



**Evaluation of EGUIDE  
Leonardo da Vinci Pilot Project  
No:IRL/05/B/F/PP/ 153103**

**A Report Commissioned by Ballymun Job  
Centre**

**Compiled by**

**Business Improvements Solutions Ireland Ltd**

All views expressed in this report are the opinions of the authors based on the empirical data gathered solely for the purposes of this evaluation study

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## **APPENDICES**

## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 Background to the Evaluation

The Leonardo De Vinci (LDV) programme was launched in 1996 to focus on the teaching and learning needs of those involved in vocational education and training. Leargas, the Leonardo De Vinci National Agency in Ireland defines the programme as

*“The European Community’s Action Programme for the implementation of a Vocational Training Policy”.*

Leonardo De Vinci uses transnational cooperation to improve quality, foster innovation and promote the European dimension of vocational training systems and practices. It aims to develop a European area of cooperation, supporting and supplementing Member States ‘policies on lifelong learning, while fully respecting their responsibility for the content and organization of vocational training’ ( Leargas 2005)

The EGUIDE project was a 2 year pilot project (2005-07) funded under the Leonardo De Vinci 11 initiative. The Project had three main aims

1. To research and develop a Quality Assurance Framework for Guidance into initial training.
2. To design and develop an E Guidance system consisting of a number of guidance tools, specifically aimed at disadvantaged job seekers and those in and out of low skill employment.
3. To design and develop a web based framework within which the guidance tools can operate

Ballymun Job Centre (BJC) Dublin, Republic of Ireland, was the coordinating partner, taking the lead responsibility, initially for the composition of the EGUIDE partnership and subsequently for the leadership of the partnership around the design and development of EGUIDE. BJC also had overall responsibility for the administration and financial management of the project. The Partnership consisted of organizations from Northern Ireland, Germany, Spain, Italy, Romania & Hungary who came together to research and develop EGUIDE. These partners provided a range of expertise and professional advice to support the co-coordinating partner.

BJC was established in 1986 to respond to the needs of job seekers in the local community. It strives to provide responses to unemployment and low income and for many years has promoted the use of quality career guidance tools and methodologies to assist the individuals most removed from quality labour market opportunities. The Centre has previous experience in the Project Management of LDV programmes, having successfully led the CHOICES Programmes<sup>1</sup>. It was the learning outcomes from CHOICES which shaped much of the thinking of the Centre around the content and Partnership development for the EGUIDE Project.

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<sup>1</sup> The CHOICES Programme (2002-05) was a Leonardo Da Vinci transnational programme which pioneered the development of an innovative assessment centre to facilitate the guidance and assessment needs of disadvantaged job seekers in the area of ICT.

The first formal meeting of the partnership was held over a 3 day period 18 - 20 November 2005, with the final meeting held over December 7 & 8 2007 in conjunction with the formal launch of the EGUIDE Project. Overall the Partnership met as a defined group on five occasions throughout the two year project

## **1.2 Terms of Reference for the Evaluation**

This evaluation was commissioned by Ballymun Job Centre as part of the Quality Assurance process provided for within the project to

- Determine the extent to which the Project has been successful in achieving its stated aims and objectives
- Highlight areas for improvement to inform the future development of EGUIDE
- To stimulate ideas and discussion around the sustainability of EGUIDE beyond the prescribed funding period

The following overall terms of reference under specific headings were agreed with Ballymun Job Centre and guided the work of the evaluation

### Relevance

- To what extent have EGUIDE activities been consistent with Leonardo da Vinci terms, conditions & priorities.
- To what extent have EGUIDE activities been consistent with stakeholder needs

### Added Value

- To what extent has the establishment of the EGUIDE partnership (expertise, personalities, responses, ideas, and networks) benefited the development of project outcomes.
- To what extent has the development work and/or the results exceeded original expectations

### Efficiency

- To what extent have financial, administrative or other procedures contributed to or hindered the achievement of results
- To what extent has the partnership worked to deadlines and budget limits.
- To what extent has the EGUIDE coordinating organization been able to utilize the experience of the partnership

### Effectiveness

- To what extent have the EGUIDE objectives been achieved

### Impact

- To what extent have the results of EGUIDE been disseminated to the intended target group?
- To what extent has EGUIDE improved the Guidance resources available for this target group?
- To what extent is the EGUIDE project likely to expand beyond the intended scope of Guidance Practice?

### Sustainability

- To what extent is it plausible that funding sources for the support and development of the project are likely to be available (and where from)

## **1.3 Evaluation Methodology**

The timeframe for the evaluation was September 2007 to December 2007. The methodology adopted for the evaluation was comprised of the following elements

### Review of Written Documentation

The review of written documentation has included

- Background literature
- Relevant policy material
- Project planning and development records
- Quality Assurance material including policies and procedures
- Other records including minutes of meetings, management information and financial records
- A range of data and material that was produced for the purposes of the evaluation

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### Consultation with Project Managers and Staff

This included

- Extensive consultation with Ballymun Job Centre over a series of meetings with the Manager, Assistant Manager & European Project Officer by means of individual and joint semi-structured interviews
- Consultation by means of, a Focus Group discussion and attitudinal survey by questionnaire, with guidance practitioners from Ballymun Job Centre

### Consultation with Partners

This included

- Individual meetings with representatives from each of the partner organizations.
- Attitudinal survey of all partners organizations

### Consultation with Clients

This included

- Consultation by means of, a Focus Group discussion and attitudinal survey of clients of Ballymun Job Centre who participated in the piloting of the EGUIDE tools.

### Method of Consultation

Business Improvement Solutions (BIS) adopted an open discussion method in all consultation. This process was driven by the terms of reference agreed with Ballymun Job Centre of the evaluation. This produced a wide range of qualitative data which when transcribed provided BIS with important insights from all stakeholders (clients, partners and practitioners). Analysis of this data produced important data about the experience of each type of stakeholder during the EGUIDE pilot. All participants in the evaluation were assured of confidentiality by the BIS team. This assurance will be observed in all reporting.

## **1.4 Reporting**

The substantive part of this evaluation took place between September and December 2007, this included attendance at a meeting of the transnational partners in Dublin and the official launch of the EGUIDE Project, all of which took place in December 2007. It was recognized at the beginning of the process that there was a need to manage the evaluation process carefully in order to coordinate the work and ensure minimum duplication for those being consulted. The process has therefore been facilitated on a day to day basis by the Assistant Manager of Ballymun Job Centre and the Evaluator.

## **2.0 Background**

### **2.1 Career Guidance**

Career guidance is often perceived as a service relevant mainly to those within a formal educational setting and in particular those in upper second level education. However this should not be overstated. It is a service that is an integral part of any training and education process. For adults returning to the workplace or to education and training, a career guidance process can greatly assist in the making of a well informed decision about the direction which best meets the needs of the individual.

For many individuals accessing the public employment services, community education, adult education and vocational training, the lack of a career guidance process, in addition to other barriers, can often mean that uninformed career decisions are made based on the availability of training/education courses. This was also the experience of the EGUIDE partners whose core business was the delivery of guidance and mediation to disadvantaged job seekers. The EGUIDE partnership argued that career guidance should be the first step in any training or education process particularly for those who have been unemployed or disengaged from the labour market in the past. The thinking of the EGUIDE partners was mirrored in some of the deliberations of key players within training and development in Ireland. The report of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (2006) recommended that

- In order to meet the needs of individuals who are not engaged in education/training systems, guidance tools should be developed
- Information about vocational training/education courses be improved and accessibility for individuals who are not engaged in Vocational Education Training (VET) be enhanced

The EGUIDE target group of, people who are unemployed, in and out of low skill employment or absent from the work force for long periods had a particular fit with the target group of some of the partners, who recognized the hugely positive role that EGUIDE could have in meeting their client needs.

Most models of career guidance advocate the exploration of the self, the environment and well informed decision making. Many organizations working with individuals disadvantaged in the labour market use career counseling approaches to career guidance such as the models proposed by Egan (1975) and Ali & Graham (1996). These models use similar approaches in terms of person centred goal oriented processes. The National Guidance Forum report (2007) recommended that

- “The guidance process should be client centred, appropriate and relevant to the needs of the client, balanced unprejudiced and fair” (Pg21)

This client centred approach was the overriding principle adopted by EGUIDE in setting the aims and objectives of its work.

## 2.2 Quality Assurance

Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Barry (1988,1990) define service quality as *“the degree to which customers’ satisfaction with a service meets the expectations they had about the service before using it”*

The Leonardo Da Vinci programme (LDV) identified quality standards as a need in the vocational education and training sector. European Policy Developments in Guidance argue for improvements in access to guidance services and quality assurance of services in order to achieve the Lisbon Agendas strategy for making Europe the most competitive and dynamic knowledge based economy in the world. (Lisbon Strategy 2000: Concrete Future Objectives of Education and Training Systems, 2001).

The OECD Review of Career Guidance Policies (2002) recommended that in Ireland there is a need to develop *“new and more comprehensive electronic career information products including psychometrically rigorous assessments and information on training and education based on agreed quality standards”*  
Given the emphasis within EGUIDE on quality assurance, there is therefore a strong link between this objective of the project and a core priority of LDV.

Although many organizations offer some form of career guidance to disadvantaged job seekers there was a lack of a standardized coordinated approach across the services, apparent to the organizations involved in EGUIDE. The major concern emanating from this was that the end product i.e. the Career Guidance service would vary and lack quality and consistency. The EGUIDE partnership in recognizing that this lack of process was evident were challenged to prove this was not only the case nationally within their own countries but also across all of the EGUIDE partnership countries.

Research on guidance practice was conducted across the partner countries by the partner organizations to

- Define and document the process of guidance of disadvantaged job seekers in each partner country and to identify how this currently relates to training across the partnership.
- Determine whether quality assurance systems exist at the level of Guidance and Initial training and whether existing Quality Assurance Frameworks could be used to inform the EGUIDE Quality Assurance Framework.

The research identified that though many of the partners had existing quality standards within their own organizations, only one, the Matrix Standard was specific to service delivery. Overall there was unanimous agreement among the partners that there existed a need for a Quality Assurance Framework specific to Guidance. This research was fundamental to the feasibility of the Quality Assurance Framework and is a positive indicator of relevance, added value, efficiency, effectiveness and impact within the project.

After the process of research and review of quality in career guidance was concluded, the EGUIDE partnership felt that the use of the European Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF) for quality in Vocational Education Training (VET) was an appropriate framework to use given the conviction within the Partnership that career guidance should be the first stage in VET.

Much of the early work of the Partnership (2006) was around redefining a career guidance process specifically aimed at individuals who were disengaged from the labour market based on the European CQAF. The result of this work was the development of the EGUIDE Quality Assurance Framework which seeks to ensure that each client receives the same standard of guidance irrespective of the approach of the guidance practitioner or the culture of the organization offering the guidance service. Enshrined in the framework is a six step process which ensures that the individual receives a comprehensive support service, enabling them to develop self awareness and self knowledge, to understand the world of work and the opportunities available and to make a clear well informed and realistic decision on moving forward

### **2.3 EGUIDE Tools**

The six steps of the EGUIDE career guidance process are

- Step 1. Promotion
- Step 2. Welcome and Information Service
- Step 3. Consultancy Tools
- Step 4. Decision making stage
- Step 5. Implementation
- Step 6. Follow up

It is during Step 3 that tools are used to help the client to become more aware of themselves and their potential. The underpinning research at the start of the project found that guidance practitioners, working with individuals who were trying to access quality employment, education and training, found it difficult to identify commercial web based assessments developed specifically to meet this client group's particular needs. The areas identified as being fundamental to an effective career guidance process were Interests, Person – Environment Fit and Cognitive Thinking Style. To meet this need the EGUIDE Partnership developed an online battery of career tools based around three areas

- Interest Explorer
- Personality Discovery Quiz
- Cognitive Explorer

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The tools were designed with the following practical advantages to ensure that the client was at the centre of all development

- Are easy to access from any computer with Internet access
- They utilize scenario – based animation with voiceovers that overcome literacy issues and motivate by being fun and easy to use
- The guidance practitioner has full control of who uses the tools and which tools they use
- All the assessments are preceded by animated introductions that are designed to help the client feel comfortable in the animated computer environment. To achieve this animations are modeled within an arcade game style
- The tools are translated into three languages, English, Spanish and German

The following sections of this report will address the agreed areas for evaluation and includes the findings from the consultations with all of the key stakeholders of this project and will measure how successful EGUIDE has been in designing a Quality Assurance Framework and Web Based Tools to meet many of their diverse needs.

### **3.0 Relevance**

#### **3.1 To what extent have EGUIDE activities been consistent with Leonardo da Vinci terms, conditions & priorities?**

The Leonardo da Vinci programme focuses on the teaching and training needs of those involved in vocational education and training. It aims to establish and bolster the competitiveness of the European labour market by helping European citizens to acquire new skills, knowledge and qualifications and have them recognised across borders. It also supports innovations and improvements in vocational education and training systems and practices. One main objective is to increase the quality and attractiveness of vocational education and training (VET) in Europe. Leonardo da Vinci is open to the entire spectrum of subjects covered by vocational education and training. It supports the transfer of knowledge, innovation and expertise between all partners in this domain. A wide-range of actions is funded by Leonardo da Vinci, notably transnational mobility, European projects focusing on the development or the transfer of innovation and networks. It addresses trainees in initial vocational training, people available on the labour market and professionals in vocational education and training, as well as any organization active in this field. The E-GUIDE project was based on the learning from the Leonardo da Vinci Pilot Project CHOICES (Leonardo da Vinci- Pilot Project – No. IRL/02/B/F/PP – 119118), which aimed to pioneer the development of an assessment centre tailored specifically to facilitate the guidance, assessment and development needs of disadvantaged job seekers in the area of ICT.

The E-GUIDE project applied the principles of the Leonardo da Vinci to

- Disadvantaged jobseekers, a group who were not in a position to fulfill their full potential in the employment market, the key element to their position in society and ultimately their general health and well-being.

To achieve this, quality guidance is essential to disadvantaged job seekers who are attempting to access VET that meets their individual needs. This is due in part to the limited opportunities afforded to the more disadvantaged in society who are very often unaware of their own abilities and aptitudes. This position is further compounded by a lack of awareness of the options available to them in the VET system. As a result many end up in low paid, low income jobs with little chance of progression or training, or they find themselves on training courses for which are unsuitable. The E-GUIDE partnership focused upon the development of a structured comprehensive guidance process that leads to progress into appropriate vocational training and education both within and outside of the workplace. When effective such a process will further serve to enhance both the awareness and ability of disadvantaged jobseekers to reach their potential within the labour market. The aims and objectives of the E-Guide Project were tailored to facilitate this process.

All partners were unequivocal that the E-GUIDE Project activities were consistent with Leonardo da Vinci terms, conditions and priorities. Partners who had been involved in other E-Learning projects within Leonardo Da Vinci felt that it compared favourably with anything they had previously contributed to within the programme. One member of the partnership who brought many years experience of E-Learning projects within the Leonardo Da Vinci programme said it was '*one of the most successful projects in which I have worked*'. As a group, the partnership was in a strong position to have an informed opinion on this issue based on their experience and expertise which they brought to their role within the E-Guide project. (See Table 2 Pg 23)

The composition of the international partnership for the project demonstrates the transnational nature of the development of EGUIDE, from the cross border input to the development of an innovative approach to the assessment of the needs of disadvantaged jobseekers. The achieved outputs of the project namely

- The Quality Assurance Framework
- E-Guidance system consisting of guidance tools
- Web-based framework

are consistent with LDV priorities around transfer of knowledge and networks transnationally. Overall, the successful transfer of knowledge, innovation and expertise between all partners to achieve stated outcomes for those involved in VET is clearly evident to this evaluation

### **3.2 To what extent have EGUIDE activities been consistent with stakeholder needs?**

The main stakeholders of the EGUIDE Project were

- The Partner organizations
- The clients (disadvantaged jobseekers)
- Career guidance practitioners,

All of partner organizations were satisfied that EGUIDE activities were consistent with their needs. They highlighted the importance of the research conducted at the outset of the Project which focused on two specific areas namely

- Career Guidance
- Quality Assurance

as being pivotal to the design of program activities to meet their diverse needs. The partners felt that there was sufficient scope within the activities to ensure consistency and added value to each partner's domestic activities. Some of the partners who have used quality assurance frameworks in their own organization in the past are more advanced in terms of embedding the EGUIDE Quality Assurance Framework than others who have less prior experience.

BJC have used the EGUIFE framework to conduct an internal audit of their guidance services and will include the audit outcomes as part of the final EGUIDE report. BJC are committed to continuing to use EGUIDE to shape and develop its services. Another partner with a similar client group to BJC are planning to use the framework as a quality assurance mechanism for current guidance services. A third partner with experience of working with public sector organizations felt that the framework with some tweaking was fit for purpose for the public sector.

All of the partners felt that the main outcome from the partnership was the quality assurance framework, with those partners who provide guidance indicating that the framework, with some customization to local needs, is sufficiently robust to deliver quality assurance across their portfolio of services. Some partners felt that scoping the framework across their organization will take some time due to the stretch on internal resources.

There was also agreement among the partners that the EGUIDE tools were consistent with their client needs when used as part of the overall guidance process. They added that clients will need to participate in other parts of the guidance process where it is possible that other issues will emerge, highlighting that this is a difficult challenge for the practitioner who has to motivate the client throughout the entire pathway. One partner emphasized that it was the objective of the EGUIDE tools to complement the relationship between the practitioner and client and not to replace this relationship.

The EGUIDE tools have been tested on close to 400 clients across four countries. BIS consulted directly with a client group in BJC, however through the consultations with the partners it was also possible to get feedback as to how their clients rated EGUIDE activities. Overall the clients were very satisfied that EGUIDE activities were consistent with their needs. The experience of clients who participated in EGUIDE would further support the view that it is much more stimulating than the traditional pencil and paper administered psychometric assessments. In particular one of the international partners commented that *'the fact that the clients are not required to read the test was considered a big strength when administering to the target group*

Participation in EGUIDE also appears to offer a more enjoyable experience for clients. One international partner stated that *'the tool was easy for clients to complete, it was easy to go through,* another called it *'a very rich and friendly tool set for guidance'* Such an experience can also serve to engage the client group more fully in a procedure that requires their support and participation to reach its full potential in adding value to service delivery.

There were additional stakeholders involved in the Project in the form of the Advisory Committee who included

- FAS
- Local Employment Services Network (LESN)
- Vocational Education Committee (VEC)
- Further Education Training Awards Council
- Psychological Society of Ireland.

The objective of the Local Employment Services Network (LESN) is to focus on the provision of services to those most disadvantaged in the labour market as a direct response to the local context within which it operates. The LESN acts as the gateway, or access point, to the full range of opportunities which are available to enable a long-term unemployed person enter/re-enter the labour market. The services provided by LESN are tailored to the needs of each individual client and the local environment within which they operate. Services provided include guidance, training, education and employment supports and are made available through a network of Contact Points. Ballymun Job Centre, the lead partner in EGUIDE manages the LESN in Ballymun.

One of the key services delivered by the LESN is:

- **Mediation and Guidance:** Registration and orientation; provision of intensive personalised guidance leading to development of a career path plan; career counselling; referral to other LESNs or third party agencies; assistance with securing active labour market programmes and employment; post-placement supports.

The activities of EGUIDE can play a key role in enabling LESN' to improve the quality of guidance available to their core target group, those most disadvantaged in the labour market. This has been recognised through the involvement in five LESN's in the piloting of the EGUIDE tools and a presentation by the manager of BMJ on EGUIDE to the coordinators of LESN's nationwide. There has also been a number of effective changes which BJC have implemented within the Ballymun LESN which EGUIDE has played a part in. These include splitting the mediation and guidance services and matching practitioners exclusively to guidance. The EGUIDE framework has enabled the registration service to become much more robust for clients. The Job Centre has an employment focused approach with specific annual job targets. There are also both education and training targets. The monitoring and measurement of performance against targets are managed by an access database. EGUIDE has now been incorporated into this framework. This is an innovative development demonstrating how EGUIDE can fit within other VET activities.

The Further Education Training Awards Council (FETAC) have a rigorous quality assurance process for providers who wish to become accredited FETAC providers, which is based on the European Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF) for Quality in VET. The provider is required to demonstrate its capacity to monitor, evaluate and improve the quality of programmes and services it offers to learners. The EGUIDE Quality Assurance Framework for Guidance into initial training is also based on the European CQAF model. This positioning of the Framework presents real potential to offer an accredited learning programme on guidance into initial training in the future.

The VEC which is the largest provider of community education in the Republic of Ireland was involved in the piloting of the EGUIDE tools on one of their sites. The VEC run training courses which would be targeted at the long term unemployed across all age groups. However they do not deliver professional career guidance to augment their courses. The availability of on-site web based guidance tools would add considerable value to the community education portfolio and would also enable their registration process to become much more robust. This was a recurring common theme emanating from the feedback obtained from the partners and practitioners who were mainly of the view that EGUIDE as the initial stage in the career guidance would add considerable value to the registration and assessment process of providers.

The development of EGUIDE has been consistent with stakeholder needs across VET both from an operational and strategic perspective. However this evaluation has identified the requirement for greater buy in from stakeholders on a nationwide wide, to facilitate the integration EGUIDE into their operations. Further marketing and promotion of EGUIDE will increase the profile of the product range and result in greater awareness of the real benefits of adopting EGUIDE.

#### **4.0 Added Value**

##### **4.1 To what extent has the establishment of the EGUIDE partnership (expertise, personalities, responses, ideas, and networks) benefited the development of project outcomes.**

Ballymun Job Centre was the coordinating partner, taking the lead responsibility initially for the composition of the EGUIDE partnership and leadership of the partnership around the design and development of the EGUIDE tool. Support was provided by partners from six other countries, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Northern Ireland, Romania, and Spain. These partners provided a range of expertise and professional advice to support the co-coordinating partner.

Most partners brought knowledge and insight on the experiences of disadvantaged jobseekers. The partnership also contained specialist expertise in the design of E-Learning and web based assessment tools that could be customized to the needs of the international partners generally and disadvantaged jobseekers in particular. Shared discussion at the international meetings and ongoing regular communication enabled the partnership to operate effectively within its remit from its inception until completion of the project. This meant a *'good interactive partnership existed during the key stages of the EGUIDE'*

Technical expertise on the design and application of web based tools was a key element to the development of the EGUIDE tools. One partner was invited to contribute to EGUIDE because of extensive experience on the design of internet software as well as E-Learning packages. This experience was gained from contributions made to a host of EU funded initiatives within the Leonard da Vinci. One other partner had more 'hands on' responsibility for the production of the EGUIDE tools online. A key element here was the ability of these partners to create a new and innovative web based package. This element was, however, not completed in isolation from the other members of the partnership who brought a wide range of professional experience to the delivery of vocational training, as well as the design and administration of psychometric testing, particularly to disadvantaged jobseekers within national and transnational contexts. This was reflected in the professional disciplines within the partnership from which the partners were drawn which included psychology, social work, guidance and counseling as well as experienced social scientists. This range of disciplines included practitioners who worked closely with the target client group in several countries across the EU and those with experience in the administration and operational working of vocational guidance and training frameworks. Four partners worked directly with disadvantaged jobseekers. These partners offered an invaluable client based perspective to the E-GUIDE project.

The EGUIDE online tool was developed and piloted on a sample of disadvantaged jobseekers by four of the partners, two English speakers and two non English speaking. This meant that it was piloted in three languages, although as the coordinating partner BJC took a lead on this element with the majority of the target sample participating in the pilot were administered the tool by this partner. The inputs and respective roles of each international partner was based upon the skills and experience they brought to the EGUIDE partnership (see Table 2). For some, this involved provision and application of the technical expertise required to deliver an online tool for vocational guidance. For others this was based on their expertise that assisted the identification of appropriate tests and in particular the contents of tests that formed the E-Guide instrument as well as expertise in the design and development of an appropriate Quality Assurance Framework.

The partnership was in a position to provide experience of the target group as well as insights into employer's perspectives on its potential value to HR departments, the possibility of taking the EGUIDE framework beyond the requirements of disadvantaged jobseekers. One partner referred to this as the 'other side of the project'. This she explained was achieved by getting into the mind of employers and bringing experience of best practice for dealing with career guidance professionals to the design and development of E-Guide.

Some partners were not directly involved in the design and development of the EGUIDE tools because they did not possess 'hands on' technical expertise and experience in designing web based tools. However their contribution was key to the design of a set of tools that consisted of a battery of assessments for determining the needs of disadvantaged jobseekers that required conceptual and theoretical thinking from those with expertise in psychometric assessments. Partners who worked closest were those with shared expertise, e.g. two technical partners worked together design the EGUIDE tool; partners with experience of quality assurance frameworks worked together to develop the quality assurance framework. Whilst the more technically expert members of the partnership were exploring the specific design of a new web based tool, other partners were developing the contents of the tests for EGUIDE that would become part of the online E tool. Discussions involving both categories of contributor were key to achieving the aims of the EGUIDE project. Partners particularly those with experience of psychometric testing collaborated to develop the theoretical basis upon which the EGUIDE evolved from the germ of an idea into a fully functional vocational guidance tool.

With any web based tool the information available to assist completion is very important to its overall success. All international partners rated the quality of the information available on completing the EGUIDE tools. Their responses are presented in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: International Partners rating of the Quality of Information available on completing the EGUIDE Tools**

Country	Low	Average	High	Very High
(1)	0	50	50	0
(2)	0	0	0	100
(3)	0	50	0	50
(4)	0	67	0	33
(5)	0	0	67	33
(6)	0	0	100	0
(7)	0	0	100	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>20</b>

NB: All figures are percentages

Administration of the EGUIDE tool to the target client groups required them to attend the pilot site in person (although web based nature of the project means it can be completed anywhere that has a web link and set of head phones). The majority of partners (approximately three quarters) felt that

- The information available on completing EGUIDE was either of a high or very high standard.

Those who felt that the quality of information was average came from countries 1, 3, and 4. Only amongst those from country 4 was this the majority opinion. Partners from countries 1 and 4 piloted the EGUIDE with a local sample of the target group. Despite some partner's rating of the quality of information available, the feedback received from clients whom BIS surveyed who participated in the pilot administration of the E-GUIDE tool was

- very positive on the practical application and value of EGUIDE which was not always their experience of completing pencil and paper forms or attending a one-to-one interview with a career guidance counsellor.

However, there was a feeling among some partners from countries where EGUIDE was not tested and was not translated into their language, that it was difficult for them to assess the full potential of EGUIDE without translating and administering it to disadvantaged jobseekers in their own country.

Practitioners were included in the marketing and delivery of the EGUIDE tools to clients. This covered all aspects of its delivery from promoting the concept to encouraging clients to use the tools. The Practitioners are a key element to the delivery of EGUIDE as they understand the ability of the target client group. They also work more closely with the client group understanding their individual needs and are an important component to the success of the instrument. One partner summed up their role when saying '*the impact of the project results will depend on practitioners competences*'

Practitioners therefore constitute an important element to the success of the EGUIDE project. The overall theme of the feedback from the practitioners was very positive with

- Practitioners recognising EGUIDE will be a tool that can assist them in their work, which is critically important to its potential longer term success.

Vocational Guidance practitioners from the countries where the EGUIDE tools were piloted were involved in group discussions around the development of EGUIDE; providing a voice on the application of the completed tools and general facilitation around completion of the EGUIDE tools on-line through promoting the service and organising the sessions for clients. There was also strong support for the value of EGUIDE in contributing to the personal development and career paths of clients which practitioners felt would provide informed decisions around job choices. Some clients who participated in the EGUIDE pilot did not appear to be familiar with existing information sources on the tools. However, this does not appear to have provided any adverse impact upon their ability to complete its range of assessments or their level of satisfaction with the experience of completing the assessments online. In fact, a number of clients believed the rationale behind the EGUIDE became clear (i.e. the VET nature of the assessments) which they told us provided an additional incentive to reach the end of the assessment. This appears to provide additional support for the flexible and 'user-friendly' nature of this assessment framework.

#### **4.2 To what extent has the development work and/or the results exceeded original expectations?**

Most of the Partners believed that the development work delivered by EGUIDE exceeded their original expectations. The partners highlighted that within a future scoping of the tool, additional training and development for guidance practitioners may be necessary. This training need would be around the scoping and implementation of the quality assurance framework and not relating to the EGUIDE tools

However, this was not raised as a shortcoming by the career guidance practitioners who contributed to the pilot within the coordinating organization following the delivery of in-house training on its administration. As a group vocational guidance practitioners believed that *'Competence on its use was developed fairly easily'*.

Practitioners felt that the quality assurance framework was now embedded into their work and had not changed their role or job to any great extent. This is testament to their competence and confidence. They are very keen to continue to explore and improve the framework and they were enthused by the opportunity that they got to work with practitioners from another partner organization during the project. This benchmarking of approach would they felt, only serve to improve their practice in the long term. This endorsement of EGUIDE from those working closest to it, adds increased credibility to the framework and tools

All practitioners believed that there were aspects of the EGUIDE that are particularly valuable to clients. In particular practitioners highlighted the *Interest and Aptitudes* test which they felt were valuable for exploring interest and natural abilities of the target client group. They felt that it could be incorporated into the career path guidance. In relation to the delivery of the tools, they commented on the visual presentation of the software making it easy to use for clients who found it more interesting than pen and paper tests.

The practitioners felt that EGUIDE provided a more structured framework for the assessment and development of career guidance for their client group as they proceed through a structured pathway with defined entry and exit points. There was a general feeling that *'it's helped with career advice'* as it enables them to be more focused within their work.

Other general comments made by members of the partnership suggest the development of a specific framework for providing feedback to clients that is in keeping with the ease of completion could be considered. Other partners raised a question about the administration of the tool by those without knowledge of its psychological development. It was noted that a detailed manual could ensure that this issue would not become a stumbling block to its use beyond the scope of the E-GUIDE pilot. This manual could be incorporated into the quality assurance framework. However, this issue was not highlighted by any of the career guidance practitioners who administered EGUIDE to the target client group.

There were concerns that the online administration of the EGUIDE may limit the ability of vocational guidance professionals to deliver services on an individual or one-to-one basis, which some partners felt was a key element to the success of vocational guidance particularly among disadvantaged jobseekers. However the majority of partner organizations including BJC highlighted that

*"EGUIDE is not designed to replace working with individuals on a one to one basis, rather it has been designed to facilitate and improve this process"*

Other suggestions included customizing the EGUIDE tool for smaller organizations to improve its efficiency. Some partners highlighted the length of time taken to complete the EGUIDE which they considered to take too long to complete. It was also suggested that the tool should be customized to the needs of, and targeted at older jobseekers. This perception that the tools are not designed for older job seekers was diluted to some extent in the consultation with clients which included older job seekers who participated in the pilot. They provided very positive feedback on its application to BIS.

It was suggested by practitioners that the EGUIDE tool, if used as part of vocational guidance practice, could form part of a more user friendly, holistic approach to motivate disadvantaged job seekers into gainful employment. It was felt that it was important to highlight the value of the EGUIDE to all potential practitioners and clients in order to realise its full potential for disadvantaged jobseekers. This could be achieved through the development of appropriate training and workshops for practitioners from external agencies. The in-house training provided for practitioners who administered EGUIDE during the pilot will provide a foundation upon which to develop such a resource. However as the practitioners appeared to develop the competence required to administer the EGUIDE relatively quickly, this suggests that such a resource could be shaped within existing professional development frameworks.

## **5.0 Efficiency**

### **5.1 To what extent have financial, administrative or other procedures contributed to or hindered the achievement of results?**

As the coordinating partner Ballymun Job Centre was responsible for general project administration and coordination. The other partners felt that this role was highly effective to achieving the results obtained within the EGUIDE project. All partners were satisfied that the financial and administrative procedures were robust and user friendly. European transnational projects are challenging in terms of communication and accessibility of partners. The results achieved by the EGUIDE Partnership are testament to Ballymun Job Centre in that there were only five formal meetings of the Partnership throughout the project timeframe of two years. The management of such meetings is an excellent example of how best to derive optimum benefit from heavily populated meetings. There were clear action areas allocated to each partner who subsequently fed back to the wider group through e-mail and conference calling. There is also some added value in terms of the transfer of project management competence as one of the partners is now leading on a European Transnational project in which Ballymun Job Centre are also a Partner.

### **5.2 To what extent has the partnership worked to deadlines and budget limits.**

The Partnership was delivered within budget and all of the partners were satisfied with the financial procedures adopted by Ballymun Job Centre. The project was extended from September 2007 to December to enable the pilot to be rolled out into colleges of Further Education.

### 5.3 To what extent has the EGUIDE coordinating organization been able to utilize the experience of the partnership?

As the coordinating partner Ballymun Job Centre assumed the role of lead partner. In this role Ballymun Job Centre assembled a partnership that included the full range and level of experience and skills required to meet the objectives of the EGUIDE project and deliver its outputs. Table 2 provides the data necessary to assess the extent to which the coordinating organization was able to utilize the experience of the partnership.

**Table 2: Experience, Roles and Expertise of Partnership Members to the E-Guide Project**

Country	Experience	Roles	Expertise
<b>A</b>	Provision of vocational training; transnational projects	Development and dissemination of the Quality Assurance Framework	Vocation training for transnational partners
<b>B</b>	E-learning development; transnational projects	Development of on-line assessment tool	Web development
<b>C</b>	Development, promotion and organization of local economy	Identification of Quality Assurance practices in guidance of disadvantaged jobseekers	Dissemination of vocational training activities to employers
<b>D</b>	Development of support programmes for disadvantaged groups	Validation of tools and quality assurance framework	Development of innovative training for unemployed and disadvantages groups
<b>E</b>	Socio-organizational research and management training	Research Quality Assurance Framework	Development of Quality Assurance practice
<b>F</b>	Service provision to the unemployed	Development and dissemination of the Quality Assurance Framework	Delivery of vocational training and career guidance
<b>G</b>	Provision of access to employment for jobseekers	Development and dissemination of the Quality Assurance Framework	Customised service provision to the unemployed

The data presented in this table highlights that the coordinating partner, having gathered an experienced group of professionals, was in a position to utilize the expertise required to meet the objectives of the EGUIDE project. The agreed roles assumed by each partner provide further evidence that these skills were available to the partnership to pursue the aim and objectives of the EGUIDE project.

All partners were supportive and positive about the role of Ballymun Job Centre as the coordinating partner in the EGUIDE project. In reference to the coordination of the partnership, one partner felt that *'Ballymun Job Centre managed it (EGUIDE) very well in keeping track of such an ambitious project'*. Another partner was *'very impressed by the psychological theories and psychological testing aspect of the project, they (Ballymun Job Centre) really did well in my opinion to pull this together'*

For all partners their role and contribution to the EGUIDE project was consistent with the work of their own organization providing further evidence to support the utilization of their experience. There was a general feeling among the partners that Ballymun Job Centre, as the coordinating partner made the major contribution to the success of the EGUIDE project.

## 6.0 Effectiveness

### 6.1 To what extent have the EGUIDE objectives been achieved?

All members of the partnership felt that the E-GUIDE has met its objectives to some extent (see Table 3). Two thirds of individual members of the partnership felt that all the objectives had been fully met; the other third felt that these were mostly met. (half the individual members who felt that the objectives were mostly met rather than fully met belonged to English speaking members as the strength of opinion amongst these two national partners was a little weaker). However 85% of individual members of the four partners who administered EGUIDE online to disadvantaged jobseekers as part of the pilot of the instrument believed that the objectives were fully met.

**Table 3 Extent to which the partners felt EGUIDE objectives were met?**

Country	Not at all	Some met	Most met	All met
(1)	0	0	50	50
(2)	0	0	0	0
(3)	0	0	50	50
(4)	0	0	0	100
(5)	0	0	0	100
(6)	0	0	100	0
(7)	0	0	100	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>64</b>

NB: All figures are percentages

## 7.0 Impact

### 7.1 To what extent have the results of EGUIDE been disseminated to the intended target group?

The key results of EGUIDE are

- The quality assurance framework
- Web based tools

This section will explore how these results were disseminated to clients, practitioners and the wider public

Close to 400 clients piloted the EGUIDE tools across four centres. Clients felt that the administration of the E-GUIDE tools made it

- much easier for them to complete it '*at their own pace*' which contrasts with the more traditional one-to-one consultations with vocational guidance advisers and paper and pencil approaches to obtaining the information which some found '*boring*' and '*demotivating*'.

EGUIDE also provided them with a level of privacy and confidentiality that clients do not always associate with the aforementioned approaches to vocational guidance. Clients completing EGUIDE also commented on its group administration as they were able to complete it with others in a similar position known to them, which may to some extent lead to reduced inhibitions or feelings of stigma associated with being without a job. The web based mode of administration means that EGUIDE can be used as a group or individually (similar to the traditional one-to-one administration) with the support of a vocational guidance practitioner. It should however not be interpreted that EGUIDE tools are designed to replace one to one engagement between practitioner and client. The tools in fact are part of this process

Clients who had no experience of using computers were initially daunted when they entered the assessment centre at Ballymun Job Centre. These initial inhibitions were overcome with the support and encouragement of the EGUIDE administrator and other clients completing the tool. One client noted '*When I got into it (EGUIDE), it was ok, I said mother of god but then when you just click it its grand no problem*' another said '*I like the headphones*'.

Even those with no experience of the use of computers or IT adapted very quickly to the procedure for completing the EGUIDE, though they still said that the use of computer software would continue to have an inhibitory effect on them. Despite the length of time taken to complete the EGUIDE the clients '*were only in an hour and a quarter*' and '*we weren't in two hours*'. '*You can take your time there is no time limit*.

These time durations for many may seem a long time to be completing any type of protocol or paperwork especially with limited experience of clerical or administrative work, and in some cases limited literacy skills. But this was not the case with clients who participated in the evaluation.

As clients progressed through the EGUIDE tool online it began clear to some of them why they were being asked certain questions (although this was not always the case), this realization provided additional incentives to complete the test despite not receiving formal information in advance of its administration. The potential of a feedback mechanism within the E-GUIDE was particularly appealing to clients which produced a general positive reaction as well as a motivating factor to complete and gain the most individual benefit for each client. Clients generally enjoyed completing EGUIDE which was not always their experience of completing pencil and paper forms. EGUIDE therefore offers a resource that clients appear comfortable with and offers a useful tool to complement existing vocational assessment practice.

In relation to the delivery of the tool practitioners commented on the visual presentation of the software making EGUIDE easy to use for clients who found it more interesting than pen and paper tests as it offers the opportunity to provide more structures and guidance to the services available. EGUIDE offers an innovative approach to career guidance; practitioners were very supportive of its use and aware of its value to existing procedures within their own job. This appears to be one of the benefits of including them during the developmental phase of the study.

BJC have already begun the process of disseminating the learning from EGUIDE to the wider public with presentations planned/delivered at the following seminars.

- The Psychological Society of Ireland in November 2007.
- The Institute of Career Guidance Counsellors in Armagh 2007 .
- Leonardo Valorisation Conference in February. 2008
- International Conference in Berlin in Spring 2008

This process demonstrates achievement against the LDV transfer of knowledge indicator.

## 7.2 To what extent has the EGUIDE improved the Guidance resources available for this target group.

The web based administration of EGUIDE was preferred by clients to the more traditional one-to-one formal interview or pencil and paper test. The partners felt it was a particularly valuable resource for practitioners. It also offers an effective method for engaging clients in an area that could prove difficult to motivate them. Its visual presentation created a more informal ('playful') atmosphere to explore highly important issues for them. The extent to which all individual members of the partnership felt EGUIDE benefited clients is presented in Table 4.

**Table 4: The Extent to which individual partners felt EGUIDE benefited clients**

Country	None	Low level	High level	Very high
(1)	0	0	100	0
(2)	0	0	0	100
(3)	0	0	100	0
(4)	0	100	0	0
(5)	0	0	67	33
(6)	0	0	0	100
(7)	0	50	50	0
<b>Total</b>	0	<b>27</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>27</b>

NB: All figures are percentages

Three quarters of the individual partnership members felt that EGUIDE was beneficial to clients. Most of those who felt there were low level benefits for clients were from one country for whom there was total agreement on the low level benefit to partners (this was a non-English speaking country).

Practitioners from across partner organisations were involved in group discussions within the EGUIDE project; providing a voice on the completed tools and general facilitation around completion of the EGUIDE on-line through promoting the service, organising the sessions for clients. Practitioners felt the value of the EGUIDE for completing the personal development and career paths of clients felt helped to provide informed decisions around job choices. For them the main strength of the EGUIDE centered upon its mode of administration through the use of visual images and voices to guide clients through the tool which made it easy for them to administer it to disadvantaged jobseekers. The on-line delivery of EGUIDE made it 'user friendly' for many clients making it a system that could be used by anyone (and anywhere with internet access). There was also a feeling that its interactive mode made it more enjoyable, less boring and less daunting than the more traditional pencil and paper standardised assessment tools used by career guidance practitioners.

The practitioners also felt that the EGUIDE tool would not make a significant change to their role as a provider of vocational guidance and support services for jobseekers as it was only the mode of data collection from clients that has changed with the use of the framework. Other strengths of the EGUIDE highlighted by the practitioners included its flexibility as a tool for vocational guidance to jobseekers regardless of their age. This is particularly important as partners indicated they worked with a client base of between 20 and 50 per month, with a figure of 30 given as the average for the group of practitioners based in Ballymun where the tool was piloted. Furthermore, Ballymun Job Centre also delivers a careers guidance service to jobseekers with a history of addiction and other barriers to job seeking. As this service is delivered due to the specific lifestyle patterns of this vulnerable group, the flexibility of a web based tool can be of particular value.

Vocational guidance is also delivered to the youngest jobseekers by Ballymun Job Centre, those aged between 17-24, many of whom are school leavers who have not yet gained full-time employment. The visual nature of much of the EGUIDE tool is popular with them as it helps maintain their interest over the full duration of the EGUIDE which can take a relatively long period of time. This is in contrast to the traditional pencil and paper assessment tools which can inhibit their participation as there is a high level of poor literacy skills among this age group of school leavers in the Ballymun area, for example. In addition this age group is likely to be more comfortable with web based facilities as they have grown up during a period when the internet and mobile phones have played an increasingly dominant role in society particularly among young people.

The general delivery of the EGUIDE tools was considered to be one of the strengths of the instrument when compared with paper and pencil assessment tools. For example it was necessary for a careers adviser to be present in order to provide guidance and support as well as answering questions from clients. EGUIDE overcame many of these difficulties for the clients, as it was described by one practitioner as 'much more fun and interactive way to do it'. Particular mention was made of its value to school leavers as it eliminates '*the whole fear of writing as they're the computer generation*'. This is particularly important as the completion of the six assessment areas of the EGUIDE online can take up to one and a half hours which is a long time to maintain the interest of someone unless the administration and content of an assessment tool appeals to them as the EGUIDE did. This was also the case with older clients who did not have IT skills. The visual presentation of the e-guide also means that clients can view tasks being performed and see them being completed by themselves which may act as a form of intrinsic motivation to continue it as well as giving them a level of personal control in a task they may feel that they are taking a leading role.

Nearly all members of each partnership felt that the EGUIDE tool offered improved guidance to clients. Only two partnership members felt there low level improvement. These were from countries 4 and 7. In country 4 this was a minority opinion

**Table 5 Partners perception on the extent E-Guide has improved guidance offered /available to clients**

Country	None	Low improvement	High improvement	Very High improvement
(1)	0	0	100	0
(2)	0	0	0	100
(3)	0	0	100	0
(4)	0	33	67	0
(5)	0	0	67	33
(6)	0	0	0	100
(7)	0	50	50	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>27</b>

NB: All figures are percentages

### **7.3 To what extent is the EGUIDE project likely to expand beyond the intended scope of Guidance Practice?**

The partners who piloted EGUIDE felt it was a particularly valuable resource for vocational guidance practitioners and highlighted the merits of the Quality Assurance Framework developed by EGUIDE. It must be highlighted that the achievement of the partnership in designing a quality assurance framework for initial entry into guidance is exceptional. The EGUIDE quality assurance framework is unique in that it focuses exclusively on guidance delivery whilst many of the other established frameworks used by partners eg. ISO, EFQM, Q-Mark and Excellence Through People are concentrated on the wider systems and support processes within organizations offering guidance services. There is a clear distinction between these two approaches. EGUIDE has targeted this gap through focusing on the core process of the guidance organization i.e. delivery of career guidance services.

International partners highlighted the potential value of EGUIDE to school leavers as well as younger school pupils who are encouraged to make choices on educational pathways at 14 years of age and beyond. It was felt that EGUIDE could have beneficial value as part of a more general counseling process for this client group generally. In addition practitioners felt EGUIDE provides a potentially new and innovative tool for vocational guidance. It also offers a resource for assessing current and future vocational direction for disadvantaged jobseekers.

Its visual presentation created a more informal ('playful') atmosphere to explore highly important issues for them. A number of partners particularly those with experience of psychometric testing highlighted the theoretical basis upon which the EGUIDE evolved from which provides more strong foundation upon which EGUIDE has been designed and developed.

The potential informality of the EGUIDE administration appealed to clients highlighting its value as a preliminary part of the career guidance process regardless of the age or socioeconomic status of the client. One of the major innovations of EGUIDE is its potential to reduce some of the stress, anxiety and stigma associated with individual career guidance. This makes it particularly valuable with younger jobseekers, including those reaching the end of school who are more comfortable completing psychometric approaches to assessment in groups rather than individually. For example there is less need to stop and ask questions. Clients noted *'It was just straight and normal and over quick...'* For another *'It would be less daunting yeah...I think interviews are very 'em, I don't like interviews 'em I find them very daunting but if it was a computer, I'd work probably better on a computer, than face to face with somebody'*

A further value of E-GUIDE for clients is its potential use with those who may have difficulty using more traditional vocational guidance tools as there are no right or wrong answers in the interest and personality sections EGUIDE which is also considered an important benefit for practitioners of *'the visual aspect makes it more interesting for them'* and perhaps of crucial importance to career advisers is that the administration of EGUIDE to school leavers as *'its easier to get them (the school leavers) to stay there for an hour and a half if its computer based'*. Practitioners felt some of the school leaver client group perceived EGUIDE *'like a computer game'*.

From the experience of practitioners, the range of competences covered by EGUIDE also offers the opportunity to cover areas of career guidance that they did not always cover with school leavers. In particular it was noted that aptitude tests are not usually completed with school leavers unless they are proceeding to vocational training programmes whereas the EGUIDE is *'definitely more efficient, more comprehensive'* (practitioner opinion).

Some practitioners will be using the EGUIDE within a *'school retention programme'*. For this purpose they will be introducing it to young people in their final year at school who are completing the leaving cert in Ireland. In addition to the on-line administrative of the tool, practitioners highlighted a number of other strengths of EGUIDE. It enabled them to provide a clear and standard framework of service delivery to all clients as they *'are getting the same experience'*. It can be used by all ages. It was noted that EGUIDE can provide an excellent advantage to both practitioners and clients as it provides a more structured approach to the provision of career guidance. It was also noted that some older clients completed the EGUIDE at home. These clients were very positive about its value with one believing that *'it's easier to understand what they're being asked to do'*. Clients who had experience of completing both pencil and paper and EGUIDE expressed a preference for the EGUIDE approach to career guidance.

## 8.0 Sustainability

### 8.1 To what extent is it plausible that funding sources for the support and development of the project are likely to be available (and where from)

Sustainability is the most difficult aspect of managing any fixed term funded project. There is an expectation that the lead partner will have implemented sustainability strategies through the course of the project, in addition to delivering the project, which will result in sustainability by the completion of the Project. This is simply not achievable. This evaluation recognizes that all partners face a difficult challenge in targeting funding sources for the customized development of EGUIDE as a stand alone project

EGUIDE is an interagency framework which provides an opportunity to develop and implement a professional career plan for disadvantaged job seekers. BJC own the intellectual property rights, other partners have the right to use it in their own country. If they need to make changes to the tools or framework, they need to seek approval from. There are a number of options open to BJC as they seek to roll the project out. These include

#### Option 1

- Engaging with FAS on the potential for interim funding over a defined period (1-2 years) to refine EGUIDE to make it ready for market. This process would include scoping EGUIDE to all of the LESN nationwide. (It is currently being scoped in North Dublin) As the National Training & Development Authority, FAS have the capacity, access to clients and marketability to sustain EGUIDE in the future. In the event of FAS funding the product development stage of EGUIDE, this would copper fasten the relationship between BJC and FAS and the next stage in that relationship development could be an arrangement where BJC are contracted by FAS to roll the project out using their expertise and guidance practitioners.

#### Option 2

- Targeting other statutory agencies eg. Department of Social Community & Family Affairs (DSCFA) & Department of Education & Science (DOES) and develop similar scoping proposals. This evaluation has highlighted the role that EGUIDE can play in supporting disadvantaged job seekers into VET and also its role in guiding young school leavers at the initial career guidance stage. This demonstrates value in terms of reducing long term unemployment and improving the educational guidance of young people which fit within the mission of both DSCFA and DOES.

There may also be a niche within the National Development Plan 2007-13(NDP) targeting those who are economically inactive and not claiming mandated benefits to actively seek work. These profiles could include lone parents and those with a history of substance abuse. The other partners should consider a similar approach when looking to develop strategies for the roll out of EGUIDE in their respective countries

One of the Areas for Improvement that were identified during the consultations was the gaps in the feedback to those clients who complete the EGUIDE assessment. This has however already been identified and actioned by the partnership who has recently applied to the Leonardo partnership fund for resources to develop a feedback template for client's unique to E-Guide. This would measure satisfaction and would involve using all of the partners. This mechanism would fit comfortably with the consultancy tools in step 3 of the EGUIDE Quality Assurance Framework.

Much work has already been done by many of the partners in terms of embedding EGUIDE into their mainstream operation of career guidance. This demonstrates the adaptability and added value of the tool. However there is an inherent risk that as EGUIDE becomes embedded into the core business of organizations, it will lose its identity and with that the projects ability to innovate further

## **9.0 Conclusions & Findings**

In conclusion, the overall assessment is that EGUIDE is an innovative and qualitative initiative which is delivering benefits to users and practitioners, in addition to providing significant learning opportunities to the organizations involved.

This section includes the main conclusions and findings from the evaluation which are considered here in respect of the main terms of reference under the following headings

- Development of the EGUIDE Model of Practice
- Partnership Working
- Quality Assurance
- Future development

### **9.1 Development of the EGUIDE Model**

EGUIDE has been developed very successfully over a two year period based on a model of delivery of career guidance that incorporates a person centred approach that is customized to meet the needs of disadvantaged job seekers. The three overall objectives of the EGUIDE Project have been achieved through a well planned and structured intervention since the initial project conception in 2005 through to the piloting of the tools from September 2007 and the official launch of the Project in December 2007. Through the successful implementation of the pilot phase EGUIDE is already influencing practice within the partner organizations. Whilst it is acknowledged that the sample size of the research is limited, it has nonetheless provided useful, relevant and important information on the experience of developing, working with and using EGUIDE. A number of positive outcomes have been demonstrated by the Project.

- 85% of individual members of the four partners who administered the EGUIDE online to disadvantaged jobseekers as part of the pilot of the instrument believed that the objectives were fully met.
- There were very high levels of satisfaction among partners, practitioners and clients with all aspects of EGUIDE
- All partners were unequivocal that the EGUIDE Project activities were consistent with Leonardo da Vinci terms, conditions and priorities. Partners who had been involved in other E-Learning projects within Leonardo Da Vinci felt that it compared favorably with anything they had contributed to within the programme.
- All partners were of the view that the Project responded to a clear identification of need. The need for the EGUIDE Project was identified through sound research around the need for Guidance and a Quality Assurance Framework across all of the partner countries.

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- EGUIDE is consistent with the needs of stakeholders involved in VET both inside and outside the Project Partnership.
- Partners, practitioners and clients feel that the EGUIDE tool, if used as part of vocational guidance practice, could form part of a more user friendly, holistic approach to motivate disadvantaged job seekers into gainful employment.
- Practitioners were very supportive of the application of EGUIDE and aware of its value within their own job. This appears to be one of the benefits of including them during the developmental phase of the study.
- The web based administration of EGUIDE was preferred by clients to the more traditional one-to-one formal interview or pencil and paper test.
- Clients feel that they have a greater level of independence and autonomy when using the web based tools.
- Ballymun Job Centre as the lead partner and Project Coordinator implemented robust and practical financial, administrative and communication procedures which has contributed positively to the achievement of results.
- The successful transfer of knowledge, innovation and expertise between all partners to achieve stated outcomes for those involved in VET is clearly evident to this evaluation

## 9.2 Partnership Working

In terms of Partnership working there are three key success factors identifiable in the successful delivery of this project which are evident from the evaluation

- It has brought together a team of highly motivated, energetic and innovative individuals from the community and public sectors
- It has required a very broad base of expertise for successful delivery from individuals with expertise in
  - Career Guidance Planning & Delivery
  - Vocational Training & Development
  - Working with disadvantaged Job Seekers
  - Quality Assurance Frameworks
  - ICT and in particular web based frameworks
- This is a relatively mature partnership with good working relationships that have been developed and nurtured over a relatively long period of time. Some partners are new, but others have developed working links over many years.

Partnership working has been an essential element not only at the strategic level of this project but also very necessary and evident in front line delivery of the projects. The involvement of guidance practitioners and employment support staff from external agencies in the pilot phase was an essential factor in the roll out.

## 9.3 Quality Assurance

- The development of a quality assurance framework is an innovative example of how quality can be embedded in an evolving process. The existence of this framework will be critically important when working with state agencies on potential future roll out.
- It would be useful in terms of continuous improvement to benchmark the quality assurance framework against other frameworks in terms of all or some of the following areas
  - Approach
  - Delivery
  - Measurement of results
  - Feedback
- Moving forward it will be necessary to develop a scoring matrix for the framework; this could then be used to assess performance of individual agencies against the standards.
- It was felt that it was important to highlight the value of the E-Guide to all potential practitioners and clients in order to avail of its full potential for disadvantaged jobseekers. This could be achieved through the development of appropriate training and workshops for practitioners. This could lead to the production of a training manual for all guidance practitioners.

#### **9.4 Future Development**

- The requirement for a specific framework for providing feedback to clients that is in keeping with the ease of the completion and drawing upon the levels of interest and motivation to complete the EGUIDE has already been identified by the Partnership and funding proposals developed. This would augment the decision making and implementation stages in the Quality Assurance Framework.
- There are a number of potential avenues for rolling out the Project which are already being advanced by BJC. There is also recognition that further work is required in the areas of scoping beyond the pilot stage to further validate the work of EGUIDE.
- The transfer of knowledge from the two year funded phase of EGUIDE will be significant in the wider roll out. BMJ recognize that this will require working beyond the intended scope of guidance practice. This work has already commenced with conference presentations at
  - The Psychological Society of Ireland in November 2007. .
  - Leonardo Valorisation Conference in February. 2008
  - The Institute of Career Guidance Counsellors in Armagh 2007
  - International Conference in Berlin in Spring 2008

## **APPENDICES**

## **APPENDIX I**

### **Partners Questionnaire**

## Business Improvements Solutions

### Evaluation of the EGUIDE Project.

#### CONFIDENTIAL

Ballymun Job Centre has commissioned Business Improvements' Solutions (BIS) Belfast to undertake an evaluation of the EGUIDE project. This questionnaire has been designed to obtain information important to this task. We would be grateful if you take a few minutes of your time to complete it.

All information you provide will be treated in the strictest confidence. No individual will be identified in the report that we will produce for Ballymun Job Centre. We do not require you to include your name on this questionnaire and will ensure that any information you provide to us is treated in the strictest confidence.

Thank you in advance

Mr. Finbarr Fitzpatrick  
Dr. Patrick McCrystal

**Questionnaire Number** \_\_\_\_\_  
(This will be completed by BIS)

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

**These questions will be used to inform the evaluation of the e-Guide.**

**1. What is your job title and organisation/country? (Please write in below)**

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**2. How long have you been in this position?**

\_\_\_\_\_years                      \_\_\_\_\_months

**3. Did you have any input into the design and or development of the e-Guide project? (Please tick all that apply)**

Design           

Development

None             

(If possible please comment on your answer to question 4)

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**4. What is your role within the e-Guide project? (Please write in below)**

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**The e-Guide Partnership**

**5 In your opinion to what extent has the establishment of the e-Guide partnership benefited the project outcomes?**

Not at all [ ]      A little [ ]      A lot [ ]      Totally [ ]

(If possible, please explain your answer below)

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**6 To what extent has the e-Guide coordinating organisation utilised your experience as a partner?**

Not at all [ ]      A little [ ]      A lot [ ]      Totally [ ]

(If possible, please explain your answer below)

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**6. In your opinion has the e-Guide consistent with Leonardo da Vinci terms, conditions and priorities?**

**5a Leonardo da Vinci terms** (Please tick one)

Not at all [ ]      A little [ ]      A lot [ ]      Totally [ ]

(If possible, please explain your answer below)

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**5b Leonardo da Vinci conditions** (Please tick one)

Not al all [ ]      A little [ ]      A lot [ ]      Totally [ ]

(If possible, please explain your answer below)

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**5c Leonardo da Vinci priorities** (Please tick one)

Not at all [ ]      A little [ ]      A lot [ ]      Totally [ ]

(If possible, please explain your answer below)

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**6. To what extent is the e-Guide consistent with the work of your own organisation?**

Not at all [ ]      A little [ ]      A lot [ ]      Totally [ ]

(If possible, please explain your answer below)

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**HERE ARE SOME QUESTIONS ON THE E-GUIDE QUIZ**

**6. From your own experience are there any aspects of the e-GUIDE Quiz that you believe are particularly valuable to clients?**

Yes [ ]      No [ ]

If yes please give some information or examples for your answer

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**7. If possible can you give some examples of good practice for guidance and support that you provided or facilitated around the EGUIDE quiz?**

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**8. From your own experience what do you think are the strengths of the EGUIDE Quiz for clients? (Please tick one)**

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**9. From your own experience what do you think are the best parts of the EGUIDE Quiz? (Please write below)**

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**10. From your own experience what do you think were the worst parts of the EGUIDE Quiz?**

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**11. From your own experience do you think the EGUIDE Quiz could be improved? (Please tick one)**

Yes  No

*(If yes, please write in your reasons for this)*

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**12. In your opinion has the development (and outputs to date) met or exceeded your original expectations? (Please tick one)**

Not yet met   
Met   
Exceeded

**13. In your opinion how would you rate the quality of the information available with the EGUIDE Quiz? (Please tick one)**

Low       Average       High       Very High

**14. In your opinion to what extent has the of the e-Guide benefited clients. (Please tick one)**

None       Low level       High level       Very High

**15. In your opinion to what extent has the e-Guide improved the guidance offered/available to clients? Please tick one)**

None       Low improvement       High improvement       Very High

**16. In your opinion to what extent have the e-Guide objectives been achieved?**

Not at all       Some met       Most met       All met

*Please explain your answer*

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**17. If you would like to make any other comments about the e-Guide please do so below.**

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**THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE**

## **APPENDIX II**

### **Practitioners Questionnaire**

## Business Improvements Solutions

### Evaluation of the EGUIDE Project.

#### CONFIDENTIAL

Ballymun Job Centre has commissioned Business Improvements' Solutions (BIS) Belfast to undertake an evaluation of the EGUIDE project. This questionnaire has been designed to obtain information important to this task. We would be grateful if you take a few minutes of your time to complete this questionnaire before participating in the focus group discussion.

All information you provide will be treated in the strictest confidence. No individual will be identified in the report that we will produce for Ballymun Job Centre. We do not require you to include your name on this questionnaire and will ensure that any information you provide to us is treated in the strictest confidence.

**Thank you in advance**

Mr. Finbarr Fitzpatrick  
Dr. Patrick McCrystal

**Questionnaire Number** \_\_\_\_\_  
(This will be completed by BIS)

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

**These questions will be used to inform the evaluation of the e-Guide.**

**1. What is your job title \_\_\_\_\_**

**2. How long have you been in this position?**

\_\_\_\_\_ years                      \_\_\_\_\_ months

**3. What is your role within Ballymun Job centre? (Please write in below)**

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**4. Did you have any input into the design and or development of the e-Guide project? (Please tick all that apply)**

Design              
Development   
None             

(If possible please comment on your answer to question 4)

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**5. What is your role within the e-Guide project? (Please write in below)**

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**HERE ARE SOME QUESTIONS ON THE E-GUIDE QUIZ**

**6. From your own experience are there any aspects of the e-GUIDE Quiz that you believe are particularly valuable to clients?**

Yes

No

If yes please give some information or examples for your answer

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**7. If possible can you give some examples of the guidance and support that you provided or facilitated around the EGUIDE quiz?**

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**8. From your own experience what do you think are the strengths of the EGUIDE Quiz for clients? (Please tick one)**

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**9. From your own experience what do you think are the best parts of the EGUIDE Quiz? (Please write below)**

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**10. From your own experience what do you think were the worst parts of the EGUIDE Quiz?**

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**11. From your own experience do you think the EGUIDE Quiz could be improved?**

Yes  No

*(If yes, please write in your reasons for this)*

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**12. From your own experience how would you rate the quality of the information available with the EGUIDE Quiz? (Please tick one)**

Low  Average  High  Very High

**13. From your own experience to what extent has the of the e-Guide benefited clients. (Please tick one)**

None  Low level  High level  Very High

**14. From your own experience to what extent has the e-Guide improved the guidance offered/available to clients? Please tick one)**

None  Low improvement  High improvement  Very High

**15. If you would like to make any other comments about the e-Guide please do so below.**

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**THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE**

**APPENDIX III**

**Client Questionnaire**

## **Business Improvements Solutions**

### **Evaluation of the EGUIDE Project.**

#### **CONFIDENTIAL**

Ballymun Job Centre has commissioned Business Improvements' Solutions (BIS) Belfast to undertake an evaluation of the EGUIDE project. This questionnaire has been designed to obtain information important to this task. We would be grateful if you take a few minutes of your time to complete this questionnaire. Whilst the questionnaire runs to six pages, most questions require you to tick a box.

All information you provide will be treated in the strictest confidence. No individual will be identified in the report that we will produce for Ballymun Job Centre. We do not require you to include your name on this questionnaire and will ensure that any information you provide to us is treated in the strictest confidence.

**Thank you in advance**

Mr. Finbarr Fitzpatrick  
Dr. Patrick McCrystal

**Questionnaire Number** \_\_\_\_\_  
(This will be completed by BIS)

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

**These questions will be used to develop a profile of project participants.**

**1. Are you male or female?** (Please tick one) Male  Female

**2. Age (years)** \_\_\_\_years 16-19  20-25  Over 25   
(Please write in your age in years or tick the appropriate category)

**3. Marital status** Single  Married  Separated  Other   
(Please tick the box that tells us your marital status)

**4. Where do you live?** (Please write in) \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Did your parents/legal guardians usually work when you were growing up?** (Please tick yes or no and write in type of work they did)

Yes  No

Mother/legal guardian Yes  No  Type of work/occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Father/legal guardian Yes  No  Type of work occupation \_\_\_\_\_

*If they did not work, did your parents receive state/unemployment benefit?*  
(please tick the appropriate box)

Yes  No

**6. Do you have any children?** Yes  No

**7. How old are your Child/children?** (Please write in age of each child)

Child 1 \_\_\_\_years

Child 2 \_\_\_\_years

Child 3 \_\_\_\_years

Child 4 \_\_\_\_years

Child 5 \_\_\_\_years

Child 6 \_\_\_\_years

**8. Did you complete school** (i.e. at least until 16 years) Yes  No

If no, when did you stop attending school (Please write age in years) \_\_\_\_ years

**9. Did you obtain any educational qualifications whilst at school?** (Please tick one)

Yes  No

*If yes can you tell me what these were?*

Junior cert

Leaving cert

Other

(If you have other educational qualifications please write in details below)

**10. Roughly how long ago did you leave school?** (Please write in the length of time).

Years \_\_\_\_ Months \_\_\_\_

**11. Have you undertaken any education/training/courses since leaving school?**

Yes  No

*If yes can you tell me what these were?*

**12. Do you have any particular health issues/difficulties?** (Please tick the relevant box)

Yes

No

If yes, please write in here

**HERE ARE SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT WORK EXPERIENCE**

**13. Did you work previously?** (Please tick one)    Yes [ ]        No [ ]

*Can you tell me your last job?* \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please write in job title or type of work)

**14. How long did you work there?** (Please write in the length of time spent in this job)  
\_\_\_\_\_ years    \_\_\_\_months

**15. Was this your only job?** (Please write in)        Yes [ ]        No [ ]

**16. Have you undertaken work experience/placements since you last worked?** (please write in)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes [ ]        No [ ]

*Can you tell me what you did?* \_\_\_\_\_

**17. Have you undertaken any further education or vocational/work training?** (please write in)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes [ ]        No [ ]

*If yes, can you tell me what this consisted of?*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**18. Are there any facilities/resources/programmes training to improve your employment opportunities that you are aware of but have not yet accessed?** (e.g. *community based educational*)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes [ ]        No [ ]

**HERE ARE SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR JOB ASPIRATIONS**

**19. Do you wish to work full-time or part-time?**

(Please tick one)

Full-time

Part-time

**20. What type of job would you like to do?** (Please tick full-time\or part-time and write in the type of work you would like to do below)

Type of work \_\_\_\_\_

Type of work \_\_\_\_\_

**21. Do you believe you have the qualifications and experience to do this job?** (Please tick one)

Yes

No

**HERE ARE SOME QUESTIONS ON THE E-GUIDE QUIZ**

**22. What level of Computer Skills do you think you have?**

(Please tick one)

None [ ]                  Basic [ ]                  Good [ ]                  High [ ]

**23. Did you receive information about the EGUIDE quiz prior to you starting it?** (Please write in below)

Yes [ ]                  No [ ]

**24. If yes, how would you rate the quality of the information you received?** (Please tick one)

Poor [ ]                  Average [ ]                  Good [ ]                  Very Good [ ]

**25. Do you feel that you received sufficient guidance and support from staff when participating in the EGUIDE Quiz?** (Please tick one)

Yes [ ]                  No [ ]

**26. Can you give some examples of the guidance and support that you received before taking the EGUIDE quiz?**

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**27. What aspect of the EGUIDE Quiz did you find most interesting?**

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**28. Are you more aware of your strengths and abilities as a result of the EGUIDE Quiz?** (Please tick one)

Yes [ ]                  No [ ]

**29. Are you more aware of your interests and behaviours as a result of the EGUIDE Quiz?** (Please tick one)

Yes [ ]

No [ ]

**30. Do you have a better understanding of the labour market/education and training opportunities that are best for you as a result of the EGUIDE Quiz?** (Please tick one)

Yes [ ]

No [ ]

**31. What do you think were the best parts of the EGUIDE Quiz?**  
(Please write below)

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**32. What do you think were the worst parts of the EGUIDE Quiz?**

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**33. Do you think the EGUIDE Quiz be improved?** Yes [ ] No [ ]

*(If yes, please write in your reasons for this)*

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**34. How would you rate your overall satisfaction levels with the EGUIDE Quiz?** (Please tick one)

Low [ ]

Average [ ]

High [ ]

Very High [ ]

**THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE**

## **APPENDIX IV**

### **Stakeholder Questionnaire**

## Business Improvements Solutions

### Evaluation of the EGUIDE Project.

#### CONFIDENTIAL

Ballymun Job Centre has commissioned Business Improvements' Solutions (BIS) Belfast to undertake an evaluation of the EGUIDE project. This questionnaire has been designed to obtain information important to this task. We would be grateful if you take a few minutes of your time to complete this questionnaire..

All information you provide will be treated in the strictest confidence. No individual will be identified in the report that we will produce for Ballymun Job Centre. We do not require you to include your name on this questionnaire and will ensure that any information you provide to us is treated in the strictest confidence.

**Thank you in advance**

Mr. Finbarr Fitzpatrick  
Dr. Patrick McCrystal

**Questionnaire Number** \_\_\_\_\_  
(This will be completed by BIS)

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

**These questions will be used to inform the evaluation of the e-Guide.**

**1. What is your job title and organisation?**

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**2. How long have you been in this position?**

\_\_\_\_\_ years                      \_\_\_\_\_ months

**3. Did you have any input into the design and or development of the e-Guide project? (Please tick all that apply)**

- Design
- Development
- None

(If possible please comment on your answer to question 4)

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**4. What is your role within the e-Guide project? (Please write in below)**

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**5. To what extent is the e-Guide consistent with the work of your organisation?**

Not at all             A little             A lot             Totally

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**HERE ARE SOME QUESTIONS ON THE E-GUIDE QUIZ**

**6. From your own experience are there any aspects of the e-GUIDE Quiz that you believe are particularly valuable to clients?**

Yes

No

If yes please give some information or examples for your answer

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**7. If possible can you give some examples of good practice for guidance and support that you provided or facilitated around the EGUIDE quiz?**

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**8. From your own experience what do you think are the strengths of the EGUIDE Quiz for clients? (Please tick one)**

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**9. From your own experience what do you think are the best parts of the EGUIDE Quiz? (Please write below)**

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**10. From your own experience what do you think were the worst parts of the EGUIDE Quiz?**

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**11. From your own experience do you think the EGUIDE Quiz could be improved?** (Please tick one)

Yes  No

*(If yes, please write in your reasons for this)*

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**12. In your opinion has the development (and outputs to date) met or exceeded your original expectations?** (Please tick one)

Not yet met   
Met   
Exceeded

**13. In your opinion how would you rate the quality of the information available with the EGUIDE Quiz?** (Please tick one)

Low  Average  High  Very High

**14. In your opinion to what extent has the of the e-Guide benefited clients.** (Please tick one)

None  Low level  High level  Very High

**15. In your opinion to what extent has the e-Guide improved the guidance offered/available to clients?** Please tick one)

None  Low improvement  High improvement  Very High

**16. In your opinion to what extent have the e-Guide objectives been achieved?**

Not at all  Some met  Most met  All met

*Please explain your answer*

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**17. If you would like to make any other comments about the e-Guide please do so below.**

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**THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS**