



Network for the promotion of language strategies for competitiveness and employability

Final Report

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Executive Summary

The CELAN Network project **is aimed at** enterprises, especially SMEs, business representative organisations (BROs) at different levels, workers, and the social partners, as well as at higher education institutions (HEIs) and associations, and specialist organisations. Its **overarching aim** was and still is to make a contribution to the activities of its parent organisation, the Business Platform for Multilingualism, established by the European Commission in 2009. CELAN is designed to raise awareness among the target groups of the relevance of multilingualism to business performance and employability and of the wide range of pertinent language tools and resources available. Its **ultimate aim** is to enable business users to identify their own specific needs linked to their specific business goals, and to take appropriate action.

The **CELAN consortium** is comprised of three BROs, three European higher education associations, three specialist organisations, two HEIs, and a municipal VET institution. All partners have a long-standing record in European co-operation, and a declared interest in promoting multilingualism for the labour market. They all have experience and expertise in business-education co-operation; the added value of the consortium resides in members' and experts' different kinds of experience and expertise and their different legitimate interests and priorities – a challenge and an asset.

The **methodologies applied** – desk research, surveys and interviews conducted among / with members of the target groups and representatives of the language industry, creation and maintenance of a blog, development and maintenance of an online platform are as such not new, but the **specific thrust of the approach adopted** is **innovative** – using the needs of enterprises and workers as a point of departure. In addition, CELAN developed and launched an innovative Language Needs Analysis Application (LNAA) designed to provide business users with pertinent information regarding the use of languages in corporate environments, the skills and competences required, and the tools and services offered by the language industry.

Through a **Europe-wide survey among enterprises and BROs** regarding language and language-related **needs of businesses**, project partners gained an idea of how enterprises might employ language skills in the age of internationalisation. The results are documented in a general report and three sectoral reports. Moreover, the CELAN Network prepared the first ever comprehensive catalogue of business-relevant products and services of the language industry, with special emphasis on language technology and language technology tools. Project partners became fully aware of the complexity of the issue of languages in and for enterprises, and they also learnt that enterprises, especially SMEs, are not sufficiently aware of the solutions available. Hence, in addition to the LNAA, CELAN developed a “Language policy/strategy management toolkit for solving language problems”.

CELAN's **plans and projects for the future** are not quite as concrete as had been expected at the time of the submission of the Progress Report. A lot will depend on the aims and activities of the Business Platform, hopefully to be re-launched later this year. Ways will have to be found of reaching out to BROs and enterprises, particularly SMEs, at national, regional, and local level. It is hoped that the CELAN Vademecum will serve as an entry point into the CELAN platform and the information and services

it provides. Moreover, project partners on more than one occasion discussed the issues of the maintenance and further development of the CELAN Platform in general and of the LNAA in particular, of further “research” into business needs and practices, and of promoting consultation and collaboration between education / training and business at all levels. As regards the Platform, partners believe it should be possible to find sponsors or even commercial partners – but they decided not to pursue the idea of developing a full-fledged business plan during the eligibility period. Meanwhile, the co-ordinating organisation, the Conseil européen pour les langues / European Language Council will ensure the maintenance and viability of the CELAN platform for the time being.

The CELAN project **Web site** can be accessed at www.celan-platform.eu. It provides access to the LNAA and the various reports prepared and resources developed in the project, as well as to the CELAN blog.

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1. Project Objectives

Project objectives

The project's **overarching aim** was to make a major contribution to the activities of its parent organisation, the Business Platform for Multilingualism, established by the European Commission in September 2009, whose members regarded it as their mission to provide European enterprises and individuals with pertinent services and tools with a view to enabling them to improve their professional performance through effective language strategies, and to provide the European Commission and Member State governments with pertinent advice.

The CELAN Network project had four main objectives: (i) to identify and assess authentic business language needs by means of direct interaction with business users, using structured data collection systems; (ii) to provide a comprehensive overview of the language resources available to address the needs identified; (iii) to develop concrete tools and services through which business users can access reliable support for their linguistic and language-related needs, including an online system which provides business users with pertinent information regarding the use of languages in corporate environments, the skills and competences required, and the tools and services offered by the language industry; (iv) to prepare practical guidelines for employers and employees, and recommendations for the Commission, and to develop an exploitation and business plan for the time after the end of the CELAN project.

How the project benefits a specific community of users and how they are involved in the project

Like the Business Platform, the CELAN project is business driven. Its main beneficiaries are enterprises, in particular SMEs, workers, business representative organisations (BROs) and the social partners. Other beneficiaries include higher education institutions and specialist organisations with a declared interest in preparing people in Europe for a globalised labour market. These beneficiaries are either directly represented in the CELAN partnership or indirectly involved through the Business Platform. Moreover, the exercise of collecting authentic business language needs involved several hundred enterprises and BROs from across the Union and beyond, and the on-line Language Needs Analysis Application developed is expected to attract a substantial number of business users. Moreover, there are clear indications that the higher education survey raised awareness among the institutions targeted.

The potential impact upon and benefits to the target user groups

CELAN is expected to benefit these communities in a number of ways – particularly by raising awareness among them of the relevance of multilingualism to business performance and employability, by increasing awareness of the wide range of pertinent language tools and resources available, and by encouraging and enabling business users to identify their own specific language and language-related needs, and to take appropriate action.

2. Project Approach

Methodologies, surveys, analyses, and tests carried out (if applicable), set-up of co-operation for the network

In order to collect information regarding company language needs, the project designed a specific questionnaire that was completed by over 500 professional users. The questionnaire investigated the most significant aspects of business language needs, collecting data on the languages used, the actors involved, the functions undertaken, the awareness of available resources, etc. The questionnaire data was assessed and analysed in order to provide an overview of current practice and to identify potential trends and typical behaviour.

In parallel to the collection of data regarding users, project activities concentrated on the current market provision of language support tools and services. This took the form of desk research, a survey among providers of products and services in the language industry, and of interviews. It also involved the development of an “ontology” of the available resources in order to catalogue and classify the available systems, providing clear and comprehensive descriptions of the various means that might serve to satisfy the user needs identified. This ontology includes categories such as Language technologies and language technology tools, Language and other content resources, Language services and language service providers, and Language policy, standards and certification, each of which provides detailed information on examples of characteristic implementations of the respective tools or services.

Building on the surveys, the desk research undertaken and the interviews conducted, an online tool was developed – the Language Needs Analysis Application (LNAA) - with which a user’s identified needs can be matched to potential solutions offered by the market as well as to other resources.

The added value of the approach used

There are two major types of added value.

- A large number of stakeholders have been / will be, for the first time, made aware of the wider range of pertinent language resources available.
- A substantial number of business users have been / will be, for the first time, enabled to recognise their own linguistic and language-related needs and to take remedial action.

In more general terms, a wide range of stakeholders will be encouraged to reflect and take action on the language needs of the labour market in the age of globalisation and internationalisation.

Evaluation strategy, approach, results etc.

Ultimately, the success of the approach adopted can only be assessed once the online tool and the other resources provided have been used and evaluated by a substantial number of members of the target groups. However, CELAN project partners in general, and the members of the Management Committee in particular,

have sought throughout the project period to assess the approaches adopted and to evaluate the quality of the results achieved. Moreover, Management Committee members held a number of virtual meetings, and individual work package leaders met on more than one occasion to properly co-ordinate their activities. The advice received from the external evaluator was equally valuable.

The mid-term Round Table event and the Final Workshop provided important feedback from project-external experts.

Dissemination and exploitation strategy and activities – how these contribute to the sustainability of project results

Partner representatives seized every opportunity to present CELAN aims, activities and (expected) outcomes to stakeholder representatives – at business-oriented meetings and through their own dissemination channels. The outreach achieved amounted to almost 40,000 companies and other stakeholders. Moreover, CELAN was presented in the newsletters and on the Web sites of project partners (CEL/ELC, COTANCE, EMF, EUCA, FAV, FEW, Infoterm and OEP), and partner representatives talked about the project at some 50 internal and external meetings. The CELAN blog attracted 20,824 page views. Without any doubt, the project achieved impressive short term dissemination / impact targets.

As regards medium- and long-term exploitation and sustainability, it can be said that CELAN managed to raise awareness among companies and business representative organisations of the benefits of developing corporate language policies. Furthermore, CELAN created interest in the language industries in Europe through its thorough mapping of all sectors of the language industry as a starting point for the use of language technologies. This outcome has been strongly promoted through LT Innovate, the Forum of Europe's language technology providers. Last but not least, through CELAN surveys and outputs, a substantial number of higher education and other training institutions became aware of the importance and the complexity of "multilingualism" in the age of globalisation and internationalisation.

As regards sustainability, the number one challenge is this – how can project outcomes and outputs in general and the LNAA in particular be maintained and further developed? Without any doubt, the aims and activities of the Business Platform for Multilingualism, which will hopefully be re-launched later this year, will be of major importance in this respect. Moreover, the CELAN Management Committee has entered into a dialogue with a number of pertinent Commission Services, arousing their interest in the CELAN initiative. In addition, two members of the Management Committee are currently involved in a two-year business-oriented project supported by the Council of Europe's European Centre for Modern Languages, which has provided them with an opportunity to draw the attention of entrepreneurs to the CELAN project. In fact, the responses received to date have been rather positive.

Strategies for the maintenance of the outcomes of the project were developed and are presented in the framework of project deliverables.

3. Project Outcomes & Results

Major achievements and results of the reporting period, including links between results and objectives

In assessing CELAN's achievements and results, one should bear in mind that the project constituted quite an innovative effort – both in terms of the make-up of the partnership and of the outputs envisaged. Hardly ever before had such diverse stakeholders collaborated in a business-driven EU languages project; and some of the outputs envisaged are beyond parallel. It is all the more remarkable that project partners by and large managed to deliver on time. The project generated results in the following areas:

- Design and delivery of a specific questionnaire – in five languages - on the multi-lingual needs of business users. More than 500 responses were received, which were aggregated, presenting results in graphs and charts. An overall report, as well as three specific sector reports were prepared.
- Design and delivery of a specific questionnaire addressed to providers of products and services in the language industry, which was also used for identifying candidates for in-depth interviews. A comprehensive annotated meta catalogue of business-relevant services, tools, resources, policies and strategies, and their current uptake in the business community was prepared, including three appendices. In addition, a report of interviews conducted with representatives of the language industry and of non-specialist enterprises was prepared; the report of the interviews includes a number of case studies of whole-company success stories. Moreover, linked to these reports, a comprehensive list of matches and gaps between specific business needs and existing services, tools and resources was produced. In all this, special emphasis was placed on language- and language industry-related aspects of standardisation and certification. The research culminated in a list of recommendations and provided input to the LNAA, the Toolkit, a showcasing system, and the instruction modules.
- Based on the results of the survey on multilingual needs carried out among business users, and on the research into business-relevant services, tools, resources, policies and strategies, design and delivery of a specific questionnaire addressed to the higher education members of CELAN partner organisations on higher education business-oriented language provision. The responses received were analysed, and collated in a report.
- A project logo was designed and a Web site set up, incorporating a project blog. The site provides access the LNAA, the Toolkit, and to all other project results and outcomes, and is in particular the interface to the online resources developed. It also houses the online questionnaires designed to collect information on business needs, language industry products and services, and on higher education business-oriented language provision.

The key resource developed is the Language Needs Analysis Application (LNAA). It seeks to provide business users with pertinent information regarding the use of languages in corporate environments, the skills and competences required, and the tools and services offered by the language industry.

The user is presented with a series of screens containing prompts and questions divided into specific areas: company characteristics, language needs, education and training, and tools and services.

On the basis of the responses given, users are assigned to a specific group depending on the intensity of needs and the awareness of the solutions available to respond to these needs.

As the number of respondents increases, individual users can also assess their position in comparison with others in function of their company size, area of activity and location.

The LNAA therefore provides the following functionalities of particular interest to the business community:

- Raised awareness of the significant issues that must be addressed when assessing and developing corporate language policy;
- Indications of the availability of relevant systems and solutions to respond to identified needs;
- Individual profiling of businesses with respect to competitors and/or partners in the market.

It must be emphasised that the application does not (and cannot) aim to give an absolute and perfect response to a given problem or need, but rather provides a framework and context in which the user is able to gather examples and expertise with which to inform and, hopefully, enhance current and future language practice within a given environment.

The LNAA is accompanied by a Vademecum, designed to lead enterprises to the application.

Finally, the partnership has formulated a number of recommendations targeted at the European Commission and other policy-makers and decision-makers.

Web site and contact details

The Web site can be accessed at www.celan-platform.eu

The project co-ordinator, Wolfgang Mackiewicz, can be contacted at erasmspr@zedat.fu-berlin.de

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The person who co-ordinated the development of the CELAN Platform, including the LNAA, Michael John Hammersley, can be contacted at michael.hammersley@unibo.it

The person who co-ordinated our research into linguistic and language-related resources, services and tool, Christian Galinski, can be contacted at christian.galinski@chello.at

4. Partnerships

The CELAN Network was different from “normal” LLP network projects in that a majority of its partners were not institutions based in different participating countries, but European organisations, with members – institutions and organisations - spread across Europe. This facilitated dissemination and was an important factor in the surveys conducted. However, what was truly innovative about the partnership was the fact that partner organisations represented different stakeholder groups – business representative organisations, higher education associations and specialist associations. In this respect, CELAN was a pilot experience - and a learning experience for all the partners involved.

Benefits of partnerships established with groups outside of the direct project / consortium, e.g. with target users

The CELAN Network project was launched from within the Business Platform for Multilingualism. During the first few months of the eligibility period, it benefited from regular dialogue with Business Platform members not directly involved in project activities. Unfortunately, Platform activities came to halt in the middle of 2011. However, it is hoped that CELAN results will inform the activities of a re-vamped Platform, which should be launched in the second half of 2013. CELAN also benefited from the fact that the co-ordinator participated / has been participating in the OMC working group “Languages for jobs” and the follow-up OMC Thematic Working Group “Languages in Education and Training”. Moreover, two members of the Management Committee are members of the team carrying out the ECML project LINCQ, one of the aims of which is to encourage business users to view multilingual competence as part of company quality which can be exploited to promote a positive and constructive corporate image among customers and suppliers.

In all this, it must be remembered that the project’s principal aim has been all along to make a contribution to the activities of the Business Platform for Multilingualism. CELAN partners hope that through the new Platform envisaged they will be able to liaise with further stakeholders and reach out to target users.

5. Plans for the Future

CELAN partners sincerely hope that its begetter, the Business Platform for Multilingualism, will be re-launched in one form or another later this year - and this for the following reasons.

- They firmly believe that fruitful synergies can be achieved between the results and outcomes of the CELAN project and new initiatives launched by the European Commission.
- They are keenly interested in receiving feedback from stakeholders on CELAN findings and products.
- They hope that with support from the European Commission it will be possible to reach out to business users “on the ground”, i.e. to bring CELAN outcomes and outputs to the attention of those organisations and people that the Business Platform and CELAN want to support.

From the very beginning, CELAN partners were fully aware of the importance of the sustainability of the project’s outcomes. In fact, they originally thought that it would be possible to find a commercial partner interested in maintaining and further developing the LNAA. During the course of the project, it became clear, however, that – for a number of reasons – it was impossible to develop a technological tool that could provide a language advisory service to enterprises of the kind “identify your language needs and match these with all available resources”. Still, partners remain convinced that the resources developed can play a major role in the development of corporate language policies, strategies and practices. For the time being, they have decided not to do develop a business plan, but they are determined to be on the look-out for potential sponsors and business partners.

6. Contribution to EU policies

The creation of the Business Platform for Multilingualism was one of the measures initiated by the European Commission in the wake of the 2008 Communication (“Multilingualism: an asset for Europe and a shared commitment”) and of the report presented by the Business Forum for Multilingualism in the same year (“Languages mean business – Companies work better with languages”). Within the EU2020 agenda, languages are related to jobs, mobility and growth. In other words, the CELAN project is also directly related to the EU’s current language policy.

However, CELAN outcomes are also relevant to other recent initiatives of the European Commission – the Rethinking Education strategy, the Skills Passport and other transparency tools, the European Skills Panorama and the “Opening up Education” initiative; they are also directly relevant to Erasmus+, notably to the Knowledge Alliances foreseen for the new Programme. CELAN partners have developed a number of concrete recommendations for Erasmus+, which are the direct result of CELAN findings. Speaking more generally, CELAN results and outcomes constitute a contribution to the realisation of the European Commission’s policy aim to promote successful entrepreneurship and to improve the business environment for SMEs, in order to allow them to realise their full potential in today’s global economy.

