organized events during the phases QualiProSH I and II. Still TTO tried to involve as individuals in this project the students from the vocational high school for economy in Sofia. To reach more stakeholders TTO took part in Plovdiv fair in May 2010. The International Fair Plovdiv comprises multi-branch fairs and trade exhibitions covering key sectors of Bulgarian economy. It is the only fair organizing company in Bulgaria admitted as a member of UFI - the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry. International Fair Plovdiv organizes the most important trade forums countrywide. On this and all following events organized by NIS the information materials of the project (flyers, posters and information sheets) were distributed as well as the questionnaire form created by NIS. In July 2011 TTO organized a meeting with authorized representatives from the largest company in the Second Hand sector in the field of textile – named "Mania". They showed interest in the project and were positively disposed to the idea for initiating a co-operation between Second Hand players. The development of such co-operations would be an essential basis to implement a sector-specific qualification sustainable in the currently undeveloped sector in Bulgaria.

To reach directly the user of the qualification – employees or people who are searching a job - TTO organized training for the members of Regional Business Centre – town Novi Pazar in August and September 2010 on the issues in the module "Organization of Goods receipt" of the project. This Business Center is member of Association of NBDN (National Business Development Network) in Bulgaria. As a result of the educational training the staff of this Business Center was prepared to manage and conduct teaching activities on this module.

As a conclusion it could be stated that the sector specific professionalization is at an early stage in Bulgaria and there are many things that should be done in the following future to reach a sustainable implementation of the products. Above all it depends also on the future development of the sector itself, because at the moment it is as mentioned before in the growth.

4.3 Proposals for a further sustainable implementation of the projects products

For the sustainable implementation of the projects products TTO is planning different activities. So the project results will be guaranteed by signing a contract with Regional Business Centre-Novi Pazar - Member of the National Business Development Network (NBDN) and leading organization for training and requalification of unemployed from the north-eastern region in Bulgaria, with which will be commissioned the developed methodology for the purposes of the certification requalification courses. As a result of the development of an accepted and tested methodology, the Technology Transfer Centre at Scientific Research Department of Sofia University will include this module in the list of paid training courses organized for students, teachers and will offer the transfer of this training technology to partner organizations and educational institutions.

The subcontractors - Foundation "Institute for transfer of innovative practices" and RBC-Novi Pazar will take the necessary measures for the licensing of these training courses at the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training National /NAVET/, specialized body to the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria. The methodology for training in the sector "Second Hand" was presented during the General Assembly of the Scientific Research Department to 200 scientists, teachers and research projects leaders - where were presented the different modules and perspectives for implementation of the project results. So it can be expected that the products are sustainable further developed and used in Bulgaria.

To implement the products sustainable it is necessary to develop a network to reach the user of the products. Therefore TTO developed some more ideas and visions. So it is necessary in the future to discuss the methodology with interested institutions (National Employment Agency, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Centre in Vocational Training (TSPO), National Agency for Vocational Education and Training, employers, academic staff and business representatives. Also it would be good to present and discuss it at the roundtable during EDE 2011 with the participation of the Association National Business Development Network (NBDN), which brings together 40 business centres and incubators. These all are involved when a new qualification should be implemented in Bulgaria and the sector. Furthermore it is necessary to test the methodology by business institutions, connected with business support and development of new training mythologies and to test the compliance with the faculties of the Sofia University. Furthermore it should be:

- Participate at a discussion on the problems of professional training profile "Second Hand", with the participation of the largest professional training organization in the country - Association National Business Development Network (NBDN) for evaluation of the feedback between users and training organizations.
- Publishing articles in website of the Science research department of Sofia university
- Publishing information at HORIZONTY annual scientific on line magazine
- The results of the project will be used to test the methodology of teaching profession "Second Hand" not only by scientists but also in practical training activities.

5. Proposals for Finland

5.1 Status of the Second Hand sector in Finland

The following description of status of the Second Hand sector in Finland will be based on what was written in Leonardo da Vinci project „QualiProSecondHand”, and will be continued by a review of the situation in common field of Finland and case region which is Turku region; in South-West of Finland.

There are quite a few Second Hand organizations (SHO) in Finland. Their background lays on recession in 90's, which aroused a huge amount of unemployed people. SHOs started their action from very low-scale actions (e.g. providing leisure time activities for their members and their families) but little by little their set of supply of products and services broadened and in most cases actions linked with environmental field; more or less recycling products and services.

A noticeable point is that in Finland most of SHOs are from legal angle associations, not ltd; some of them are regarded as a social enterprise status¹⁷, other as non-profit organizations. This reflects upon their shareholder practises in a way that shareholders don't really monitor either work of board or top management.

SHOs' sizes are also relatively small measured with turnover but they employ in many cases over 100 people. This 'equation' is possible due the fact that public labour-market officials (both central government and local administration) support SHOs by through direct subsidies mainly financing salary and/or rent cost. A reason for this is that in official labour and social policy a remarkable role has been given to SHOs to employ long-term unemployed (people who have been unemployed over 500 working days), disabled labour and e.g. refugees.

A strong dependence of SHOs with public officials, especially local labour and social authorities, has both benefits and disadvantages; stakeholder linkages have been deepening from late 90's up to late 2000's both vertically and horizontally. Benefits can naturally be measured on lower fixed costs, which enable e.g. managers to concentrate on societal task of the organization. The other side of the coin is that it's harder to recognize and analyse all negative impacts, to set accomplishable long-term goals, to evaluate goals and most of all, to set a process-based development model, which could be comprehensively as suitable for different size and in different business field and in different regions locating SHOs.

Ministry of Labour in Finland divides unemployed people in three categories:

1. A group of people who have just recently lost their job but are very likely to find a new one by on their own. They don't in most of cases need active guidance from labour or social authorities.
2. Group 2 consists of workers whose competence must be updated by aided re-educating courses or new professional degree. They are actively guided (or even "forced" to participate) to find a new career path by officials.
3. Group 3 is a tough one. They consist of long-term unemployed, disabled people who may have severe physical or mental disorders, and immigrants in

¹⁷ Social Enterprise status requires from organization that on third of its employees must be long-term unemployed, disabled (mentally or physically) job-seekers or refugees.

which major problematic sub-group are refugees, whose educative and language skills are very low.

Most of employees in SHOs in Finland consist of people in group 3. Special features of group 3 can be described as follows:

- They are ageing people; in many business sectors over 40's who don't have updated education / work-competence, are uninteresting options for employers.
- They are already totally fed up with re-educating programmes¹⁸ arranged by labour authorities and due that their first reaction to re-education within SHO is very negative or doubtful.
- Their language, computer, social skills¹⁹ are inadequate.
- If they have been in labour-rehabilitating programmes over time (in some cases it is possible depending on municipal social authorities) in SHOs, they're already facing a touch of giving-up of hope, depression and frustration. Thus they are not motivated to participate in inner qualification programmes of SMO.

In qualification and strategic development process another 'bottle neck' is a lack of managing competence of top and middle-level managers. In many Finnish SHOs top and middle-level managers consists of people whose competence is based on experience in lower level management in Open Market Company or small business entrepreneurship in certain special field of business. They often do have a practical vision of 'what should be done' or emphatic touch of monitoring / guiding their workers, but they also seem to suffer of frustration and 'lazes-faire' management style. This is obvious especially for managers who have been operating several years in SHOs.

From the qualification education perspective all bold and underlined marked sentences mentioned above are relevant for further development programmes of SHOs. But one is unmentioned. It is a sum up of all previous facts. Its name is a poor organization culture and it is probably a toughest one to deal with. If organization has existed already a few years but there is no spirit 'of get things done', no one really believes in qualitative development programmes despite how good they are in matter of motivation, structure, material and so forth. During Leonardo II all participants have been exiting and enthusiastic about education structure in itself BUT they have been very disappointed or frustrated afterwards how good results are not show in every day's working life in practise.

As a summary a few similar features of Finnish SHOs can be named. These are:

- A strong dependence with public authorities and due that a strong influence of public bureaucracy.
- A low negation power with b-to-b customers.
- A strong dependence of products of SHOs on market fluctuations.

¹⁸ E.g. for many years in construction business operating worker, after long-term unemployment, is forced into "a course of stone painting" under a threat of losing monthly unemployment fee.

¹⁹ This feature pops up especially in face-to-face sales situations.

- Small revenues, which enable only few possibilities to react on need of unexpected investments, R&D operations, marketing operations, development of sales and logistics, HRM and so forth.
- An averagely very low competence skills of operative workers and also only poor skills of middle-level managers.
- A lack of comprehensive business strategy in most of SHOs.
- A poor organization culture; a weak commitment of workers and managers.

There are four practical SHOs in Turku region. They are:

- Kaarinan Työttömät ry = Unemployed of Kaarina (UK)
- Turun Ekotori = Turku's Eco Square (TES)
- Raision Ekotori = Raisio's Eco Square (RES)
- Liedon Kisällikellari = Chamber of Trainers of Lieto (CTL).

UK is an official partner in Leonardo II. In Leonardo II active network collaboration partners have been UK, RES and CTL. TES is the biggest operator in region but UK is in many cases as active societal actor in the area and is a key network actor in a project. All results have been disseminated to all actors in region but key qualification participants in phases 1 and 2 were top and middle-level managers of UK, RES and CTL. Participants in phase 3 were middle-level managers and for first time key-operating workers in UK.

5.2 Activities for sustainable implementation of the project products

As the project is time-limited and financially limited, no active promotion campaign has been launched. On the contrary, the project and its products are disseminated mainly through existing top-networks concerning SHOs in Finland, which are:

- Suomen Kierrätyskeskusten Yhdistys ry (Association for Finnish Recycling Organizations, AFRO).
- Työttömien valtakunnallinen yhdistys (Association for National Unemployed, ANU).

In the **AFRO's** action plan for a year 2011 the quality improvement and its practises has been a major topic. Members of UK have been key lectures concerning results of phases one and two and disseminating of testing material. This work will continue on autumn of 2011 and spring of 2012. So far audience has mainly consisted of managing directors but on the other hand their possibilities to further disseminate quality material on regional level is the cheapest and most effective way.

ANU is an organization which tries to influence on politicians at central governance for SHO point-of-view. Its interests is also that SHOs in Finland would operate and act as qualitative as possible in order to ensure decision makers that aid-money aimed to SH-markets are not wasted. Quality team will also be a one the main themes in the autumn 2011 and representatives of UK's will be main lecturers in seminars.

Other dissemination channels have been:

- on the internet:
 - promotion of official sites of Leonardo II

- links of Leonardo II to official site on UK's home site www.ekokaarina.net
- straight personal connections and official network linkages both in private and official sector (national and local level)
- dissemination through local education organizations (colleges, universities).

5.3 Proposals for a further sustainable implementation of the projects products

Till now, the project has been focused in Finland mainly on the managerial level; (phases 1 and 2, phase 3 is focused on floor-lever workers also). It has been a necessity because without orientation of managers and their motivation for further education all other resource-inputs would be wasted; see previous background of non-innovative organization culture.

Quality education is key area of HRM (Human Resource Management) and TQM (Total Quality Management). HRM and quality education (materials, structures, aims, focus groups and so on) should always be based on comprehensive business strategy. Top Management is always ultimately responsible for implementation for HRM actions.

For further sustainable implementation of the projects product contains following dimensions from Finnish angle:

- Present environmental and recycling education practises within Finnish education system compared with products of the project.
- Comprehensive need for vocational level in SH point-of-view especially suited for demand of employees.
- Which are the practical, educative institutions in Finland that are in key-teaching position of providing and implementing materials developed in Leonardo II.
- In order to find “real jobs in open markets” for long-period unemployed through SHOs and education programmes given in SHOs, is there still further development areas in products developed in Leonardo II?

These four dimensions mentioned above will next be considered from two angles:

- a) Visions/Ideas;
- b) Useful networks/partners.

Present education practises within Finnish education system – visions/ideas:

- Environmental education is given in Finland at almost all levels: universities, colleges and vocational level. Upper-level organizations (e.g. universities) focus on more comprehensive, strategic and managing approach. The present material suites more into a programme of vocational schools and institutes, which have very practical touch in their teaching.
- Recycling education is lacking of an independent degree in Finnish system. A pilot project has already launched in South-West Finland. It will be focused on vocational level. It's still unclear whatever this new project will give birth for total new independent degree or will it be a new independent teaching phase within a degree already exist in vocational system.

Present education practises within Finnish education system – networks/partners:

- Noticing project's products developed so far and potential demand for them, a few notions can be made:
 - sustainable use of them must further develop in collaboration with SHOs, educational institutions and business and entrepreneur associations;
 - products can be given more theoretical enhancement creating more closely linked network ties with universities, faculties or departments specialized in environmental / recycling issues and due that more enhancement and dissemination possibilities to products..
- Strong promotion actions towards authorities in ministry of education in order to receive products / materials a legal educative status.

Comprehensive need for vocational level in SH point-of-view especially suited for demand of employees – visions/ideas:

- Vocational level can be divided in two: pre-adult and adult level. A broad survey among different fields of business and entrepreneurs would be reasonable to get updated information which kind of special skills employees require in environmental issues; in both pre-adult and adult levels.
- What kind of role SHOs can play in education process in which recycling professional is tailored in individual level to needs of employee.

Comprehensive need for vocational level in SH point-of-view especially suited for demand of employees – networks/partners:

- SHOs in all parts in Finland; even though researches / case studies may be more worthwhile to proceed regionally in collaboration with some SHOs companies and education institutions.
- An open sharing of these results e.g. to all present Leonardo II network partners and a comparison of results between each other.

The practical, educative institutions in Finland that are in key-teaching position – visions/ideas:

- A Chosen institute should already have long-period experience in teaching of environmental / recycling matters.
- A Chosen key-institute most likely lays on field of vocational level than in theoretical / research field.

The practical, educative institutions in Finland that are in key-teaching position – networks/partners:

- Chosen local institutes.
- Chosen local SHOs and specially their possible developing projects linking with the project's products.
- Possible local authorities who may have financial or administrative interests in developing projects.

On-going evaluating process between actors involved in order to find sustainable developing path for products of Leonardo II – visions/ideas/networks/partners:

- An explicit answer is impossible to give who are right network actors / partners in right time, location or project field; there exists too many dimensions which can be dominant.
- However some ideas can be drawn:
 - all participants who mutually have committed to a) use products and b) further develop them should possess equalities like:
 - see benefits for long-period commitment of educating process, strategic development of organizations and mostly can separate basic differences between projects and processes,
 - they have resources enough to real educative investments;
 - educative positive results in field of SHOs may be delayed for many reasons, so patience is required for participants and network managers;
 - a lot of experience is required from teachers who are in responsible of giving practical lessons in SHOs: there probably are huge heterogeneity among students from a ability to learn point-of-view.

6. Proposals for Slovenia

6.1 The status quo in the Second Hand sector in Slovenia

The Second Hand sector in Slovenia is not identified as a sector, association or any other type of network. The main reason for this is that only a small number of companies have stores that would buy and sell used products. The analysis of the Second Hand sector in Slovenia has shown that employers need a representative who would defend their interests and strive for the optimal solutions. In Slovenia, two institutions have this role, namely Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Chamber of Craft. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry includes 23 branch associations. Both chambers represent the main interests of employers in the negotiations with trade unions and the government. Besides carrying out various activities connected with the requirements of companies/enterprises, the most important role of the chambers is to provide professional services and consultancy. As it has been mentioned before, the Second Hand sector in Slovenia does not profit from such support at the moment, as no networks exist for this sector. However, positive changes have been recently introduced, which show that first steps towards creating future networks in this field have already been implemented. As a consequence, a logical step forward for Slovenia would be to get involved in the project activities as one of the partner countries. In the process of development of the Second Hand sector in Slovenia, we would need significant assistance and would benefit from the best practices provided by the other partner countries, in which this sector is already developed or even very well-developed. The involvement of different countries in the project activities has already proved as an excellent opportunity for the exchange of information and testing of concrete examples of good practices.

6.2 Activities for sustainable implementation of the project products

The testing in the field of the Second Hand sector was carried out by the Technical School Centre Nova Gorica. We distributed the advertising material regarding the Second Hand sector and presented the project to the general public. Furthermore, we have carried out a survey that has shown how many people were familiar with this sector, to what extent they would be willing to cooperate and what kind of products they would buy in a Second Hand shop. Also we have prepared a short analysis based on the questionnaire.

After the allocation of working modules and the decision that every module will be tested by several project partners, Slovenia first tested the module „Management/Administration of business processes”.

The tasks of the trainer were to impart knowledge about different working processes in the field of management and administration of business processes. Therefore following learning content would be implemented: personnel planning, carrying out general administrative tasks, planning of work schedules, working tasks and working time, organisation of job training, job controlling and presentation of the enterprise outwards (e.g. to authorities). The knowledge and skills (competences) that a person participating in the testing should have include the following: ability to organise, ability to do the bookkeeping, ability to do the salary administration and preparation, ability to optimize effectiveness, IT-skills, ability to train, etc. The whole theoretical and practical testing was performed by the Technical School Centre Nova Gorica, because of the situation in Slovenia. As mentioned before there exist at the moment not such a big Second Hand sector like in countries of Western Europe and thus no bigger companies that make any qualification in this field. Another reason for this was that the school already had the required materials, equipment and the necessary staff for such testing. In addition, the Centre is also the executor of the National Vocational Qualifications. We included in the testing mostly those who were interested and ready to cooperate. As already defined in the module, the tested persons have acquired knowledge from the field of communication, organization, bookkeeping and accounting, informatics, management, and economy.

Until now we have successfully linked with the key institutions and individuals that could offer us any kind of assistance with the testing of the module. We started to cooperate with the local branch of the Employment Office of the Republic of Slovenia and involved teachers from the Centre who were prepared to cooperate in the project and in the module testing. Furthermore, we established links with a shop that could be considered as a shop representing the Second Hand sector.

We have recently entered into contact with the Environmental Research Institute (Okoljsko–raziskovalni zavod - ORZ) and ECO-TCE Ltd, where we saw the greatest potential for the appropriate expansion of the Second Hand sector in Slovenia. Both institutions have opened a Re-use centre in Rogaška Slatina, which runs on a pilot basis. The purpose of the Re-use centre is to renovate, reconstruct, decompose and prepare still useful products for the re-use. This centre is an open door centre which welcomes everybody, those who want to bring in still useful products as well as those who want to buy renovated products for a symbolic price. The so-called green price shows the actual savings in favour of the environment, which certainly contributes to an increased environmental awareness: today we rarely ask ourselves how many

raw materials, water, energy and emissions are necessary for the production of a new item. Through its activities, the Re-use centre has an awareness raising role, since it makes people aware of how dumping useful products is closely connected to dumping raw materials, consuming energy and water and to the pollution.

In cooperation with the above mentioned institutions, we organized a meeting and conducted a round table entitled: PRODUCTS "From the 2nd hand". The aim of this event was to get the participants acquainted with the possibilities to start business and activities in this sector, to provide answers to questions in this field as well as to highlight the advantages of the effective environmental conservation.

6.3 Proposals for further sustainable implementation of the project products

Visions/Ideas

The Technical School Centre Nova Gorica envisages its further work strategy mostly in the direction of the recognition of previously acquired knowledge and skills, which may be formal or informal, as well as in the direction of national vocational qualifications, including a proposal for the development of the appropriate qualification for the Second Hand sector. We can see the opportunities for the development and professionalization of the Second Hand sector in Slovenia within both above mentioned systems. It is worth mentioning that the two systems already exist in Slovenia; the system for the recognition of informally acquired knowledge and skills is still in the development phase, while the system of acquiring national vocational qualifications has been in practice for several years.

Given the fact that concrete results have already been achieved in the system enabling the acquisition of national vocational qualifications and we have several years of experience with this system, concrete possibilities for further activities in this field can be envisaged in the future. However, these possibilities have to be first recognized and confirmed by the authorities in the field of the economic environment. More precisely, the whole process which justifies the need for the development of a new qualification has to proceed in the following way:

1. Initiative
2. Labour market analysis
3. Occupational profile
4. Occupational standard
5. Development of a catalogue of standards for professional knowledge and skills

Our vision is to develop a vocational qualification in the field of the "Second-Hand" sector following the above procedure. In the text below, you can see a brief overview of the whole process, described step by step.

Initiative

The pre-condition for a new NVQ is the development of an occupational standard which has to be based on the needs assessment and support from the social partners. The development of an occupational standard starts with an initiative submitted to the Centre for Vocational Education and Training (hereinafter the CPI)

by a legal body, be it chamber, trade union, school or other organisation. The CPI discusses the submitted initiative for a new NVQ together with the initiator while the sectoral committee for occupational standard (consisting of representatives of the chambers, ministries and trade unions nominated by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs) decides if an occupational standard will be prepared or not. It is therefore very important to have strong support from the social partners represented in the sectoral committees before the submission of the initiative; otherwise the development process could become complicated from the start.

Labour market analysis

The most important element of the initiative is the labour market analysis with regard to the long-term development of the economy. Besides in-depth labour market analyses, it is recommended to get letters of support from the social partners (employers) and thus strengthen the needs assessment results.

Occupational profile

Once the initiative for a new occupational standard is confirmed by the nominated sectoral committee for an occupational standard, the CPI together with the working group starts the preparation of an occupational profile. The working group mentioned before is nominated by the ministries or the chambers and comprises the experts in the relevant field (a representative of the NVQ initiator is usually included as well). The occupational profile is a detailed description of work that somebody has to perform in a certain vocation and is based on the initiative for an occupational standard.

Occupational standard

The working group is in cooperation with the CPI, ministries and chambers responsible for the preparation of an occupational standard. The preparation consists of the following main tasks:

- Development of key tasks (based on the occupational profile);
- Description of professional knowledge, skills and competences;
- Harmonization with the Slovene and EU regulations;
- Assessment of labour market needs on the basis of a long-term development strategy;
- Integration into the publicly recognised education programmes

The next phase towards the occupational standard confirmation is final proposal, followed by final confirmation.

Development of a catalogue of standards for professional knowledge and skills

The catalogue of standards for professional knowledge and skills (hereinafter the catalogue) is the basic document for the NVQ assessment and accreditation built on the occupational standard. The catalogue is also an indication that some NVQs can be acquired through prior learning assessment. A catalogue can be initiated by anybody. The development procedure is coordinated by the CPI in close cooperation with professional bodies, associations and trade unions.

Useful networks and partners

In the future, the useful partners in the project will be the Environmental Research Institute (Okoljsko raziskovalni zavod - ORZ) and EKO-TCE d.o.o . The cooperation with the other social partners will also be beneficial (representatives of chambers, trade unions and ministries, for ex. Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs), especially if we want to develop a new vocational qualification in the field of the Second Hand sector.