

C3: Promoting a Competitive, Confident and Credible Social Economy FINAL EVALUATION REPORT ACTION 2 AND ACTION 3

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Overview

The C3 Partnership brought together 11 strategic and delivery organisations across the West of England for an EQUAL-funded programme of work aimed at increasing the quality and effective activities of social economy organisations. The overall purpose was to increase the economic and social prosperity of the West of England and to “demonstrate other ways of doing and thinking about business support delivery and to promote the social economy sector as a competitive and credible source of trade and service delivery, within the mainstream economy.”

This evaluation covers Actions 2 and 3 of the EU programme, the delivery and the mainstreaming.

Through preparatory work in Action 1 and previous research by Bristol City Council, a gap was found in the availability of appropriate ‘whole-organisation’ support for the social economy. The decision was made to adapt the EFQM model which had previously been used effectively in the private sector as well as parts of the public sector, for use by organisations across the social economy. This was done in order to increase those organisations’ Credibility, Confidence, and Competitiveness (C3) through the increased use of performance improvement (PI) techniques by social economy organisations, the delivery and provision of PI approaches to support, as well as the recognition, incorporation, and promotion of PI by funders and buyers. One significant result of this work has been the use of C3Perform to influence the (D) or diagnostic element of the new IDB approach to publicly-funded business support delivery to social enterprise within the South West.

Whilst difficulties in obtaining appropriate funding meant that the original goals and activities of the partnership could not be reduced or not fully realised, C3 effectively developed and has begun to embed and disseminate a range of ‘C3Perform’ PI tools. Further development and mainstreaming of these tools, and the promotion of PI more generally amongst different parts of the social economy, will need to take place after the end of the EQUAL funded programme. However, the results of its use so far indicate that the tool is well-received and can change the focus and effectiveness of organisations to improve their ability to deliver services and products and meet their goals.

For example, the organisations that took part in C3, reported benefits to their organisation across all the elements of C3Perform. The top three areas were improved staff and employee relations, staff empowerment, and strategic use of results. Overall, the C3 Perform enabled organisations to take a full look at their organisation, review strategic objectives, take a more customer-centred approach, plan actions to tackle areas of weakness, bring planned activities forward and ensure that they were carried out, as well as helping to confirm or prioritise activities.

The most striking feature of these results is the high instance of benefits reported with respect to staff issues (84% on a weighted average across organisational type) compared with the 33% citing this as a reason for engaging. In some cases, particularly for voluntary organisations, there was evidence that C3Perform had enabled the production of focused business plans and processes which led fairly directly to increased funding. Proving increased competitiveness for organisations using C3Perform will, however, require longer-term evaluations since such outcomes are unlikely in the short time period of the project.

We also found that C3Perform:

- appears best suited to organisations that are established, and are small to medium size;
- has acted as an awareness-raising tool and a catalyst for PI;
- benefits from external facilitation in order to support activities, achieve culture change, and provide a more dispassionate input that enables honest discussion of issues between staff and management.

In addition, the C3 Partnership was unique in encouraging joint working and delivery across the social economy or third sector predominantly within Bristol. There was a recognition of similarities of vision and needs, with strong working relationships as well as an increased understanding of difference.

Those partners that delivered and developed C3Perform exhibited high levels of emotional intelligence as well as a problem-solving mentality and commitment to ensuring that the tools being developed worked well. The strength arising from common working between the partners in the 'core' group was crucial in weathering, and responding to, major funding crises and the need to restructure the project.

This evaluation sets out the initial aims of C3 and the extent to which they were met, outcomes for organisations using C3Perform, how the partnership itself worked and provides recommendations for future development and mainstreaming.

1. Introduction

Background

The origins of the C3 Partnership arose in work carried out by Bristol City Council (BCC) in order to support the social economy or third sector.¹ A BCC 2002 paper set out the rationale for a programme of support for social economy organisations, noting a range of barriers to their organisational development – chiefly around funding, staffing, premises and management. They also carried out work on individual social entrepreneurs and their support needs.²

In 2003, Baker Brown Associates produced a report for BCC, looking at the development of ‘social enterprise’ business support. They noted that the EU EQUAL Programme in the UK was promoting the ‘Strengthening of the Social Economy’ (Theme D of the EQUAL programme). They made reference to an existing EQUAL partnership – the Social Enterprise Partnership GB Ltd (SEP) – which was focusing at a national level on developing the capacity of social enterprise support services, including quality and impact measures. Their conclusions included recommendations that the Bristol 1999 social economy audit be updated, and that there was a need to develop quality standards and performance improvement tools to improve the performance and credibility of social enterprises with purchasers and investors.³

In 2004, another report assessed the support infrastructure for the social economy in Bristol, looking at the range and depth of services. It noted that “there is little coordination and marketing of the range of services available to social economy organisations” and that quality management systems are not being provided. This piece of work added to the developing rationale for taking a more holistic approach to support delivery and organisational development.⁴

The ultimate goals of BCC, from this and other work, were to link the social economy to the mainstream economy, helping social economy organisations become more Confident, Competitive and Credible and stimulating demand by funders and procurers for social economy goods and services.⁵ This could be done using performance improvement (PI) approaches to enable organisations to look at themselves in their entirety, focus on outcomes and results, and increase demand for support which addressed their needs. This increased demand could be encouraged

¹ The definitions of the ‘social economy’ and ‘third sector’ are contested. For the purposes of this evaluation, and following current practice in the EU, these two descriptive categories will be seen as equivalent, covering organisations ranging from community groups to co-operatives and to social enterprises. These organisations can operate with income from different sources, for example, grants or earned income. They have a primary social or environmental goal rather than that of profit-maximising and operate with a range of governance models.

² See Social Economy Bristol Development Project (2002) *The Value of Investing in People and Enterprise*, SEBDP and Flying Giraffe (2004) *Activist to Entrepreneur*, Research for Bristol City Council. www.socialeconomybristol.org.uk/reports.ihtml sets out all the reports produced by SEBDP.

³ Baker Brown Associates (2003) *Social Enterprise Support Services in Bristol*, for Bristol City Council.

⁴ Phil Parry Associates (2004) *Strengthening Support Services to Build a Dynamic Social Economy in Bristol* www.socialeconomybristol.org.uk/text/reports.ihtml

⁵ Initial rationale given by Ted Fowler from Bristol City Council, in conversation. The 1999 Audit – Bristol Social Economy Audit (1999) *Summary Data and Statistics* are available from www.socialeconomybristol.org.uk/reports.ihtml – provided the basis for the Social Economy Bristol Development Project SEBDP which led the C3 Partnership and bid.

by funders and procurers requiring or supporting quality assurance and performance improvement as ways to improve bids and increase investment- or delivery-readiness.

As a result of all this work, the C3 Partnership was set up to deliver an EQUAL-funded programme aimed at exploring the quality assessment and performance improvement approaches, and extent of use, within the third sector; develop and test new tools where appropriate; raise the profile of the social economy and shift business support for the social economy towards a more holistic or PI-led approach. The overall aim was to thereby increase the economic and social prosperity of the West of England.

The C3 Development Partnership was made up of 11 organisations – Bristol City Council, Social Enterprise Works (initially BACEN), Black Development Agency (BDA), Voscur (Voluntary Organisations Standing Conference on Urban Regeneration), BRAVE Ltd (CDA section) – (formerly Avon Co-operative Development Agency (CDA)), RISE (The Voice for South West Social Enterprise), North Somerset Council, South Gloucestershire Council, Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES), Community Action and Business Link West.

The first part of the EQUAL project, Action 1, produced research to inform Action 2, and took the form of:

- audits of the social economy in Bristol; North Somerset; South Gloucestershire; and Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES);⁶
- qualitative work by three partners to better understand the ways in which organisations used or understood various quality assurance and performance improvement techniques: BRAVE Ltd (then Avon CDA), Social Enterprise Works (then BACEN), and Voscur;⁷
- a review of quality systems for the social economy or third sector.⁸ This report concluded that performance improvement (PI) would be an appropriate focus for the EQUAL work; there were gaps in provision of appropriate tools and processes (particularly for social enterprises); and the need to improve the ways in which impacts could be measured by the social economy. The authors concluded that performance improvement techniques can increase confidence and legitimacy with external stakeholders, as well as support competitive advantage and capacity building. It was noted that PQASSO had been developed for voluntary organisations but that its credibility may not be high in public and private sectors. It might therefore be a good idea to help social economy organisations engage and increase their competitiveness through existing mainstream tools. The EFQM or Business Excellence (or just

⁶ Bristol City Council (2005) *The Social Economy in Bristol Audit 2004-2005*; Co-operative Assistance Network Limited (2005) *The Social Economy in Bath and North East Somerset in 2005, Final Report Version 2*, Bath and North East Somerset Council, Somer Community Housing Trust and Envolve; North Somerset Council (2005) *Audit of the Social Economy in North Somerset*.

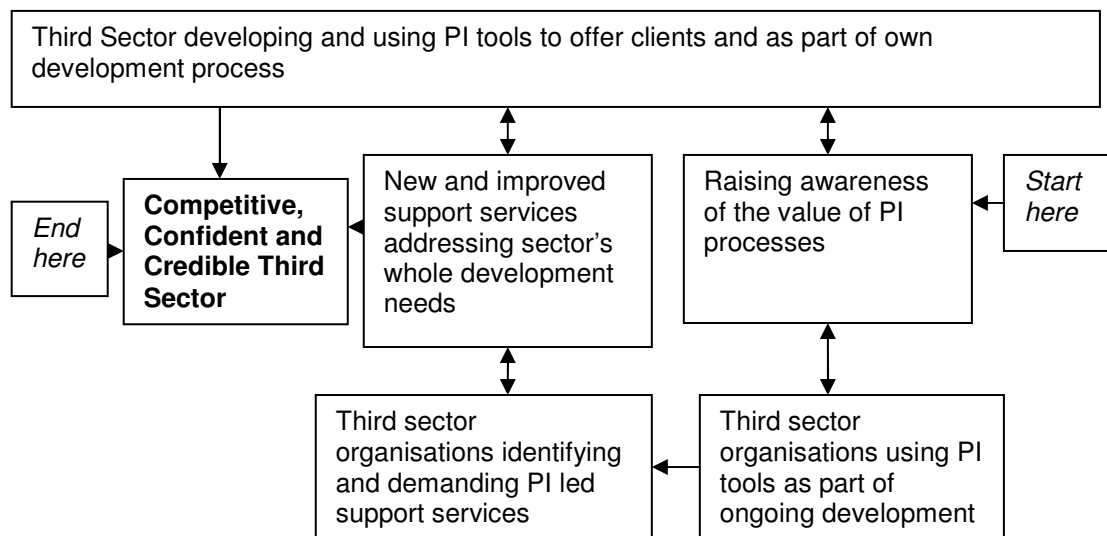
⁷ Avon Co-operative Development Agency (2005) *Never mind the Quality feel the Width*; BACEN (2005) *Promoting a credible, competitive and confident social economy, Report by BACEN regarding quality assurance for social enterprise*; Voscur (2005) *C3 Partnership: Promoting a credible, competitive and confident social economy, Voscur Report as part of Action One of the C3 Partnership*.

⁸ C3 (2005) *Research Report into Quality Systems and the Social Economy*.

Excellence) model was generally preferred as being the most holistic approach to achieving these aims.⁹

Diagram 1 was prepared during Action 1 to illustrate the presumed causal linkages in the C3 model of encouraging organisations to embed and use PI. This would be done partly by increasing demand for relevant services and by the support services themselves addressing integrated organisational needs rather than providing *ad hoc* and specific services. The result should therefore be C3 – a Competitive, Confident, and Credible Third Sector.

Diagram 1
C3 Route Map



The activities of C3 in Actions 2 and 3 were designed to address the goals of Diagram 1. The details are set out below.

Context

In 2005, at the start of Action 2 by C3, there was an increasing focus within the voluntary and community sectors on performance improvement through initiatives such as ChangeUp and particularly through the Performance Hub.¹⁰ Equally, the development of support for social enterprises included performance and strategy development of organisations, as well as increasing their ability to measure and report on impacts. Ongoing activities included, for example, part of the work of another EQUAL partnership, that of Social Enterprise Partnership GB Ltd (SEP), *Prove and Improve*, which aimed to provide a set of materials and a website of

⁹ EFQM stands for European Foundation for Quality Management and is often called the Business Model. You can find out more about how it works and its rationale from its UK body, the British Quality Foundation www.quality-foundation.co.uk

¹⁰ Capacitybuilders was set up in 2006 to take over the management of the ChangeUp programme to build the capacity of the third sector www.capacitybuilders.org.uk/. The Performance Hub is a national hub of expertise for the third sector, a partnership between the Charities Evaluation Service (CES) and the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) as lead partners www.performancehub.org.uk

available quality and impact measurement techniques, as well as developing new ones to fill perceived gaps.¹¹

The 'social economy' or 'third sector' was split between the voluntary and community sector and social enterprise in 2005, as was policy: the Government had set up a Social Enterprise Unit within the then Department of Trade and Industry and government support for the voluntary sector, charitable activities and volunteering was located separately within the Home Office. Back in 1999, before the Social Enterprise Unit existed, the social economy audit by Bristol aimed to look at the full scope of the social economy or third sector, as did the subsequent C3 partnership which was designed to bring infrastructure bodies from different parts of the social economy together to recognise similarities and commonalities as well as differences of language, emphasis or working.

The approach by the C3 EQUAL bid was therefore aimed at joint working across the social economy. This was a new and innovative approach at the time and pre-empted a move towards more integration. In 2006, the Office of the Third Sector (OTS) was created within the Cabinet Office to 'join up' the third sector by building on similarities, as well as working with and accommodating differences.¹²

Aims and objectives of the Development Partnership (DP)

The original 2005 Development Partnership Agreement (DPA) for Action 2 responded to the need identified in Action 1 to embed quality and performance improvement within business support and organisations across the social economy. The partnership was designed to include strategic and delivery partners in Bristol and the broader West of England (across both urban and rural environments).

Action 2's strategic objectives were stated to be:

- *Fostering a culture of continuous learning and improvement throughout the West of England social economy.*
- *Improving the quality and range of support services available to the West of England social economy (more specifically to embed PI through a PI diagnostic tool and action planning to enable growth and sustainability).*
- *Developing a strong and sustainable social economy support infrastructure across the West of England area.*
- *Promoting the values and achievements of the West of England social economy (for example, through a Trade Association which would promote quality, networking and marketing to develop the identity of the sector).*

However, as a result of difficulties in obtaining funding, the DPA was revised in 2007 in order to extend Action 2 to December 2007 with a narrowing and re-focusing of actions and objectives.

The DP set out its revised overall aim to be to:

“increase the contribution of the West of England social economy to the economic and social prosperity of the sub-region and region, doing so by piloting methods of integrating Performance Improvement (PI) into business support and organisational development within the sector within and beyond the West of England. It will embed PI approaches into sector support by delivering diagnostic and action planning to social economy enterprises

¹¹ The legacy is a website www.proveandimprove.org

¹² www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third_sector.aspx

seeking growth and sustainability. C3 is fostering a culture of continuous learning and improvement throughout the West of England social economy.”

Its objectives were clarified and reduced to three:

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| <i>Objective One</i> | <i>Embedding performance improvement in the West of England social economy by developing, testing and raising awareness of EFQM based diagnostic tools and impact measurement tools.</i> |
| <i>Objective Two</i> | <i>Designing and operating a new social economy support infrastructure across the West of England promoting performance improvement.</i> |
| <i>Objective Three</i> | <i>Developing a ‘Trade Association’ for the social economy sector promoting its values, sense of identity and achievements; thus promoting capacity for action.</i> |

To achieve these objectives, specific activities were set out (see Appendix 1 for full details of the action plan). The DP summarised these actions as:

- **“Training and peer learning support activities for social economy organisations** will be developed and implemented across the range of issues identified within the PI diagnostic and action planning approach (Objective 1). The range of support services need to be rolled out to the sub-region as the rural and urban areas outside Bristol have not got access to a great choice of business advice support.”
- **“A rural service** will be set up and will co-ordinate social enterprise business support across the sub-region through appropriate referrals; depending on the type of support required. This will allow the development of a strong and sustainable social economy support infrastructure across the WoE [West of England] area (Objective 2).”
- **“The trade association will promote quality (i.e. improving performance) within the sector**, enable and stimulate networking and marketing for social economy organisations and help develop the identity of the growing sector. In turn, this work will promote the values and achievements of the WoE social economy (Objective 3).”
- “In order to further, develop and maintain the range of focus on PI led support and the mainstreaming legacy of C3, **other stakeholder groups** (such as social enterprises, funders, the enterprise support community and policy makers within and beyond the west of England) **will also be involved** to ensure effective product development.”

Aims and objectives of the Mainstreaming Partnership (MP)

In order to carry out Action 3 on Mainstreaming, the DP became the MP.

The overall aim of the mainstreaming and exit strategy was set out to be to:

“influence the work of policy makers at local, sub-regional and national level (e.g. linking to the issues discussed in the Thematic Networking Group): this will range from information and agenda-setting to affecting practical arrangements for the support and growth of social economy enterprises. We aim to use the results of Action 2 to demonstrate other ways of doing and thinking about business support delivery and to promote the social economy sector as a competitive and credible source of trade and service delivery, within the mainstream economy“.

The MPA set out its three objectives as being:

- Objective One* To develop the impact and value of social economy enterprises by influencing mainstream practice in the area of support available to social economy enterprises by promoting the use of, and good practice based on, the Excellence Model and associated tools.
- Objective Two* To influence the way social economy enterprises enhance their competitiveness and articulate their credibility by embedding performance improvement in their practice and, working together in a network of excellence to promoting their work to consumer, business and public sector audiences.
- Objective Three* To influence the policy and financing instruments of governmental, social and private sector stakeholders and show how supporting the improvement of performance of social economy enterprises and valuing and recognising their impact can help establish robust delivery of their economic, social and environmental objectives.

The Action Plan for the MPA is set out in Appendix 2. The overall ways of achieving the stated objectives, were stated in the MPA to be:

- **“mainstreaming the C3Perform 'suite'** (business support diagnostic tools based on the Excellence Model) and other associated tools targeting support and infrastructure agencies, funders (both buyers and investors), policy makers and social economy enterprises, at national, regional and sub-regional levels”;
- **“mainstreaming the Trade Association and promoting a strong identity** (i.e. brand of excellence) for the social economy sector”;
- **“mainstreaming the opportunities of public sector procurement** targeting social economy enterprises and procurement officers based on findings from C3 and national policies”;
- **“promoting the C3 web-site and sustaining it as a toolkit and a platform for developing expertise**, using the community of interest we develop during Actions 2 and 3 through establishing the value of our work with entrepreneurs, advisors and funders”.

How the evaluation was carried out

Andrea Westall and Sarah Forster were contracted to evaluate Action 2 and Action 3 of the EQUAL C3 Partnership in May 2007.

Specifically we were asked to:

- assess and evaluate Action 2 of the C3 project which was focused on the effective research and development, as well as delivery, of C3 products and services. We were also asked to work with the delivery team to capture learning and innovation;
- evaluate Action 3, including assessing the sustainability of the C3 partnership's activities, as well as their impact on the social economy sector.

Our approach to these two pieces of inter-related work was to take into account the *Guidance Note on Evaluation* produced by ECOTEC for the second round of EQUAL and to merge the evaluations of Actions 2 and 3, since they were going on simultaneously.¹³

¹³ ECOTEC Research and Consulting Limited (2002) *Guidance note on Evaluation* www.equal.ecotec.co.uk/resources/gpg/

In order to evaluate Actions 2 and 3, the following activities and approaches were undertaken between May and December 2007 in three distinct periods: May – June (A); July – August (B); and September – December (C). The work in the first two periods (A and B) provided useful analysis and work which fed into ongoing development by C3. The final stage (C) built on available exit evaluations organisations that had used C3Perform, evaluated the outcomes of the entire programme, analysed mainstreaming and legacy plans, and provided recommendations.

A – May 2007 to June 2007:

- assessed and analysed available material, gathered further information through telephone and email including an initial review of the broader evidence base on performance tools (Appendix 3);
- produced and presented a presentation on initial findings and recommendations;
- reviewed existing monitoring and evaluation (M&E) data, identified gaps and provided feedback and suggestions for changes in M&E processes to meet project needs and better capture results.

B – July 2007 to August 2007:

- identified stakeholder interviewees and drafted semi-structured questionnaires (Appendix 4);
- carried out interviews with all available C3 Partners, advisers and support staff to ascertain views on the effectiveness, development and future of the Partnership and its products;
- prepared and carried out a participative partnership evaluation using the New Economics Foundation approach – *Look Back Move Forward*; a 360 degree appraisal of all delivery partners; and a facilitated group discussion on legacy and mainstreaming; at a partnership evaluation meeting on July 17th 2007 (Appendix 5);
- produced comments on the proposed website;
- a report on partnership performance and interim mainstreaming and legacy recommendations.

C – September 2007 to December 2007:

In order to produce a final evaluation, we:

- analysed the exit interviews of organisations that had the C3Perform suite, using additional information where necessary (Appendix 6);
- assessed the feedback forms for the Action Learning Sets and specific Performance Work Groups to ascertain their effectiveness;
- assessed the revised website and downloadable materials;
- discussed and developed mainstreaming and legacy recommendations.

2. Results

Overall objectives and actions

The three objectives set out for Action 2 were:

- Objective One* *Embedding performance improvement in the West of England social economy by developing, testing and raising awareness of EFQM based diagnostic tools and impact measurement tools.*
- Objective Two* *Designing and operating a new social economy support infrastructure across the West of England promoting performance improvement.*
- Objective Three* *Developing a 'Trade Association' for the social economy sector promoting its values, sense of identity and achievements; thus promoting capacity for action.*

Overall, we can say that, in terms of outcomes (not outputs):

- Objective One** **Partly achieved.** PI tools based on EFQM were successfully developed and applied with about 49 organisations primarily within the Bristol area (with some rural organisations) but not within the broader West of England due primarily to funding limitations.
- Objective Two** **Not achieved** – partly because of lack of availability of funding to support the engagement of partners outside Bristol as well as the development of the business support elements of the C3 work. However, in the South West, C3Perform influenced the development of the diagnostic (D) part of the Information, Diagnostics and Brokerage (IDB) model of delivery of government-funded services to social enterprise.
- Objective Three** **Partly achieved.** The Trade Association has been set up but focuses primarily on social enterprises rather than the whole of the third sector. However, one of the aims of the mainstreaming is to develop networks for PI at the local, regional or national levels.

The specific outputs associated with Action 2 were monitored by the DP and audited by ECOTEC. Here we will comment on the general results of the different activities and their effectiveness in meeting the goals and objectives identified.

Overall, the main outcome of C3 was that of developing tools (Objective One) rather than to promote the identity of the social economy (Objective Three) or change business support provision (Objective Two). In retrospect, this was partly a function of lack of funding and engagement of key strategic organisations. However, the development and delivery of effective tools enabled the partnership to create practical results through working with organisations on the ground which has created positive benefits for the organisations concerned. This is a good basis from which to engage with the growing interest in PI and impact measurement across the social economy, particularly with other EQUAL partnerships. Significant cross-sectoral working and learning was also developed through the work of C3, which could be further developed for practical benefit in the local area.

Looking at the first objective in more detail, C3 has contributed to embedding performance improvement in the South West social economy particularly for social enterprises. This is being achieved through the incorporation of the PERform diagnostic tool for social enterprises into IDB, chiefly by RISE. SEW is also likely to take on provision of social enterprise-related services on behalf of the South West RDA and will continue to adopt a PI approach to service delivery. There is therefore, more embedding of PI taking place for social enterprises (including some co-operatives) than for voluntary and community organisations as a result of C3 activities (for more detail see *Outcomes for organisations using C3Perform* below). Some of the organisations that took part in C3 have embedded PI, however, for most it seems to have been a one-off activity. The creation of a PI network could play an important role in ensuring that PI is fully embedded by individual organisations.

With regards to Objective 2, the delivery of the new social economy support infrastructure across the West of England has not happened, partly because the appropriate funding to develop a 'PI Hub' did not take place.¹⁴ The role of SEW in taking PI ahead within the social enterprise sector appears to be quite strong. However, infrastructure has not been developed through the programme for the voluntary and community sector.

The activities outlined in Action 2 included extending PI work out to rural areas and areas outside Bristol. This did not happen initially, partly because of lack of funding and also because of the lack of engagement by Community Action in delivering more than their own quality assurance model – Hallmark.¹⁵ Towards the end of 2007, match funding was realised to extend the application of C3Perform to some rural organisations, but the results of this activity are unavailable for evaluation.

The Trade Association, Objective 3, has been developed primarily by RISE. C3 contributed to scoping work but funding did not materialise for the Trade Association's continued development. The Trade Association is focused primarily on social enterprises and, again, the C3 objectives seem to be being predominantly realised within the social enterprise sector, rather than the social economy as a whole.

The results of the activities of Action 2 can be summarised in the following table.

Table 1
Outputs of Action 2

Type of activity	Outputs
Developing and delivering C3Perform as an accessible and simplified model of PI based on EFQM	Achieved
Delivering additional action learning sets and Performance Improvement Working Groups on particular aspects of PI	Achieved
Offering additional training and advice to participants eg ICT	Achieved
Delivering to rural areas beyond Bristol	Not achieved – generally due to lack of funding
Creation of a website for advice and support	Achieved

¹⁴ The PI Hub was intended to be a way for business support services in the region to share expertise and develop more holistic business support.

¹⁵ Hallmark is a form of quality assurance for particular social economy organisations and formed part of match funding for the project and other subregional local government partners.

as well as downloads of C3Perform and associated materials or links	
Creating a Trade Association to promote peer learning and identity	Partly achieved – focused on social enterprises only
Developing and promoting an identity for the social economy sector	Not achieved although superseded to some extent by central government creating the Office of the Third Sector

EQUAL leading principles

We can also report against the 6 leading principles for EQUAL:

- Partnership
- Empowerment
- Transnational Co-operation
- Innovation
- Mainstreaming
- Equal Opportunities

Partnership

A good and effective partnership was realised between the core delivery partners (5 C3 partners) to develop tools and test them (see *How the C3 partnership worked* below). The benefits of joint working across the social economy were also realised with a recognition of various similarities of vision and needs, with strong working relationships and synergy developing over time, as well as increased understanding of differences across the social economy. However, the partnership was unable to realise the full potential and engagement of all partners, generally as a result of funding not being secured or fully secured.

Empowerment

Clear empowerment arose in two main ways (more details are set out in *How the partnership worked*):

- amongst the participants involved in the delivery organisations within the C3 partnership;
- amongst employees and managers within the majority of the beneficiary organisations.

Transnational cooperation

This element of the Action 2 and 3 activities is being evaluated separately. The outcome of the transnational work is a website – www.Exchange2Improve.com – which sets out case studies “to support shared learning and encourage the development of excellent Social Enterprises across Europe”.

Innovation

The DPA set out the following forms of innovation that C3 was designed to achieve. These were:

- Innovation One* *The development of PI integrated business and organisational development products and materials (PI diagnostic tool and self-help action plan).*
- Innovation Two* *To make quality management systems and impact measures a high priority for the sector and raise the awareness of the value of PI processes.*
- Innovation Three* *To develop a new delivery mechanism that promotes PI practices in the whole of the West of England area.*

Innovation Four *To develop the identity of the social economy sector and promote the sector's commitment to quality whilst at the same time strengthening the links between enterprise support agencies, statutory agencies and social economy organisations.*

In terms of the identified innovations, the following outcomes can be seen:

Innovation 1 **achieved** – *The C3Perform tools have been developed as an adapted EFQM toolkit for the social economy sector. Further testing and evaluation will be necessary in future in order to continue to adapt and prove its impact.*

Innovation 2 **begun** *but being done by other organisations as well*

Innovation 3 **only partially achieved** *but C3 influenced the diagnostic for social enterprise support being delivered through government-funded business support services*

Innovation 4 **not achieved for the social economy as a whole** – *partially being achieved for the social enterprise sector through the Trade Association but could be further achieved by elements of the legacy and mainstreaming as long as this involves linking up with other similar activities and tools elsewhere.*

In addition to the originally identified innovations, another innovation can be seen to have happened as a result of the programme, that of:

Successful working between support providers from across the social economy sector which recognised and responded to commonalities and synergies.

Mainstreaming

Mainstreaming is assessed in greater detail in Section 3. This process is ongoing and will need to extend beyond the lifetime of the EQUAL programme and funding.

Equal opportunities

The DPA set out an equal opportunities policy. The monitoring assessed whether an organisation was or was not 'equalities led' when engaging with C3Perform. Organisations and advisers had very different views on what an 'equalities-led' or 'equalities-focussed' organisation referred to. However, it was apparent from the range of organisations involved in the programme, that there was significant inclusion of those either with a commitment to equal opportunities or ones that were focused specifically on disadvantaged people.

We also conducted specific evaluations of:

- outcomes arising for social economy organisations as a result of using the C3Perform tools;
- the workings of the C3 partnership.

Outcomes for the organisations that had used C3Perform

Overview of products and services

One of the main objectives of C3 was to adapt and simplify the EFQM model for social economy organisations and link this to action planning. As a result of ongoing feedback from organisations and discussions between advisers, the C3Perform tool was developed, as well as a shortened version – QUICK Perform; a brief diagnostic

questionnaire; and Workshop Perform. The tools, at the time of writing, are available to download from the website with the exception of the brief diagnostic questionnaire.

In addition, specific areas that required particular focus or development were addressed through Performance Improvement Working Groups (PIWGs). Action Learning Sets were also set up for members of organisations to work through particular issues. Participants within C3 were able to access other kinds of support where appropriate, such as ICT. In addition, there were also introductory PI courses run by Voscur which introduced PI concepts and from which organisations could deepen their understanding and engagement by opting to use further C3Perform support.

Organisations could therefore make use of different combinations of products and services. These were:

- C3Perform – the full C3Perform self-assessment;
- QUICK Perform – a reduced self-assessment which developed out of a realisation that the full C3Perform was too long for some organisations. This shorter version could be seen as a good way to engage organisations before progressing to a full C3Perform or as a stand-alone;
- Workshop Perform – a short self-assessment using posters to engage large numbers of people;
- Diagnostic Perform – a simplified A4 questionnaire designed to engage organisations either before they decided to enter into C3, or to gain an overview of where they are before using more in-depth tools;
- Action Learning Sets (ALSs) – to encourage individual organisations to work through different aspects of their development needs;
- Performance Improvement Working Groups (PIWGs) – focused on specific issues: namely Customer Results, Social Return on Investment, and People Results (staff issues);
- Other training provided by SEW and Voscur – on, for example, ICT. There were also two-day Introductory Performance Improvement Courses – which were used as a way to engage organisations in PI and recruit some organisations to take on C3Perform tools.

Each organisation had an adviser who facilitated engagement with PI and C3Perform by each organisation, promoting ‘facilitated self-assessment’. Generally, advisers facilitated a process for the staff and management of participating organisations to go through a self-assessment of their areas of weakness and strength using the different C3Perform tools. Based on this self-assessment, organisations then produced action plans which were reviewed later by the adviser to see what actions been taken forward, and how and whether they had embedded PI.

Organisations were encouraged to participate in C3 through a variety of routes – including briefings, the Introductory Performance Improvement Courses, referrals, targeted phone calls or general mailings.

Four organisations focused on delivering C3Perform and PI to different parts of the social economy. They were:

- CDA – co-operatives
- Social Enterprise Works – social enterprise
- Voscur – voluntary sector
- Black Development Agency (BDA) – Black and ethnic minority (BME) community organisations

In each case, an adviser from each organisation liaised and worked with specific beneficiary organisations. The clients, scope, networks and remit of these different organisations overlaps. For example, a co-operative is also a social enterprise. Some organisations that identify as voluntary sector are also social enterprises. BME community organisations are part of the voluntary sector and some may develop into social enterprises. However, whilst there are overlaps in coverage, the four support bodies cover most of the different kinds of social economy or third sector organisations.

The approaches and products were developed over the time of the project through:

- interaction between the advisers;
- support from other members of the C3 team;
- capturing learning tables and discussions.

The advisers also believed that they learned over time to be more and more flexible with the different products and services on offer, tailoring these to the needs of the organisation. For example, sometimes Workshop Perform was used to engage large numbers of staff before moving on to full or QUICK Perform. In some cases, there was a focus on only a couple of aspects of C3Perform as a way to engage organisations that were more concerned about addressing pressing issues. In the case of the BDA, because it worked with 'fragile' community organisations, elements of C3Perform were often embedded within ongoing support.

Results

The monitoring and evaluation material produced by the partnership was used to assess the outcomes of the C3Perform tools and related services for those organisations that took up the offer of C3 support.

C3 kept a database which recorded engagement with different organisations where some kind of intervention was either planned, interest was expressed in going ahead, or was undertaken. The beneficiary database included 88 organisations. These can be divided by lead organisation, and hence roughly by type.

Table 2

Lead organisation by number of organisations contacted, as well as those who undertook some kind of PI activity

Lead organisation	Number of organisations on database	Undertaken some kind of intervention (excluding pre-C3Perform training)
CDA	12	11
SEW	37	24
Voscur	26	11 (another 3 did just an ALS or a PIWG)
BDA	13	3
TOTAL	88	49

Out of the 88, the number undertaking some kind of C3Perform tool, with or without engagement with other services, was 49. The numbers of organisations which did not engage, or continue their involvement, were recorded differently by different lead bodies, so we cannot analyse any relative differences in take-up of C3Perform for different kinds of organisation.

Each organisation that engaged undertook a combination of C3Perform tools – Workshop Perform, QUICK Perform, or full C3Perform. Some undertook all three, some one or two. The small numbers of organisations under each category and the variety of packages of intervention, mean that it is impossible to assess the impact of different combinations of products or assess the additional benefits of engagement with ALSs or PIWGs.

For the organisations that engaged with C3Perform in some way, full monitoring information was often unavailable and so we could only analyse in-depth those organisations that completed exit evaluations (Appendix 6):

Table 3

Numbers of organisations who filled in exit evaluations by lead organisation

	Number who used C3 tools	Full monitoring information (including exit evaluations)
CDA	11	8
SEW	24	10
Voscur	11	4
BDA	3	0
TOTAL	49	22

We also looked at other material – action plans, notes, interim evaluations, initial engagement papers – where this was available. The information was also matched and compared with interviews with advisers, as well as the results of ongoing Capturing Learning sessions.

The relatively higher availability of monitoring material for social enterprises (SEW) and co-operatives (CDA) may bias the results presented here. There were no available exit evaluations for the BDA and only 5 for Voscur (however we could only use four for this analysis since full information was not recorded for the fifth). So, whilst we can break results down by different types of organisation, because of the small numbers, we can only indicate possible issues/differences that will need to be explored through further use and analysis of the different C3Perform products.

Organisations were also classified according to other criteria which might influence the appropriateness and use of C3Perform including:

- **Size** – measured by turnover – under £5k, £5-25k, £25-50k, £50-250k, over £250k;
- **Stage of development** – measured as pre-start; new start (0-2 years); or established (over 2 years).

Again, because of the very small number of organisations involved, any conclusions are tentative. Organisations also differed by sector and scope of activity. Given the relatively small number of organisations, and the very broad spread of activities and foci, we cannot analyse any differences with regards to sector or type of activity. Organisations that were targeted by, or used, C3Perform tools covered activities ranging from arts, to disability services, to meeting the needs of young people.

Table 4

Turnover of organisations recorded on the C3 database, those that did C3Perform and those that completed exit evaluations

Turnover (£)	All	Did C3Perform	Completed exit evaluation
< £5k	6%	3%	5%
5-25k	7%	11%	10%
25-50k	22%	16%	10%
50-250k	46%	45%	43%
>250k	19%	26%	33%
Percentage (%)	100%	101%	101%

By looking at the relative turnover of organisations, those who chose to take on C3Perform were mostly within the £50k - £250k range.

Table 5

Stage of development of organisations recorded on C3 database, undertook C3Perform, and those that completed exit evaluations

Development stage	All	Did C3Perform	Completed exit evaluation
Pre-start	3%	4%	5%
New start	15%	15%	9%
established	82%	80%	86%
Percentage (%)	100%	99%	100%

Most organisations that made use of C3Perform – about 80% – were established, in other words, over 2 years old. Of those that completed the exit evaluations, there appears to be some bias towards the more established.

Focusing just on those organisations that completed exit evaluations, we can analyse their answers to the questions set out in the questionnaire (Appendix 6).

Initial objectives

Looking at their initial objectives, we can see to what extent organisations, advised by different lead organisations, cited the following issues as the reason for engaging with C3Perform.

Table 6

Lead organisation by reasons for engaging with C3Perform

Lead org	Improve strategic/ business planning (%)	Improve governance (%)	Improve processes/ efficiency (%)	Marketing (%)	Staff empowerment/ relations (%)	Increase Revenue generation (%)
CDA	40%	40%	80%	10%	40%	30%
SEW	60%	0	80%	0	10%	10%
Voscur	100%	25%	50%	0	50%	0
Weighted average	67%	22%	70%	3%	33%	13%

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^x The weighted average is the average of the percentages of organisations making positive statements about certain issues for each lead organisation. This approach was taken since the numbers of exit evaluations completed varied by organisational type. The results could therefore be skewed if a straight average was taken.

These results indicate that overall, the main reasons for taking part were to improve strategic and business planning (67% on a weighted average across organisations) and to improve organisational processes and efficiency (70% weighted average). Looking at different organisational types (although recognising that many social enterprises are co-operatives), the co-operatives and the voluntary sector also cited staff issues and governance as important reasons to engage. The co-operatives were relatively more interested in governance than the voluntary sector, which is probably natural given the main focus of the co-operative organisational form.

There was very little overall interest in marketing as a reason for engaging and only some in revenue-raising. Relatively more co-operatives than social enterprises, and no voluntary organisations, citing revenue-raising as a reason for getting involved.

Benefits of using C3Perform

We can also look at the benefits stated by organisations as a result of C3Perform.

Table 7

Lead organisation by benefits of C3Perform

Lead org	Strategic use results (%)	Efficiency (%)	Staff performance (%)	Staff empowerment and motivation (%)	Staff/employee relations (%)	Ability to demonstrate impacts (%)	Ability to secure funds (%)
CDA	88	63	75	88	88	63	25
SEW	50	50	50	75	88	25	13
Voscour	75	75	50	75	75	50	75
Weighted average	71%	63%	58%	79%	84%	46%	38%

The organisations who engaged with C3Perform reported benefits across all the areas measured by the exit evaluation. The top three areas for benefits were improved staff and employee relations, staff empowerment, and strategic use of results. It is important to note though that many organisations found it difficult to attribute all the outcomes to C3Perform alone.

Overall, the C3Perform approach enabled organisations to take a full look at their organisation, review strategic objectives, take a more customer-centred approach, plan actions to tackle areas of weakness, bring planned activities forward and ensure that they were carried out, as well as helping to confirm or prioritise activities. In some cases, the full review using C3Perform resulted in a better understanding of the key areas to focus on improving, not always those that were initially presumed.

One organisation said that overall “the primary benefit has been that we have actually sat down and thought about what we do and why. With a business it is easy to react to customers and not really think about the way that you do things, how to develop, expand and improve – C3 gave us the push to start doing that”. Another said that it was good to “stop, think and reflect”.

And yet another noted the primary focus of the EFQM-inspired approach “to recognise the usefulness of being outcomes focused and collecting and keeping results data and using it to market our work and improve/shape future projects”.

We can look in more detail at one organisation, Bristol Wireless, who undertook C3Perform and developed an action plan as an example of the process.

Bristol Wireless is a volunteer-run co-operative committed to social improvement through a free wireless computer network promoted through training, support and advocacy. An established organisation, they have a turnover between £25-£50,000, over 20 volunteers and no paid staff. They prioritise environmental sustainability using primarily recycled and home-made equipment. Many computers are provided free to potential network users and community organisations. Bristol Wireless joined C3 to improve existing, and to introduce new, management processes; clarify and develop strategic and operational management; improve the quality of their funding bids; and improve volunteer engagement.

They initially used the brief diagnostic questionnaire to orient the organisation towards those areas that needed attention. Bristol Wireless identified, for example, that they had a long way to go in ensuring that “We collect information about how satisfied our customers are” but believed that “We manage resources effectively”.

The organisation then drilled down further down into each area of performance, for example noting that their strength in Leadership is a “clear mission statement and rules” but noted that they could improve through “communicating mission to new volunteers”. Looking at Policy and Strategy they have a strength in “blue skies thinking and identifying market opportunities” but needed “clearer formulation of strategic planning on following basis: 3 months (short term), 1 year (medium term) and 5 years (long term)”.

They then created an Action Plan to take identified improvements ahead. For example, in relation to the need to plan strategically they decided to:

- “source a facilitator for 1 day of strategic planning”
- “agree team to carry this work out at the next committee meeting”
- “ensure plans include measures for results/outcomes”

After a year of using C3, they demonstrated the following improvements:

Area of improvement	Example
Strategic use of results and feedback	Increased monitoring through database
Efficiency of organisation	Work and purchase order system developed and implemented
Staff performance	Better volunteer support and management of timescales and deadlines
Staff empowerment and motivation	Increased attendance at monthly meeting
Staff/employee relations	Greater member involvement
Ability to demonstrate impacts	More data available for reporting and better internal and external communication
Ability to secure funds	PI engagement and outcomes included in funding applications,

improved cost recovery, increase in commercial clients and improved product range.

The adviser who worked with this organisation noted that overall: “their product range, client support and management systems and volunteer skills have developed their competitiveness, evidenced by an increase in commercial trade. Their improved strategic focus on objectives enables them to confidently meet opportunities and challenges. Finally their credibility as a professional organisation has led to improved and new partnerships, contracts and reputation.

The organisation felt that “project work is now led by objectives rather than available funding has made work more inclusive and interesting” and enabled them to grow from “lifestyle enterprise to professional organisation”. Practically there was now “focus and clarity around objectives that had been missing” but also “a series of quick fixes and finishing of actions that had previously been adrift”. They also noted that “the many smaller improvements that come about while going through the process had a significant impact over time”.

The most striking feature of these results is the high instance of benefits reported with respect to staff issues (84% on a weighted average across organisational type) compared with the 33% citing this as a reason for engaging. The importance of EFQM in contributing to increased staff empowerment, engagement, and improved staff relations seems to have been a direct result of doing C3Perform. By creating an atmosphere of increased understanding and trust, C3Perform can enable further changes to happen, particularly those that are more challenging or disruptive.

Social enterprise and co-operatives appear not to have experienced benefits around securing funds, unlike the voluntary sector who found this a particular benefit.

It may be that, with respect to funding, voluntary organisations created business plans which could be used in funding applications, helping to focus planning and improve credibility with funders. Some organisations said, for example: “In the last big funding application, I knew by our results that I could propose, realistically, with confidence, what we could offer. Also, significantly, what we could not offer.” Another organisation succeeded in increasing the confidence, and therefore continued investment, of a funder. With one organisation, funders were aware of certain shortcomings, particularly staff issues, and the need for leadership vision and improved service delivery. The C3Perform diagnostic identified the same issues as the funder, as well as setting out ways to tackle them.

It may be that, in general, increased competitiveness arises later as has been seen in evaluations of EFQM (see Appendix 3). This suggests that C3Perform needs to have long-term evaluation in order to ‘prove’ its impact on the bottom line and to further flesh out its impact on softer outcomes such as staffing or strategy. One co-operative, however, indicated fairly quick financial benefits as a result of reviewing strategy, results-orientation and delivery practice: “We were able to secure more commercial contracts which has increased revenues”.

It is also apparent that relatively fewer benefits arose from ‘demonstrating impacts’ with observably less benefit stated by social enterprises than voluntary and co-operative organisations (25%, 50% and 63% respectively). One potential reason for this result was suggested from adviser comments that organisations wanted to focus more on internal processes and strategy in the first instance. Additionally, approaches for proving impact are complex and developing all the time. Co-operatives that saw benefits in this area had a relatively higher focus on customer results than broader social impacts.

And finally, we can also analyse questions relating to legacy and the degree of embedness of PI within organisational strategy.

Table 8

Lead organisation by future of PI within organisations

Lead org	Promoted C3Perform externally (%)	Continue PI? (%)	Needed support? (%)	Will require support to continue? (%)	Would join PI association? (%)
CDA	13%	25%	100%	63%	100%
SEW	75%	100%	50%	88%	100%
Voscur	50%	100%	100%	75%	100%
Weighted average (%)	46%	75%	83%	75%	100%

There was an unanimous agreement across organisations about their desire to join a PI association of some kind, although comments were made about cost and focus being an important part of any decision to engage.

There was a general recognition of the need for support and ongoing support thus demonstrating the critical aspect of the adviser/facilitator to a successful process. It also appears that the will to continue with PI was unanimous amongst the voluntary and social enterprises, rather than amongst a much smaller percentage of co-operatives (25%).

Looking at those organisations who chose to promote C3Perform externally, social enterprises seemed to have done this more extensively than voluntary organisations with a fairly low percentage of co-operatives doing so.

Overall, if we look at the ultimate goals of developing confident, credible and competitive organisations, and assess benefits and actions taken, the results of the exit evaluations indicate that:

- **Confidence – yes, this has been developed.** The overall view is that confidence has developed through clarity over what the organisation is for, a reworking of mission, looking at what has been done well, or being honest about what needs to be improved.
- **Credibility – there are indications that this has happened in some cases** although this is difficult to assess without speaking to all stakeholders.
- **Competitiveness – there are some examples of increased ability to generate funds.** However, since PI is an on-going and long-term process, it would be difficult to see such results in the short term. There is a clear need for longer-term evaluation to assess overall impacts. However, there is practical evidence of clearer business plans that have sometimes been effective in securing bids or increasing the confidence of purchasers.

We can further probe some of the benefits and issues raised by looking at the particular responses of organisations to exit evaluation questions. It is worth repeating that any conclusions are indicative and not robust due to the small sample size as well as the very idiosyncratic nature of different organisations and their needs, as well as differences in the style of engagement by advisers. However, we can make some tentative conclusions to inform further development of C3Perform:

C3Perform appears best suited to organisations that are established, and are small to medium size

There were a few comments from the largest organisations that either C3Perform or the adviser were not used to dealing with the size and complexity of such organisations and that the process seemed unsophisticated for their needs. It is likely that such organisations could take on EFQM or could use C3Perform on its own. At the other end of the spectrum, some organisations felt that they were not developed enough to address most of the issues in C3Perform. Whilst this point was recognised during the development of the suite of tools, Pre-start or Start-up Perform was suggested but does not appear to have yet been developed.

This view seems to be further supported by discussions with the BDA adviser who thought that C3Perform could be incorporated into ongoing work support, using elements of Perform as a taster or where appropriate for an organisation's needs. Whilst two organisations had completed C3Perform, others had only done elements or been introduced to PI. The point was made that most of the organisations linked to the BDA are 'fragile' and generally do not have the capacity or confidence to yet do facilitated self-assessment.

One organisation said "we found it useful to think about the questions raised, but were not mature enough to answer those questions".

For some organisations, the language of C3Perform was seen as 'off-putting'
Whilst this was not a universal issue, it was apparent that advisers were often translating concepts and words for organisations in order to make C3Perform relevant to their needs or structures. For example, the co-operatives had a problem with the term 'leadership' and this was changed to 'decision-makers'. The voluntary sector organisations tended to be uncomfortable with the business-orientation of the language. Whilst there were fewer comments from the social enterprises, the language was still a problem for some of this group. One of the original purposes of C3Perform was to use the language of business in order to enable social economy organisations to compete on equal terms. Several potential implications flow from this feedback. For example:

- more work could be done to segment C3Perform for different parts of the sector,
- the facilitator could stress the way in which changing and understanding different 'languages' is an important part of working with different audiences;
- different language terms or alternative ways of looking at issues could be used within the tools to make C3Perform relevant and understandable to different organisations

The reason for engagement for many organisations seems to be either because of a crisis or because they want to take a 'step back' and look at everything they do
One of the goals of C3 was to enable organisations to go beyond continual fire-fighting or crisis-management. However, in terms of marketing C3Perform, perhaps seeing PI as a way to tackle specific crises, either in funding or staffing, could be an effective approach, in addition to talking about enabling an holistic overview of the organisation.

A key result has been to create dialogue, empowerment and increased trust and focus between staff and management

C3Perform has increased staff confidence and helped create more united organisations, with a better understanding of different roles and requirements. Comments included "allows us to work as a collective without getting bogged down in personal issues/opinions" and that it can "help all staff/management understand each

other's perspectives". However, it was also noted by advisers that care may be needed when there are substantial conflicts or staff problems.

Facilitation was seen to be a core and important part of engaging with C3Perform

Reasons for the need for outside facilitation included:

- ensuring that the organisation actually did the process and put it into practice;
- enabling staff to air their opinions in an open and objective environment;
- which might not be the case if the process was led by senior management;
- to explain and contextualise the process and adapt to needs;
- to link to other resources and activities.

The focus on results and outcomes created a shift for most organisations in how they saw themselves or thought of their strategy

This focus on results is seen as being predominantly about shifting focus from internal functioning and the delivery of predetermined outputs, to concentrating first on outcomes and whether objectives had been effectively realised.

There appeared to be differences across sectors in how organisations looked at results or outcomes. Co-operatives found this area key but were primarily focused on customer impacts while the voluntary sector and social enterprises were more focused on broader social outcomes, with relatively more interest by the latter.

However, most organisations seemed to take on more internal activities first, and saw impacts or results as something to develop later

There seemed to be a tendency to focus on internal actions first which may again reflect the need to concentrate on 'pressing' issues. This may be of concern if the focus on impacts is seen as something to continually postpone, given it is the primary focus of the EFQM and C3Perform model.

C3Perform has acted as an awareness-raising tool and a catalyst for PI

C3Perform is one way into PI, in other words an entry level for some organisations within the third sector. Some organisations in the social economy might go straight to EFQM, others to PQASSO, or to other techniques like the Balanced Scorecard or its variants. C3Perform seems to work for those organisations that had not thought about PI before, and want to stand back and review their organisation. Organisations might go on to accreditation, or to focus on specific areas, accessing specific support or continuous PI.

Reasons for non-engagement or not continuing with C3Perform were dominated by issues of time and capacity

There was a range of different reasons why organisations either did not go ahead with C3Perform or did not carry on the whole process, often stopping after the diagnostic phase. These were generally to do with lack of either time or capacity. These are well-known issues and constraints for the third sector. Perhaps one way to market PI and C3Perform is to stress its use in creating more effective use of time by developing a focused strategy. (Another example is where C3 has helped develop clear business plans which have enabled funding to be obtained by several voluntary organisations.)

Other reasons for not engaging included:

- unclear effectiveness – illustrating a need to clearly identify the tangible benefits of C3Perform;
- doing PI in some form anyway.

There are mixed results around the extent of embeddness of PI amongst the organisations that took part in C3 activities

Perhaps more information could be put on the website to illustrate how PI could be embedded. Some organisations have developed a PI policy (some organisations are using this as an appendix to their business plan and as a way to increase their credibility). The co-ops seemed rather less keen on embedding, seeing C3Perform as a one-off activity (only 25% said that they would continue with PI compared to 100% of social enterprises and the voluntary sector). It is unclear why this may be so but perhaps more ownership and engagement by co-operative umbrella bodies might encourage continuous engagement.

In terms of embeddness, some organisations said that they would take C3Perform on again after 18 months to 3 years, and some would do so by streamlining or shortening the process. One reason for the development of QUICK Perform is that the whole process was felt to be too long by many organisations. This illustrates the need for the website to illustrate ways of combining and using different tools, as well as developing appropriate training for facilitators, in how to tailor approaches to organisations' needs.

C3Perform without a facilitator

An analysis was made of people who downloaded the materials on the website: in other words, C3Perform, QUICK Perform or Workshop Perform plus supporting guidance.

Out of a total of 51 emails sent to people who had downloaded C3Perform from September to November 2007, there were only a few replies. However, since the website is not marketed, it is hard to know what the level of interest could be.

One organisation, who had used it and replied to the email, said that the process "helped us focus on the organisation and identify areas we wanted to improve". They have asked their staff to do it and found the product easy to download and follow.

However, it is impossible to make any conclusions about whether or not C3Perform can be used without a facilitator. Clearly one organisation has. However, there is no information available on what kind of organisation it is and its original attitude to PI.

If the goal of C3 is to change culture amongst those who are more short-term and low on competitiveness, confidence and credibility, then it seems likely that continuing investment in facilitation is necessary. Those who download C3Perform will probably have the least journey to go and already know that they could use this approach.

How the C3 partnership worked

"Strategic and delivery organisations engaged in the social economy sector in Bristol and the West of England form the C3 partnership." However, the relative engagement of each partner has altered over the lifetime of the project. Initially, all 11 members were engaged in either strategy, or delivery, or both. However, predominantly as a result of funding which failed to materialise, five partners disengaged, five partners worked closely together on both strategy and delivery, and one contributed to strategy and delivery at first and then only to strategy at the end of the programme. Interviews with two of the disengaged partners suggested additional reasons for disengagement, relating to different expectations and motivations for involvement, which were not clearly articulated on all sides at the outset. Some sub-

regional partners felt that the approach and language of the initial Perform tools was not appropriate to their local organisations.

The final levels of engagement by different partners can therefore be illustrated by the following breakdown:

- a delivery partner group of five organisations – Social Enterprise Works, Black Development Agency, Voscur, Bristol City Council, and BRAVE Ltd (then Avon CDA);
- RISE – strategy only with some delivery before funding ran out;
- 5 partners – North Somerset Council, South Gloucestershire Council, B&NES, Community Action and Business Link West – were dis-engaged for most of Action 2.

The ECOTEC *Guidance Notes on Evaluation* suggests looking at the following issues with respect to the working of the partnership:

1. how the partnership has operated;
2. the added value of each partner and if there were gaps;
3. were partners expectations met;
4. did participants develop new skills and experience;
5. how effectively is the Development Partnership building capacity for future delivery.

Answers to the five suggested questions arose from in-depth interviews with each partner (Appendix 4) and a partnership evaluation day using Look Back Move Forward (Appendix 5):

How the partnership has operated

The five delivery partners feel that overall, despite some problems along the way, the 'delivery' partnership has worked well. One interviewee summarised this view: "The main benefit of the group was that of mutual learning. There is a tendency for VCS, social enterprise and co-ops to see differences rather than similarities. There is a lot of wheel reinvention. They worked well and were honest as a partnership. This was possibly to do with the people. The advisers were a very strong team." And another said: "Delivery partners have grown together over the project period and developed effective ways of working together."

Positive responses include a "very co-operative feel" such that people could be called on to deliver beyond their remit. There were "enjoyable but heated discussions", and also general comments about the high levels of skills and enthusiasm. From the experience of the evaluators, the C3 partnership has generally been characterised by high levels of emotional intelligence that come from the personalities involved, and there has been a problem-solving mentality and commitment to ensuring that the tools being developed worked well.

The strength arising from common working between the partners in the 'core' group was crucial in weathering, and responding to, major funding crises and the need to restructure the project. There were also tensions arising from simultaneous pressure from infrastructure projects and funding arising, for example, out of ChangeUp which tested the ability of the partners to work together rather than seek their own funding. Tensions also arose from the difficulties of balancing commitment to partner organisations with the aims of C3, which could be seen like a new organisation producing products and services. One partner said: "At one point they may have become or spent too much time on C3 when things got more complex and therefore

there were problems with their own organisations, but it was a valuable space to talk about difficulties and opportunities.”

Delivery partners seemed to move from seeing each other differently, and perhaps competitively, to increased collaboration, recognising similarities and learning from each other. They felt that this development may have been to do with the personalities involved as much as the organisations. The advisers, although from different organisations, were a particularly strong team.

The main problems and difficulties for the partnership seem to be mainly to do with the fact that C3 did not obtain the expected funding for various activities. The resultant required changes to the scope of the programme created variable impacts on partners. For the delivery partners, the narrowing of aims and the need to overcome various obstacles appeared to lead to more coherence between the group. However, for those who were not part of the Bristol-based delivery group – Community Action, Business Link, and the other Local Authorities – these changes partly led to their disengagement. With respect to RISE, the situation is more complex since they continue to be involved in strategy, but were unable to carry out their main goal, that of funding the Trade Association.

There was also a general refrain that there had not been enough communication and a lack of shared clarity over expectations, goals and motivations. The overall view is that this project has enabled groups in Bristol who had not worked together before, and perhaps saw each other as very different (particularly Voscur and BRAVE), to come together over shared goals and recognise similarities. However, this engagement did not extend to the wider West of England.

In hindsight, partners who were interviewed say that they would have:

- spent longer incorporating the international work – understanding how to collaborate and what the opportunities were;
- set overall objectives first and been more honest about how each organisation linked with these;
- undertaken more work to identify gaps in the market;
- done more work to clarify the target audience.
- been more focused on setting up systems to gather evidence at the beginning of the programme;
- created a stronger external reference group of stakeholders;
- linked with academics and quality experts to inform ongoing development;
- developed contingency planning for different forms of funding;
- spent less time developing the diagnostic workbook and more time with clients;
- had an earlier start to mainstreaming.

However, when asked if they could they have achieved their outcomes in any other way, generally the answer was ‘no’ because of constraints on what they could do. There was agreement that the way in which they worked was an inevitability. This makes it hard, and somewhat inappropriate, to look back in hindsight and think things could have been done differently or better.

The added value of each partner

‘Added value’ relates both to the skills of individuals *as well as* to the experience and contacts that the partner organisations bring. Required skills and expertise also

became apparent as the project operated and therefore could not have clearly been set out at the inception of the project.

Individual skills included:

- experience of partnership working;
- PI background;
- project management.

Looking at each partner organisation:

- **BCC** successfully fulfilled a wide range of roles spelt out in the revised DPA: accountability, leadership, activity monitoring, financial monitoring and administration, project management, as well as additional continuity and enthusiasm, and prior work on the social economy and their needs in Bristol.
- Both **Voscur** and the **BRAVE** brought engagement with, and experience of, the voluntary and community sectors and co-operatives respectively. From interview responses, these organisations acknowledge they could have better used their linkages into their sectors in order to add wider reach and engagement. C3Perform has not yet been embedded into their priorities or strategy.
- **Social Enterprise Works** brought the experience of the social enterprise sector (which also includes some co-operatives) and contributed commitment and other skills from employees. They have probably added more value to development and partnership working than was expected from the initial DPA, possibly since they have the greatest fit with the goals of C3.
- The **BDA** was specifically included to target BME organisations. The added value seems to have been less around 'equalities' and more around how to deliver to community and grass-roots organisations.
- **RISE's** role was as "delivery partner, event organiser, marketing and communication expert, regional stakeholder and strategic development role". RISE has fulfilled its role as a regional stakeholder (particularly through embedding C3Perform approaches within the social enterprise IDB) and within strategic development for the partnership, as well as taking forward the creation of the Trade Association and the social enterprise mark after initial development within C3.
- The three local authorities, other than BCC – **North Somerset Council, South Gloucestershire Council, B&NES** – were engaged at the beginning of the programme, particularly in scoping their areas' needs. However, their added value has been lost through dis-engagement.
- **Community Action** engaged with C3 as a funding source for their PI tool, Hallmark, but the additional synergy from reach and the expertise of rural organisations has not been realised.
- **Business West** was engaged partly to provide experience of a 'hub and spoke' model as well as to provide experience of business support across the West of England and mainstreaming into government programmes and strategy. Again, mostly due to loss of funding, this engagement and added-value has ceased.

Were partners' expectations met?

Partners' expectations were not clearly articulated at the beginning of the programme and thus their realisation cannot be assessed.

Did participants develop new skills and experience?

All the core delivery partners (in other words BCC, SEW, Voscur, BRAVE and BDA) were very positive about developing new skills, such as:

- learning about PI, available tools, and EFQM through experience and training;
- project management and working in partnership;
- learning how to manage a delivery partnership;
- working at the regional and national levels;
- the issues and difficulties of a wide range of organisations across the third sector;
- a more realistic set of expectations about partnerships;
- how to negotiate.

How effectively is the Development Partnership building capacity for future delivery?

In discussions with individual partners and throughout the evaluation day, the delivery partners and RISE all responded fairly positively to the suggestion that the partnership should go forward. It was also clear that there was an understanding that BCC would not be able to take the lead in the future, both because they did not know what their future would be with respect to the social economy and also so that the social economy was creating its own support.

Some of the desire for continued engagement stemmed from the realisation that the synergies and importance of having social economy organisations network together is useful, beyond PI or C3Perform.

There seemed to be little interest in a partnership that focused only on C3Perform, but more on one that engaged with Performance Improvement generally. There was a lack of clarity from participants about whether or not this would be absorbed into a suggested Performance Improvement Network.

3. Mainstreaming

The objectives of the mainstreaming strategy as set out in the Mainstreaming Partnership Agreement were:

- Objective One* *To develop the impact and value of social economy enterprises by **influencing mainstream practice in the area of support** available to social economy enterprises by promoting the use of, and good practice based on, the Excellence Model and associated tools.*
- Objective Two* *To influence the way social economy enterprises enhance their competitiveness and articulate their credibility by **embedding performance improvement in their practice** and, working together in a **network of excellence** to promoting their work to consumer, business and public sector audiences.*
- Objective Three* *To **influence the policy and financing instruments of governmental, social and private sector stakeholders** and **show how supporting the improvement of performance of social economy enterprises and valuing and recognising their impact can help establish robust delivery** of their economic, social and environmental objectives.*

The partnership recognised that mainstreaming should have happened earlier than it did but the loss of a key staff member reduced their capacity. The partnership are aware that mainstreaming will need to continue after the end of the EQUAL funding in December 2007 in order to realise the goals of C3.

The specific activities to be delivered are set out in Appendix Two and summarised below.

Objective One

These were:

- a) encouraging support agencies to use and develop C3Perform and using the C3 website to promote the message – **partly achieved through development of the C3 website and ongoing meetings**

There seems to be little evidence as yet of the positive impacts of encouraging support agencies to use and develop C3Perform. The website has been developed but will need to be promoted and linked to other websites to increase awareness.

- b) integrating learning into IDB – **achieved**

C3Perform provided the background to the development of the diagnostic (D) in the IDB approach to government-funded business support to social enterprises within the South West. It might be a good idea to bring the different RDAs together to discuss how IDB is being developed/working for social enterprises (and other social economy organisations) and how it could be further developed.

- c) publicising a PI toolkit developed by the transnational partnership – **not achieved but PI case studies developed instead**

The transnational partnership developed a series of case studies and not a toolkit. The case studies focus on different elements of PI, structured through the 'enablers'

and 'results' elements of the EFQM model (Appendix 3). This website could usefully be developed and themed so that a user is clear what they might learn and how. Again, it could be linked to other sources of support and information, particularly the C3Perform website.

- d) presenting the toolkit to key audiences in the social economy, enterprise support community and policy influencers – **C3Perform has been presented to different audiences rather than the toolkit.**

The DESE toolkit has not been presented to audiences since it has not been developed. However, the C3Perform toolkit has been showcased and discussed with different audiences and there has been some small group training around the South West.

Objective Two

Activities were:

- a) Mainstreaming PI tools at mutual learning or networking events – **achieved but outcomes are as yet unknown**

Members of C3 have attended a wide range of events in the local area and around the country with the aim of showcasing C3. To be effective, the connections made will need to be followed up and a clear strategy created for mainstreaming C3 and prioritising efforts. One networking group was the thematic group set up by the OTS for all social enterprise-related projects delivered through EQUAL in the UK. There were also meetings with national level policy-makers. One meeting with the Social Enterprise Coalition resulted in the latter taking up and showcasing C3 to further embed the tool within the social enterprise part of the social economy.

- b) Promoting the TA – **achieved by RISE for social enterprise**

The TA has been set up and is being promoted by RISE. EQUAL money enabled early discussions but not in its subsequent development. The TA would be a very useful link to the C3 website although the focus on social enterprise means that other parts of the social economy cannot link up through this route.

- c) Developing and maintaining the website – **achieved**

The website has been developed and will be finalised after the launch of C3Perform. There is funding for two further years and it will be hosted by SEW. The current version is based primarily on telling people about C3Perform rather than being oriented to users, in other words, organisations, or other interested parties who might wish to use the website and learn about C3Perform. The website will need to be developed again so that the history of C3 is secondary to the primary need to work with the needs of potential users and with links to other sources of PI support and tools.

- d) Events to encourage further networking and potentially developing a professional network - **achieved**

C3 organised two major events. One in June 2007 was aimed at different audiences for C3 – organisations, funders and finance providers, and purchasers – to develop appropriate messages as well as hearing reactions to the tools and how they could be used.

The launch event for C3Perform was held on the 12th December 2007 – *Doing it Better: Improving Performance in the Third Sector*. This day-long event was aimed at third sector organisations, support agencies, procurers from the public and private sectors, funders, investors and policy-makers, and focused on PI for the third sector, promoting the C3Perform toolkit, and how C3Perform fits with the wider world of PI. There was an introductory speech by the Director of Social Enterprise within the Office of the Third Sector. Workshops focused on mainstreaming and legacy with, for example, a workshop on developing a practitioner learning network which would focus on improving the performance of the sector; impact and value procurement; and the changing support infrastructure.

The workshop on a practitioner learning network was designed to seek interest in, and to develop a PI national network. Prior to this, a Performance Improvement Network had been suggested by C3 to involve all stakeholders which could be developed at either a local, regional or national level. This network appears to be the development of the PIN. It is likely to be national and open to all organisations and stakeholders who are interested in PI across the third sector.

The launch event generated a lot of interest from participants. One Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) representative noted that in their rural area, C3Perform would be ideal to engage clients. This interest prompted a realisation that the CVSs could be an ideal way to increase awareness and reach of PI and C3Perform through the voluntary and community sector, in both urban and rural areas.

Objective Three

Activities were:

- a) Attending sector events at sub-regional, regional and national level
- b) Attending policy-making and investor events at all levels
- c) Procurement sessions for organisations and procurement officers in the public sector

C3 attended many events in order to disseminate information. Meetings were held with Bristol City Council to link C3 to the procurement process. There were also meetings with funders, for example the Big Lottery, to promote C3Perform as a way to increase organisations' capacity, prepare enhanced bids and also to illustrate investment and delivery-readiness.

As part of the mainstreaming strategy, the C3 partnership created messages and rationales for the three main audiences for C3Perform as to why they should engage with PI.

The three key audiences

Third sector enterprises would wish to *improve our performance* in order to:

- Strengthen **our competitiveness** – a stronger focus on delivery helps to achieve *our* aims.
- Generate **confidence**, based on evidence, to help *us* meet opportunities and challenges (both internally and externally).
- Demonstrate **our credibility** with buyers, investors, potential partners, staff, volunteers and other stakeholders.

Buyers, investors and funders: we should encourage and expect a *performance improvement* approach because:

- It increases confidence that *our* supplier/partner organisations can deliver targets and shows that they have a focus on outcomes.
- It drives up the quality of proposals, providing *us* with a better information base for decision-making.

- It ensures *our* investment will count with partners demonstrating enhanced capacity to benefit from further investments.

The **enterprise support community**: workers of all specialisms can encourage a *performance improvement* approach underpinning *our* work because success for and growth of *our* clients:

- Stimulates demand for *our* business and organisational development support.
- Develops the demand for range and breadth of skills and support that *we* offer to the sector.
- Interventions with more-knowledgeable clients are more effective and will strengthen *our* future business relationships.

These messages have been tested out and refined with each group. The evidence base for each could however be further developed, beginning with the results of this evaluation and specific case studies. It is also worth noting that the first bullet point on competitiveness talks about 'a stronger focus on delivery'. In keeping with the spirit of EFQM and C3, perhaps the stress should be more on meeting needs and realising outcomes than just stressing effective delivery.

4. Learning Points and Recommendations

From the results of this evaluation, and also the comments of advisers, we can list the learning points developed as a result of this EQUAL programme as well as suggest recommendations on how to further develop and mainstream C3Perform.

Learning points and good practice

Learning points for the use of C3Perform came from the organizations through exit evaluations, from advisers, particularly through a document *Key criteria for success in using C3Perform* which grew out of Capturing Learning Events, and through interviews with advisers.

These were:

- *Engage a senior staff member as a PI champion*
A key problem identified was if the management committee was not involved at the start, it could block or not see the relevance of the process.
- *The best way into PI is to start broad-brush across the organisation and then go into more depth in areas where there is a need for action*
As one adviser said it is “like going down through layers with more and more detail”.
- *The experience of using PI should be empowering for all involved*
- *Any pre-training or advertising literature should emphasise the long-term continuous nature of C3Perform*
- *Advisers should set and agree with client organisations fixed dates for self-assessment and action planning otherwise activities can slip*
- *Actions plans should be owned by a PI champion and particular actions owned by members of the PI team*
- *Informed decisions need to be made about who, and how many people, to engage in different parts of the process*
There are pros and cons of keeping the group large or making it small (for example small groups may make it easier to deal with sensitive issues but miss the opportunity to bring the organisation together).
- *Preparation and training of participants is key to success*
- *Very young organisations need more intensive support with a shorter process perhaps more focused on marketing and business planning or specific projects or activities*
- *Discipline with regards meetings and actions*
- *More time required the larger and more complex the organisation (it was noted that sometimes the bigger the organisation the more issues are unearthed)*
- *A plan of PI work should be prepared for organisations which reflects their capacity and scope*

There are also several obstacles to doing, continuing or completing the process:

- time;
- funding and financial pressures;
- staff leaving;
- hidden agendas which may create difficulties.

Other learning points, as a result of the work done by the C3 partnership were recognised and dealt with as the C3 programme developed. These points to consider may be useful for other similar partnerships:

- It is important at the beginning of any new partnership for each new partner to spend time understanding why everyone is there, articulating why they are there and what they could offer, before any activities are undertaken. This helps prevent misunderstandings further down the line.
- It is critical to spend time setting up systems to gather evidence at the beginning of the programme in order to establish baseline data and ensure that the most accurate and appropriate information is collected in order to satisfy the needs of different stakeholders. It is also important to ensure that all stakeholders collect and appropriately record all data and information to inform ongoing development and to provide evidence to assess the outcomes of the project.
- It is important to recognise and find ways to deal with the tension between successfully realising the goals of the partnership, and meeting the needs of the partner organisations.
- The development of new tools and complex services can take much longer than anticipated due to the need for constant change in the light of experience.
- It is useful to identify and develop a group of knowledgeable and/or influential external stakeholders at the beginning of the programme. These people and organisations can initially help with the development of new products and services and can also provide strong links into networks for mainstreaming purposes.

Future development C3 and C3Perform

Whilst a significant amount of development has occurred to create three C3Perform tools, there is a need for further development of the products and guidance on their use. For example:

- A Pre-Start and New Start tool have been developed but have yet to be launched. Given the comments made by advisers and organisations, it would be useful to develop and test these products and include them in the C3Perform suite of tools.
- The ongoing issue over language used in C3Perform could be further explored through a variety of routes such as:
 - more work could be done to segment C3Perform for different parts of the sector since the co-operatives and the voluntary sector were particularly concerned about language use;
 - the facilitator could stress the way in which changing and understanding different 'languages', is an important part of working with, and influencing, different audiences;
 - different language terms or alternative ways of looking at issues could be used within the tools to make C3Perform relevant and understandable to different organisations
- The C3Perform website will need to be developed again so that the history of C3 and its development is secondary to the primary need to work with the

needs of potential users and to link this website with other sources of PI support and tools.

- The trans-national website of case studies could be further developed in order to enable different organisations to access relevant resources and relevant case studies for particular needs, by creating some sort of sign-posting between case studies as well as providing links to relevant contacts.
- Ongoing use of C3 could be linked to a long-term evaluation by a university interested in PI for the social economy. This would help establish more credibility for the tool and enable it and other tools, developed through the EQUAL programme or existing tools, to be compared and therefore linked more appropriately to organisations' needs.
- The guidance notes could make more reference to the different ways in which elements of C3Perform can be combined. They should include the simple diagnostic questionnaire as a useful option since it seemed to be an effective introduction to the process for some organisations.
- It will be important to consider with whom the intellectual property for C3Perform resides when BCC steps down as the lead body. A form of words could also be developed which ensures appropriate attribution and use.
- It would be difficult to charge for C3Perform since they are seen as entry-level tools promoting culture change for those who do not necessarily recognise the need for PI. However, charging could happen through networks or for facilitation.
- There needs to be a meeting between partners, particularly those who are currently disengaged, in order to discuss how a network between some or all of them might work in future. The core partners of BDA, Voscur, SEW, and BRAVE could continue to work together in Bristol some way since they have clear benefits of cross-social economy or third sector working around shared issues of concern. RISE could engage with other regional voluntary sector umbrella groups if the network was to cover the South West. Those groups could focus on PI and link to the proposed Learning and Performance national network.
- C3Perform, or at least a Start-up version or QUICK Perform could be tested with partnerships, since the focus on results and processes could positively benefit their synergies and impacts.
- The term 'beneficiaries' was used throughout the C3 Partnership work. It would be better to use different language or just refer to 'organisations that used C3Perform', since 'beneficiaries' does not fit with the 'can-do' language being used by C3 and self-assessment.

Mainstreaming

Suggested recommendations for mainstreaming after the end of the EQUAL project are:

- It would be beneficial to develop further linkages of C3Perform with 'nodes' of PI for different parts of the social economy so that organisations from a variety of backgrounds can access and use the tools.
- Since BCC is unable to lead further development of C3Perform, the organisation for whom C3Perform appears to have become most embedded is Social Enterprise Works. Ultimately, responsibility for the website, and product and further development is likely to be best passed to this organisation, rather than remaining with a partnership group with no or limited funding.
- There could be specific discussions with PI networks, particularly the British Quality Foundation (BQF) who promote EFQM within the UK, in order to gain endorsement and formal linkages.
- To further develop and increase the legitimacy and robustness of C3Perform through ongoing development and long-term evaluation, it would also be useful to:
 - Embed C3 as one tool amongst other PI tools within the Performance Hub, regional quality and PI networks, and other 'nodes' for PI such as the *Prove and Improve* website. (C3Perform was runner up in the Supporting Performance Competition of 2007 under the Quality category – this link could be built on as well as their inclusion within the Performance Hub toolkit. There has also been interest by the Creating Excellence network within the South West.)
 - Develop links and interest with one academic institution that works specifically with all or part of the social economy on PI.
- Re-engaging the disengaged partners, particularly the unitary authorities, could further embed C3 within the region.
- C3Perform could join with all groups and networks associated with PI and the social economy to develop further public procurement linkages through and with organisations such as IdEA or the LGA. This work could build on the extensive experience of central government with EFQM.
- On balance, the take-up, promotion and relevance seems to fit more strongly with the social enterprises supported by SEW although (although with a few language changes and appropriate facilitation works across the social economy). This indicates that perhaps the goal of developing C3Perform for the whole of the social economy or third sector was too difficult given the prevailing environment which reinforces difference, despite the aims of the new Office of the Third Sector. However, the benefits of working together could be preserved through the suggested PI network, but marketing, mainstreaming and further development, could also happen separately through different umbrella bodies and 'nodes' to reflect the different environments and languages used by different parts of the social economy or third sector.
- It could be useful for the EQUAL-funded projects focused on quality and impact measurement to meet together, swap learning, and design an approach to promoting PI and quality assurance within 'social enterprises'. This opportunity would enable a clear swapping of the pros and cons of different approaches and an honest assessment of how different tools could

work together. This would also enable C3Perform to link with more national projects and access broader networks of support and access to organisations.

- The Regional Development Agencies could be brought together to discuss the way in which the IDB approach to business support is working for social enterprise and the efficacy of approaches used by different agencies, including that influenced by C3Perform in the South West.

APPENDIX ONE

Action Plan for the Development Partnership Agreement

Objective No:	1		
Activities	Description of activity	Partners responsible	Timeframe
Activity 1	Training SE business advisers in the PI diagnostic tools and action planning.	RISE, BCC and expert delivering the training	July 05 to December 07
Activity 2	Training of (outreach) information advisers in the PI diagnostic tools and action planning.	RISE, BCC and expert delivering the training	July 05 to December 07
Activity 3	Training of C3 partners to deliver Action Learning sets to promote peer learning in the sector.	C3 partners (mainly advisers)	June 06 to June 07
Activity 4	Co-ordination, development of training/improvement activities for C3 beneficiaries.	Voscur, BDA specialist training and support with support from the advisers on identifying training needs through action planning	June 05 to December 07
Activity 5	ICT health checks for C3 beneficiaries in conjunction with C3 improvement support.	Voscur ICT adviser with support from C3 advisers	July 06 to December 07
Activity 6	Equalities, inclusion and information support for C3 beneficiaries in conjunction with C3 improvement support.	Voscur equalities adviser with support from C3 advisers	July 06 to December 07
Activity 7	Developing, piloting and improving the PI diagnostic tools and action planning stage.	Business support advisers in key delivery agencies: Social Enterprise Works, Voscur, Avon CDA, BDA and BCC's Community Development workers	October 05 to December 07
Activity 8	Piloting ways of implementing impact measurement tools such as SROI to social economy organisations.	BCC and C3 advisers	July 06 to December 07
Activity 9	Key support agencies to go through a quality management system based on the Business Excellence model.	Change up PI expert to support the implementation	July 05 to June 06
Activity 10	Raising awareness (i.e. briefing sessions) about the C3 programme, PI tools and action planning.	Voscur and BDA (equalities, BME groups), Social Enterprise Works (social enterprises) Avon CDA (co-ops)	July 05 to December 07
Activity 11	Advice and support for the implementation of the Hall Mark quality management system.	Community Action	July 05 to May 07
Activity !2	Developing Benchmarking database.	Social Enterprise Works	Jan 07 to Dec 07

Objective No:	2
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Activities	Description of activity	Partners responsible	Timeframe
Activity 1	Recruiting rural social enterprise advisers and developing work plan.	CDA (BRAVE Ltd) and Social Enterprise Works	February 07 to December 07
Activity 2	Marketing and outreach work to identify rural-based social enterprises, with PI diagnosis of social enterprises' needs and support in planning.	CDA (BRAVE Ltd) and Social Enterprise Works with other C3 partners	February 07 to December 07

Objective No:	3
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Activities	Description of activity	Partners responsible	Timeframe
Activity 1	Co-ordination of the online advice system and resources section part of the C3 website.	Social Enterprise Works (i.e. Marketing Officer) with support of the C3 partners	July 05 to December 07
Activity 2	'Trade Association' feasibility study and running of performance improvement networking events that aim to promote peer learning / benchmarking within the sector.	All C3 partners to contribute to 'mutual learning' activities (including Action Learning Sets and Performance Improvement Working Groups).	June 06 to December 07
Activity 3	Developing and promoting an identity for the social economy sector.	BCC, RISE with the support of all other C3 partners	May 06 to December 07

Objective No:	1
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Activities	Description of activity	Partners responsible	Timeframe
Activity 1	Encourage support agencies to use and help develop the 'PERform suite' for their own client group at regional and national level. Use of the C3 web-site to promote this message.	The advisers at Social Enterprise Works, CDA, BDA, and Voscur.	On-going, throughout Action 3
Activity 2	Integrate the learning from C3 into the South West 'Information, Diagnostic, and Brokerage' gateway arrangements.	Social Enterprise Works, BW, BCC, and RISE.	At the desk research stage of the RISE project.
Activity 3	Publication of the Performance Improvement Good Practice toolkit developed by DESE at local, national and transnational level.	BCC (to lead)	May 2007
Activity 4	The toolkit and associated practices will be presented to our key audiences in: a) social economy (Third Sector) enterprises b) funders, both investors and buyers c) the enterprise support community d) policy influencers	The advisers at Social Enterprise Works, CDA, BDA, and Voscur with BCC staff	From March 2007 to December 2007

Objective No:	2		
Activities	Description of activity	Partners responsible	Timeframe
Activity 1	Mainstreaming PI tools and new participative learning methods developed by C3 at mutual learning/networking events.	Delivery partners, BCC	April 07- Dec 07
Activity 2	Promoting activities supporting the branding and other activities associated with the 'Trade Association', with the potential for regional/national development.	Social Enterprise Works, RISE, BCC	June 2007
Activity 3	Developing and maintaining the C3 web-site, securing its future development as a resource for the sector	Social Enterprise Works and delivery partners	On-going, throughout Action 3
Activity 4	Run a series of events to encourage further networking, breaking down barriers by developing learning between stakeholders in the sector's performance and potentially establishing a 'professional' network based around the tool-kit and lessons learned that will last beyond the C3 EQUAL funding	The advisers at Social Enterprise Works, CDA, BDA, and Voscur with BCC staff	From March 2007 to December 2007

Objective No:	3		
Activities	Description of activity	Partners responsible	Timeframe
Activity 1	Arrange and/or attend at SEE sector specific events to mainstream the impact of C3 at sub-regional, regional and national level	All partners invited to participate in dissemination activities e.g. RISE's Business Advice Network meetings, RISE's 'Rural Social Enterprise' conference, National SEC conference, Cooperative Congress 2007, etc.	On-going but most of the activity to take place after June 2007 (end of Action 2).
Activity 2	Arrange and or attend at other events, meetings organised by policy-makers and investors to mainstream the impact of C3 at sub-regional, regional and national level.	All partners with BCC taking the lead e.g. DTI, Home Office, ODPM/Treasury, Academic field, etc.	On-going but most of the activity to take place after June 2007
Activity 3	Market readiness support and development for client SEE organisations and market awareness sessions (possibly combined) for procurement officers to encourage the rise of procurement activities in the sector.	BCC with partners support	Start September 06

APPENDIX TWO

Action Plan for the Mainstreaming Partnership Agreement

Objective No:	1			
Activities	Description of activity	Partners responsible	Timeframe	
Activity 1	Encourage support agencies to use and help develop the 'PERform suite' for their own client group at regional and national level. Use of the C3 web-site to promote this message.	The advisers at Social Enterprise Works, CDA, BDA, and Voscur.	On-going, throughout Action 3	
Activity 2	Integrate the learning from C3 into the South West 'Information, Diagnostic, and Brokerage' gateway arrangements.	Social Enterprise Works, BW, BCC, and RISE.	At the desk research stage of the RISE project.	
Activity 3	Publication of the Performance Improvement Good Practice toolkit developed by DESE at local, national and transnational level.	BCC (to lead)	May 2007	
Activity 4	The toolkit and associated practices will be presented to our key audiences in: a) social economy (Third Sector) enterprises b) funders, both investors and buyers c) the enterprise support community d) policy influencers	The advisers at Social Enterprise Works, CDA, BDA, and Voscur with BCC staff	From March 2007 to December 2007	

Objective No:	2			
Activities	Description of activity	Partners responsible	Timeframe	
Activity 1	Mainstreaming PI tools and new participative learning methods developed by C3 at mutual learning/networking events.	Delivery partners, BCC	April 07- Dec 07	
Activity 2	Promoting activities supporting the branding and other activities associated with the 'Trade Association', with the potential for regional/national development.	Social Enterprise Works, RISE, BCC	June 2007	
Activity 3	Developing and maintaining the C3 web-site, securing its future development as a resource for the sector	Social Enterprise Works and delivery partners	On-going, throughout Action 3	

Objective No:	2		
Activities	Description of activity	Partners responsible	Timeframe
Activity 4	Run a series of events to encourage further networking, breaking down barriers by developing learning between stakeholders in the sector's performance and potentially establishing a 'professional' network based around the tool-kit and lessons learned that will last beyond the C3 EQUAL funding	The advisers at Social Enterprise Works, CDA, BDA, and Voscur with BCC staff	From March 2007 to December 2007

Objective No:	3		
Activities	Description of activity	Partners responsible	Timeframe
Activity 1	Arrange and/or attend at SEE sector specific events to mainstream the impact of C3 at sub-regional, regional and national level	All partners invited to participate in dissemination activities e.g. RISE's Business Advice Network meetings, RISE's 'Rural Social Enterprise' conference, National SEC conference, Cooperative Congress 2007, etc.	On-going but most of the activity to take place after June 2007 (end of Action 2).
Activity 2	Arrange and or attend at other events, meetings organised by policy-makers and investors to mainstream the impact of C3 at sub-regional, regional and national level.	All partners with BCC taking the lead e.g. DTI, Home Office, ODPM/Treasury, Academic field, etc.	On-going but most of the activity to take place after June 2007
Activity 3	Market readiness support and development for client SEE organisations and market awareness sessions (possibly combined) for procurement officers to encourage the rise of procurement activities in the sector.	BCC with partners support	Start September 06

APPENDIX THREE

Initial findings and recommendations

The main suggestion from the evaluation team was that several different kinds of evidence could be used to persuade different stakeholder groups to take up and use performance improvement (PI): evidence of need (**Evidence 1**); ensuring that the monitoring for hard and soft outcomes produces useful results (**Evidence 2**); external evidence of comparable tools to support the case for C3Perform and its likely impact on organisations (**Evidence 3**).

- A need for consideration of the language being used by C3. Terms like: third sector, social economy, voluntary and community sector, social enterprise, or enterprising social economy are being used in different ways by C3, the government, and by other stakeholders. Ensuring clarity over language, and recognising how it might be understood by different stakeholders, could affect the take-up, targeting and use of C3Perform.

Evidence 1 – evidence of need

This short report summarised the results of the studies produced in Action 1 as well as accessible and related work undertaken by Bristol City Council which had been used to inform the development of C3 and C3Perform. This information could be used in marketing materials as well in contributing to a testable set of assumptions which could be addressed in the evaluation.

Issues were raised by that summary for the legacy, final evaluation and on-going product development:

- audits carried out by C3 partners showed that the social economy, as measured, is similar to the third sector (as currently defined by government). The information collected appears to show that most organisations within the social economy, when questioned, see themselves as ‘charities’ or ‘voluntary sector’;
- organisations who are the most happy to see themselves as ‘enterprising’ either come from the co-operative sector or self-identify as ‘social enterprise’;
- work conducted by Baker Brown Associates Ltd in 2003 for Bristol City Council on the political context facing the social economy is already out of date because of national political changes, chiefly the setting up of the Office of the Third Sector within the Cabinet Office. An up-to-date analysis of third sector/social economy policies, theories and practices is necessary for the final evaluation and legacy. An awareness of this changing agenda, and the related terminology being used by different stakeholders, is important to the ongoing development of C3Perform;
- importance of clarifying and articulating links with PQASSO – particularly for those organisations that self-identify as the voluntary sector or charities and who are the most resistant to ‘enterprise’ language;
- barriers and lack of awareness of impact assessment across the third sector
- need for the drivers for adoption of quality systems as set out in the paper produced in 2005 by Social Enterprise Works (then BACEN), for C3, to be further developed and evidenced wherever possible, since they provide some of the reasons for using different PI models;
- need to further explore the relevance and experience of the Diversity Excellence Model as developed by BASSAC, since this is also based on EFQM.

Evidence 2 – monitoring of hard and soft outcomes

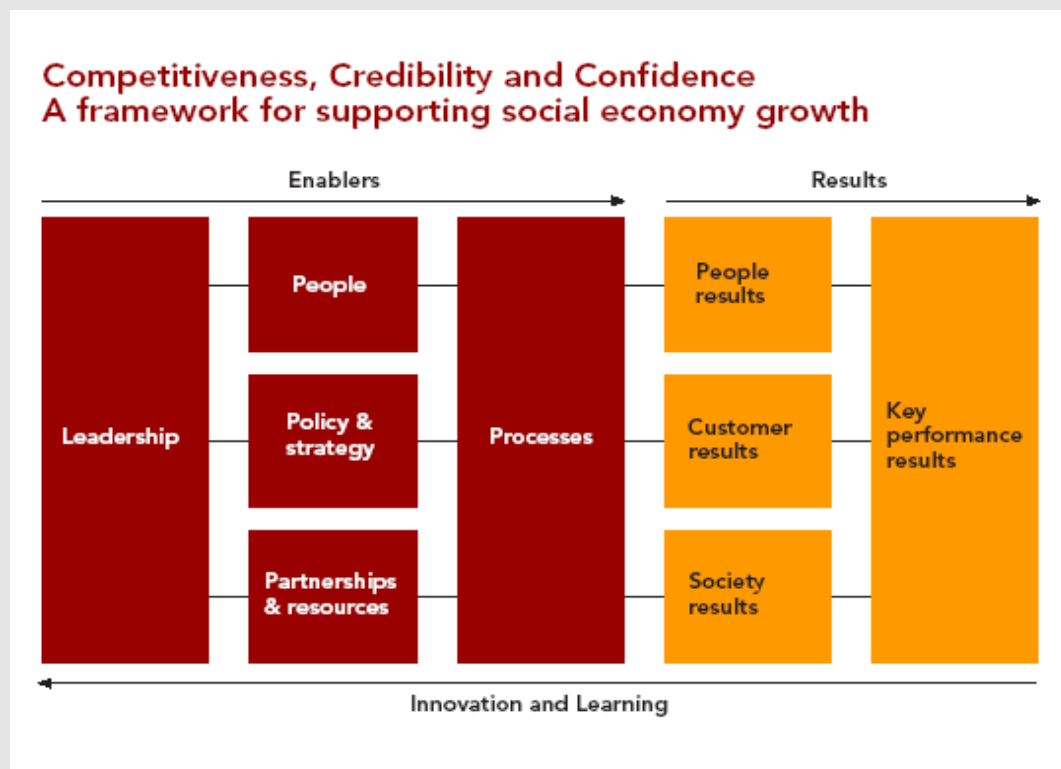
The evaluators reviewed all the data collection forms and monitoring information, suggesting changes and additions where it was felt that particular areas could be addressed differently, chiefly by:

- ensuring that all the monitoring information enables further evaluations of the impact of C3Perform on organisations to be carried out after the end of the EQUAL project;
- gathering comparable and useful information at the beginning of the PI journey, which can then be re-reviewed at regular intervals, and in follow-up interviews after the organisations have 'exited' the project or taken up and used C3Perform;
- getting the best use of the monitoring information through good information management systems that can be used to illustrate the achievement of targets by C3, form the basis for good publicity, increase the usefulness of feedback in order to further develop C3 services, and increase the ability to create a good impact evaluation of C3 services.

Evidence 3 – comparable evidence on PI techniques and how C3Perform fits with other tools

This short report summarised the available literature and practice on EFQM and quality improvement across the UK in order to feed into ongoing discussions for the C3 legacy and mainstreaming, namely: EFQM evidence; use of quality assurance and performance improvement in the public, social enterprise and voluntary sectors as well as scoping other relevant organisations and networks.

The EFQM model is based on prioritising results and seeing five other areas of organisational activity and performance as leading directly to these results:



Several issues were raised by the literature and practice search:

- the need for further investigation of the extent of actual application of EFQM across different sectors: private, public and not for profit, and their relative promotion and use by Business Links or RDAs;

- EFQM/C3 limits and links with other techniques;
- further discussion with EFQM, BQF, and regional excellence groupings about links and mainstreaming;
- exploration of the current use of EFQM within Bristol City Council;
- further discussion with the Social Enterprise Partnership GB EQUAL grouping on their 'prove and improve' work;
- exploration of the quality networks within the South West and further afield.

APPENDIX FOUR

SEMI-STRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARTNERSHIP MEMBERS, ADVISERS AND SUPPORT STAFF

Advisers

What was the experience of the organisations you worked with
What were their drivers for getting involved?
What impact do you think the C3Perform activities had on the organisations
How embedded do you think the C3Perform activities or performance improvement is
How did you work with organisations. How did you change the way that you worked
with people and why?
How have you contributed to improving the suite of tools

Partners

What precisely was your contribution to the partnership and how did it change over
time?
What precisely was your organisation's contribution to the partnership and how did it
change over time?
Has the partnership operated well together?
What could have been done better if anything?
As a partnership do you think you could have achieved your outcomes in any other
way?
How do you think the partnership might go forward, if at all?

- Who should be involved?
- Should other people be involved now and why?
- What do you think your role will be or your organisation's role going
forward, if any?

If you had to do it all over again, what would you do differently as a group?
How innovative do you think C3 has been and in what way has it been innovative?
Identify one learning point that you think is significant from the work of the C3
partnership
What organisational and personnel changes have you found as a result of getting
involved in C3 and why?
What about empowerment and confidence for employees and organisation?
And for you personally

- Did you personally develop new skills and experience as a result of
engagement in the partnership?
- Do you feel that you are empowered in any way as a result of your
participation? How precisely?
- If you look back on your involvement in the partnership, what do you think
worked well for you?
- What did not work so well for you?

General

What about the C3Perform suite of tools. Do you think their objectives have been
met? What has changed?
How does C3Perform fit with the other performance improvement tools that are out
there. How is it different?
How do you think that C3Perform should or could be mainstreamed?
What are your comments on the current strategy?

Who has been interviewed

This semi-structured questionnaire was used with the following representatives of strategic and delivery partners, advisors and support staff:

Ted Fowler, Bristol City Council
Chris Mitchell, Bristol City Council
James Town, Bristol City Council
Elaine Flint, Social Enterprise Works
Stuart Griffin, Social Enterprise Works
Julie Smith, Social Enterprise Works
Katy Harkarvy, BRAVE Ltd
Brian Titley, BRAVE Ltd
Rana Dildar Singh, BDA
Nigel Newton- Sawyer, Voscur
David MacKenzie, Voscur
Paula Howley, RISE
Vanessa Collier, Community Action
Phil Humphries and Jean Erskine, North Somerset Council

APPENDIX FIVE

Here is a summary of the Look Back Move Forward approach which can be obtained from the new economics foundation www.neweconomics.org.

LOOK BACK MOVE FORWARD

How to do it

Draw a timeline through the middle of the poster

Date the timeline with an agreed start date for the project at the start of the timeline and the date of the meeting at the other. And have an axes with very high and very low on it.

Each group comes up with two high points and two low points from the project and stick them in the right places showing extremity of how high and low

Approximate the highs and lows for people who aren't there.

Discuss the highs and lows looking for any connections, similarities or differences amongst groups.

Then consider:

- What difference has this project made
- Any unintended effects
- What would you have done differently
- What do you want to do in the future and what do you want to achieve?
- Who should be involved – what partners – same or different to now?

APPENDIX SIX

The exit evaluation as designed by C3 was as follows:

Beneficiary exit point evaluation form

Beneficiary details
Date of interview
Date of last meeting
Interviewer

Improvements

What C3Perform tools did you use?

Why did you initially engage with C3?

What specific improvements/actions have you implemented as a result of the C3 process? (For example, written business plan, improved staff communications implemented appraisal process.)

Are there are other improvements/actions you have implemented that weren't detailed in your Action Plan?

Have you improved or do you see that the performance improvement process will help you improve in any of the following areas. Please give examples.

Area	Improved	Think you will improve	Details of improvement
Strategic planning			
Strategic use of results and feedback			
Efficiency of the organisation (consider finance systems, processes, partnerships)			
Staff performance			
Staff empowerment and motivation			
Staff/employee relations	Yes		
Ability to demonstrate impacts	Yes		
Ability to secure funds	Indirectly	Yes	

What have you learnt as a result of involvement in C3/use of C3Perform?

About your organisation

About the principles of performance improvement

About anything else

Have you promoted the fact that you have implemented a Performance Improvement process to any stakeholders? For example, to funders, partners, staff or customers?

Has promoting your Performance Improvement process borne any particular results/benefits? (e.g. helped you secure funding or contracts)

Are there any other ways that this helped you with bidding or applying for funded work, and/or responding to monitoring requirements?

Legacy

Would you go through the C3 PI process again?

How could you adapt the C3 PI process to improve the efficiency of it for your organisation?

Do you feel empowered to continue to use the C3 approach to performance improvement within your organisation?

Do you think that C3Perform has moved you closer to wanting or being able to attain quality assurance standards? (If so, which one?)

Would you consider joining an Association of organisations that are committed to Performance Improvement/ Quality Assurance?

What support would you need to continue with PI and to continue to improve (consider website, resources, training and facilitation)?

How do you feel that the PI approach and techniques you have been introduced to have been embedded into your organisation's way of working?

Have the methods helped you to decide and prioritise activities?

Experience

What were the least and most useful parts of the C3 process? Consider the C3Perform tool, facilitation, support, any other aspects.

Would you recommend this process to others? Why/why not?

Can you offer tips for other organisations going through the process that will help them successfully implement a PI process? (consider what worked well for you and what you could have done better).

Have you accessed any support through the C3 process:

Has this support helped you to improve?

APPENDIX SEVEN

BDA C3 Performance Improvement Summarised Diagnostic Questionnaire

Answer each question carefully and record a score dependent upon whether you agree, are uncertain or disagree. For example

Score 0 if you disagree

Score 1 if you are uncertain

Score 2 if you agree

Please note maximum score per field 20 (100%)

Question	Score
1. Do you have enthusiastic and effective leadership?	3
2. Do you have clear direction and established values, ethics and governance?	3
3. Do you enable your people develop and fulfil their potential?	7
4. Do you manage your resources effectively and maintain value adding partnerships?	4
5. Do you design and manage new ways of working so that products and services are delivered efficiently effectively in line with customer needs?	5
6. Do you listen to your customers/key stakeholders in order to meet and exceed their expectations?	2
7. Do you receive positive feedback from your people on the issues that are important to them?	3
8. Do you perform as responsible members of the community and society?	6
9. Do you maintain a systematic approach to assessing and improving performance by the use of key indicators	1
10. Do you continuous learn, review and innovate new ways of enabling and producing results?	0
Total NB 100% equals 120	34