	Information Society Training and Awareness Raising Networks

ISTAR Networks

(RISI Pilot Project)

Final Project Report

8 July 2000

I   Identification of project

Title or Acronym

Information Society Training and Awareness Raising Networks - ISTAR

Web site

www.istar.org

File no.

ESF Reference no.

Project leader

Grace Kempster (succeeded Geoffrey Hare, 1998)

Partners

Co-ordinating partner and expertise provider
Essex Libraries (UK)

3 application sites
 Prefecture of Imathia (Central Macedonia, Greece)
Western Education and Library Board (WELB) (Northern Ireland, UK)
 Thüringer Minsterium für Wissenschaft Forschung und Kultur(Germany) - federal region

 Project management sub-contractor
Education for Change Limited (UK)

Regional partners

Imathia regional partners
•Imathia Prefecture/Veria Public Library
•Imathia Chamber of Commerce
•Office of Industrial Development, Naousa
•Trade Union Labour Institute, Veria
•Municipality of Plati (library)

Thüringen regional partners
Seven local municipalities and their libraries (Erfurt, Gera,Gotha, Greiz,Ilmenau,Meiningen,Nordhausen)
•Landesfachstelle für Offentliche Bibliotkeken (Consulting Agency)
•Thüringen Chamber of Commerce
•Adult Education Centre
•Universities including PATON (On-line Patent Information)

WELB regional partners
•Western Education and Library Board
•North West College of Further and Higher Education
•Ulster American Folk Park
•HMP Magilligan Prison

Summary of objective

ISTAR set out to provide a model for promoting awareness and extending access to networks and basic 'Information Society' services by businesses, SMEs, teleworkers and distance learners in three Objective 1 regions - Imathia, WELB and Thüringen, in support of the main economic drivers in each region

ISTAR utilised the public library network and built on the nascent momentum in that sector toward delivering services via available advanced information and communications technologies. Active partnerships were developed with other regional agencies, in the private and public sectors, in order to deliver cost-effective information and training services to users. A region with advanced capability (Essex) functioned as a resource base for expertise and project management skills during the project, working in partnership with a private sector subcontractor, Education for Change Ltd.

An ISTAR Network centre plus up to six 'nodes' was set up in each region and a full year's trial running took place and was evaluated during the period of the project. Services were promoted to target communities in each region. There was to be a measurable increase in awareness and take-up of network and other 'Information Society' services relevant to each regional economy.

A summary of results and outcomes has been posted to the ISTAR website:
http://www.istar.org/

Outline of work programme

Workpackage 1 - Feasibility and definition

Main activities - examination of existing regional policy, developments and initiatives; survey of users; consultation with local agencies

Total period - 6 months

Results expected
R1.1   detailed identification of the driving economic sectors of each region

R1.2   detailed specification of the needs of SME and individual workers

R1.3   assessment of the extent of ability of current networks and services (public libraries and other agencies) to supply those needs;

R1.4   identification and assessment of those agencies with a possible role to play in ISTAR network development, including potential role of the private sector

R1.5   assessment of technological conditions and environment in the region

R1.6   assessment of affordability and price/subsidy requirements in the light of regional economic conditions

R1.7   assessment of service financial viability, taking into account cost-recovery opportunities etc

R1.8   evaluation of the opportunities, risks and costs in each region for technological and service development in the period of the pilot application

R1.9   initial assessment of the potential for transferability within Europe

R1.10   detailed specification of the objectives for the pilot application in each region with evaluation criteria (see Workpackage 8).

Workpackage 2 - Full specification of ISTAR Networks

Main activities
Research, investigation and documentation

Total period - 2 months

Results expected
R2.1   definition of a common specification format

R2.2   production of a fully-costed technical specification for the development of an ISTAR Network in each region including: staff; equipment; communications and interface standards, relevant electronic products and services, software, telecommunications and other equipment subscription costs, running costs, cost-recovery mechanisms and levels for the period of the pilot application

R2.3   evaluation of specifications by project management

Workpackage 3 - Negotiation and contracting between regional agencies

Main activities - Consultation and negotiation

Total period - 3 months

Results expected
R3.1   definition of the minimum essential level of contractual agreement required between the various agencies, services and suppliers, public and private sector, involved in ISTAR Networks in each region

R3.2   negotiation of agreements and contracting where necessary for the period of the pilot application.

Workpackage 4 - Procurement and setup of network centres and nodes

Main activities - Drawing up tender documents according to appropriate regulations; tendering and/or 'shopping' for appropriate goods and services

Total period - 4 months

Results expected
R4.1   procurement of goods and services for establishment of ISTAR Networks

R4.2   installation and testing of technology-based services

Workpackage 5 - Appointment and training of staff

Main activities - Development of job specifications, trawling, interviewing and appointing staff; development of training specifications; design of appropriate workshop, hands-on and distance training modules (videoconferencing may also be used); development of training materials; conducting regional training workshops; formative evaluation of training outcomes and additional activities to address any problems (continuous)

Total period - 4 months (with some inputs throughout the project)

Results expected
R5.1   identification and appointment of staff of ISTAR Network centres and nodes

R5.2   training of staff to specified level of competence in operation of services, use of technologies in ISTAR Centres etc

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Workpackage 6 - promotion of services

Main activities - procurement of establishment of database of target businesses, organisations, individuals etc; public relations approach to media and news outlets in each region; invitations to SME to attend demonstration sessions and workshops; mailshots describing services, issuing invitations, offering promotional discounts etc

Total period - initially, 1 month with additional inputs throughout the project

Results expected
R6.1   large scale promotional exercise to establish awareness among businesses, individuals etc available through ISTAR Networks, using for example local radio, tv, press and networks in addition to mailshots, posters, promotion at events etc as appropriate

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Workpackage 7 - Pilot application running

Main activities - real-time operation of pilot application services

Total period - 12 months

Results expected

R7.1   full operation of the specified ISTAR services in each region, including user training programmes

Workpackage 8 - Monitoring and evaluation

Main activities - establishment (during WP1) of evaluation criteria and impact measures relating to the use of ISTAR networks by the target group, benefits derived and satisfaction; baseline studies using the above before real-time piloting in each region, interim studies after six months and final studies after 12 months; after six months running, a project workshop will be conducted at which staff will meet and exchange experiences, discuss problems and share successful approaches; regular monitoring visits to each region during the running of the pilot application in order to provide continuous formative evaluation leading to troubleshooting and remedial activities where necessary; internal advisory, monitoring and evaluation procedures for individual workpackages are additionally specified within individual workpackages where relevant. Peer Review procedures will be adopted where external validation appears necessary.

Time taken - continuous from Month 5

Results expected
R8.1   evaluation of the internal effectiveness of specific tasks and stages of the project (e.g. see provision under WP 2 and 5)

R8.2   evaluation and measurement of the impact and outcomes of ISTAR Networks on the target user groups

R8.3   implementation of mechanisms for inter-regional comparison and learning;

R8.4   full assessment for transferability across Europe.

Workpackage 9 - Dissemination of results across Europe

Main Activities - establishment of electronic mailing lists, participation in existing electronic conferences, establishment and maintenance of WWW home pages, participation in relevant 'physical' events (conferences, exhibitions etc); organisation of three ISTAR dedicated conferences in strategic locations for a Europe-wide audience of interested 'actors'

Time taken - continuous from month six (dedicated conferences in months 23 and 24)

Results expected
R9.1   generation of widespread interest matched by facilities to provide information electronically

R9.2   3 conferences with significant European key actor participation

R9.3   arrangements for ISTAR network site visits by key actors from other European regions, mainly post-project

Workpackage 10 - Project Management

Main Activities - co-ordination of all partner activities; facilitation of communications between the partners; provision of organisational and secretariat facilities to all partner level meetings; communication with the Commission; provision of reports and financial information to the Commission; drafting of project reports; quality assurance of project deliverables; maintenance and monitoring of project-level budget, accounts and payments system.

Time taken - continuous from month 1

Results expected
R10.1 integrated inter-regional team-based approach to project management and activity

R10.2 verifiable project accounting and payments system

R10.3 reporting and submission of deliverables to the Commission in line with its requirements

Project implementation period

- **Start date according to notification of Community funding**

The original contract for ISTAR was received by Essex on 15 August 1997. It was signed by Commissioner Flynn on 30 July 1997. The project start date given in the contract was 1 December 1996 and the end date was 30 November 1998.

On 20 November 1997 an amended Decision extended the project to 31 August 1999. A letter sent to Essex and signed by Rene Güth on 12 December 1997 stated that 'you may consider 20 November 1997 as starting date for the reporting process'. This was acknowledged by Essex in a letter dated 19 December 1997.

- **Actual start date**

The project commenced operations in November 1997.

- **Project completion date**

It was explicit in the contractual documentation that the project would require 24 months to complete its workplan i.e. would be completed in November 1999 and that this would incorporate a full year of 'live' service operation in order to demonstrate sustainability.

In a meeting with the Project Officer and Head of Unit, in Brussels on 4 June 1998, ISTAR Project Management [Colin Attenborough and Robert Davies] explained the requirement for a further project extension to take account of the above need and this was acknowledged.

The contract with the Commission specified that a decision on the feasibility of ISTAR would be taken 6 months into the project, following submission of the Feasibility and Definition Study in July 1998. At the time of submitting this report, the project also requested a major budget revision [a probability foreseen in the application, which forms part of the contractual documentation].

Both of these decisions were held over pending the Commission's evaluation, conducted by The Evaluation Partnership in September 1998, and a response by the project to a request for more information sent by the commission in August 1998, to which the Project Management replied immediately.

Although, ISTAR Project Management had significant reservations regarding the evaluation process itself [see more detailed comments in Section 4 below] and responded in some depth, the main recommendations of the evaluators were accepted by ISTAR and action was set in train immediately. Meanwhile, a letter had been sent by the EC on 29 September indicating that the consortium's justification of the budget revision had not been considered sufficient. In November, the consortium learned from

the Commission that the letter had not reached its destination due to a mistake in the address and had been returned to the Commission.

On 21 December 1998, the partners received a letter from the Commission requiring further detailed justification of the case for a budget revision and a request for detailed information before the go-ahead for the operational phase could be given. This information was provided by letter on 11 January 1999.

Timing of the launch of the first ISTAR services according to the project timetable would have been in November 1998. Regional Partners were in fact planning to launch services in January/February 1999. However, the letter giving the Commission's consent to the budget adjustment and to proceed to the operational phase was not received until 27 April 1999 .

During the intervening period it was possible to continue preparation of services, but regional partners were not able to commit to staff contracts, complete equipment purchases etc, without this consent. Services did not therefore become properly operational until May/June 1999.

Project Management therefore applied for a further extension period up to 27 April 2000 to enable the necessary 12 month 'live' piloting of services, envisaged in the contractual documentation. Final confirmation of this approval was received on 30 May 2000. However, Project Management had already taken a decision to continue providing the services and incurring expenditure in the hope that this approval would be received. In the final outcome, the project was therefore completed to its revised schedule.

III Partnership dynamics

3. Partnership dynamics

3.1 Outline of initial partnership

From the outset, a management structure was proposed which would reflect the 'two-tier' partnership arrangements. The first tier reflects the essential and active partnership between the three regional partners (Imathia, Thüringen and WELB) supported and co-ordinated by Essex as lead partner with the responsibility for overall project management. Joint decisions were to be made by the overall Project Management Team, with secretarial support from Essex. In parallel, a Project Technical Working Group was proposed to facilitate common technical solutions.

At the second tier, that is within each participating region, a Regional Management Team was to be assembled, to include participating and contributing partners, together with a parallel Regional Technical Working Group. It was foreseen that some of these regional partners would be Library Authorities, but that other local partners, particularly those with an interest in joint service provision to the proposed client groups would be invited to join these local teams.

It was foreseen from the start that in addition to conventional meetings, which would be necessary for formal project management purposes, it would be essential - because of the large distances involved and the high cost of meetings - to use all available communications technologies (email, fax, telephone) to hold 'virtual meetings' and to sustain a constant flow of information and ideas across all the partners.

On a formal level, the Lead Partners in each region signed a Consortium Agreement with each other (see Annex I).

Draft text (Annex II) for an Agreement between partners was made available as a local resource and formal agreements between ISTAR partners were concluded between ISTAR partners in Imathia and between the Landesfachstelle in Thüringen as Project Manager and each of the seven municipalities in WELB. This was intended to ensure project sustainability and political support.

Much of the planning work of ISTAR was undertaken through Inter-Regional Task Groups consisting of technical specialists from each of the project partners with specific tasks allocated within the overall workplan. Inter-Regional Task Groups were established to deal with:

- Service specification
- Training
- Promotion and publicity
- Monitoring, evaluation and performance measurement

3.2 Steering methods and relationship between 'politicians' and 'technicians'

Although all partner regions had signed up to the initial objectives, there were in the early stages considerable differences about priorities for action, and about how to tackle local project management. These and the method of their resolution were detailed in the Interim Report.

A strong sense of common purpose has evolved and this has led to a continued strong bond between the members of the Project Management Team, who have been able and willing to discuss how they can meet their specific local needs within the overall objectives of the project. In addition to formal meetings, regional partners have held frequent discussions by email with the common resource provider (Essex/EfC) and with each other. Each regional Project Leader, together with local colleagues as appropriate, has been able to visit all the other regional partners to compare different approaches and adopt 'best practice'.

The great value of this integrated style of partnership lay as much in developing institutional awareness as in the adoption of technical solutions. That is to say, those regions which had a weak or traditional model for public library services were encouraged and empowered towards creative change.

Because the project is based on Local Authorities with responsibilities for libraries, the politicians who control those Authorities are necessarily kept informed of progress, budgetary control issues and outcomes. Their support has on the whole been positive and encouraging, not only because the intrinsic value of the ISTAR project has been accepted, but also because of awareness that there is a developing tide in the development of national information policies to steer libraries towards the new role demonstrated by ISTAR.

To achieve the project objectives within the RISI framework and to build credibility at a regional level, it was essential to bring in local partners to create services of mutual benefit. In each region, partners and consultees included local Chambers of Commerce, education and training providers and official employment agencies. In nearly every case, this had a multiplier effect in the addition of services or databases to ISTAR sites accompanied by mutual referral of clients and cross marketing of client groups.

In Northern Ireland, the regional Enterprise Agency brings farmers, SME and other groups to the ISTAR Centre for ICT training. The unusual presence of a prison and an historic Folk Park (with a library and museum) as formal partners in ISTAR illustrates the breadth of potential clients.

Regional partners were asked to liase where possible with other RISI and regional development projects, thus WELB is in active co-operation with the Border Project (based in Derry City Council) and carries that project's web material on ISTAR terminals.

During the period since the Interim Report political support has heightened as the results of ISTAR have become available and its profile has been heightened through publicity and dissemination. 'Politicians' such as a regional MEP from Greece and senior

civil servants from Northern Ireland and Thüringen have lent their support to ISTAR by attending and speaking at ISTAR services launches, the *Something for Everyone* Conference, Copenhagen , October 1999 etc.

Latterly, the announcement by the EU of the *e-Europe* initiative and the *Jobs in the New Knowledge Economy* strategy, most especially the declared target 'to establish public Internet access points plus on-site information society literacy training in all communities e.g. libraries, post offices etc by the end of 2001', has presented ISTAR with the opportunity to demonstrate its forward-looking achievements in the context of a series of seminars in other peripheral regions toward the end of the project period and in the context of its proposed post-project life as a quality assurance and support 'brand' (see below). There is a strong sense that ISTAR is an idea whose time has come at the political level. It is the intention of the project partners to exploit the results of ISTAR in the light of this.

3.3   Monitoring tools used: description and qualitative evaluation

The requirement for thorough evaluation of this pilot was recognised in the attention devoted to the subject in the project workplan (WP8). The requirement to adopt or develop appropriate monitoring tools was also emphasised in the findings of the Feasibility and Definition study. Essex was in a strong position to mobilise expertise in the application of performance indicators. The tools were developed by an inter-regional team. Project-level and regional workshops were been to train staff in the application of these tools.

The full scheme of evaluative and performance measurement used to monitor activity in each region, included:

- Statistics - to assess take-up e.g. number of users, of training courses, sites hosted etc.
- Case studies – e.g. to demonstrate skills improvement
- Surveys (questionnaires) – e.g. to test ease of use, skills improvement, impact on users
- Focus Groups – to test user reaction in more depth

Counting and diary systems were instituted from the operational launch of services. Baseline surveys were carried out in each region in the early period of service provision. This was followed up by exit surveys which enabled sample-based comparison of results 'before and after' ISTAR services.

With regard to the contribution of ISTAR to the overall objectives of RISI2, the Project Management Team gained a better understanding of the issues which concern the Commission as a result of attending the RISI2 seminar in Iraklion, during November 1998. It was explained that RISI II projects would be evaluated against the four pillars of employability, entrepreneurship, adaptability and equality of opportunity. In designing and implementing the evaluation scheme, ISTAR has sought to address questions such as the impact of the project on:

- the skills gap
- the labour force
- the economy
- local companies
- the number of people with new skills - and what skills these are
- how these are related to the local economic strategy/skills gaps etc
- the number of trainees who get jobs and/or the impact of the project on keeping companies competitive and preventing unemployment
- whether social partners were involved in the process
- whether there was any change in attitude by the labour force (e.g. more willing to develop skills; more willing to take part in training/lifelong learning)
- equality of opportunities
- use of ICT by end users/partners
- awareness of ICT by end users/partners
- new revised/business practices
- better private/public co-operation
- how the project contributed to changing cultures [e.g. case studies, success stories]
- how the project contributed to regional economic development e.g. through other business support strategies (training/advice etc); public information strategy; education strategy

This common, inter-regional approach has enabled ISTAR to identify generic elements which are common to all regions, what learning can be shared and what is different in each region.

IV.   PROGRESS and ACHIEVEMENTS

4.1   Presentation of actions undertaken in relation to objectives

Overall, there were comparatively few major variations between the workplan and the operations undertaken. The central objectives and the means of their achievement were largely unchanged. However, in the Feasibility and Definition phase, a number of significant issues became evident which required some degree of re-orientation.

First and foremost, there was a strong perception that the successful impact of ISTAR Networks in delivering ICT based training and awareness services depended in large measure upon the identification, deployment/ recruitment and training of a **sufficient and adequately trained staff resource** to provide a good service to users at the Network access points. This entailed increased resources being devoted to their recruitment and training.

The project considered and implemented various methods of ensuring the basic level of competence of ISTAR staff engaged in service delivery within the period of the project both in ICT and as trainers and providers of support services to the public. Each region developed a Training Action Plan. This was based on an audit of competences in each region. The tools and templates for this work were appended to the Interim Report.

For the long-term sustainability of ISTAR-services, a scheme such as the European Computer Driving License (ECDL) which is competency based and offers accreditation, appeared to offer the most promising route. Staff in WELB began to receive training toward this qualification during the project period. It is now also the basis of staff training specified within the NOF provisions in the United Kingdom. Thüringen has now established plans to provide ECDL training for its staff. There is no ECDL franchise in Greece, but distance learning options are being considered.

This also raised the question whether ISTAR Networks themselves should be offering services to the public leading to ECDL. The options available include:

- ISTAR centers and nodes could be accredited to deliver training for the ECDL qualification in themselves [perhaps beginning with certain modules];

- ISTAR centers and nodes should focus mainly on introductory, awareness and 1:1 problem solving modes and should enter alliance with other public and private sector training providers, directing those wishing to obtain ECDL to them, perhaps providing 'open learning' workstation and facilities in support

One possible corollary of the second option is that other training providers could become members of a regional ISTAR network.

This series of issues regarding staff and user training were considered in depth during the later part of the project and the solution has been defined in the context of the post-project 'roll-out' of ISTAR services. Whilst no ISTAR service formally offered training to

ECDL syllabus during the project, discussions have now commenced with ECDL regarding the establishment of a formal link and of ISTAR in promoting, providing access and delivering ECDL services. Discussions are also underway with a number of other training resource and qualification providers, in order that a range of approaches, suited to national and service related objectives can be made available through ISTAR..

It was also apparent that it is not possible to remedy deficiencies in the **regional telecommunications infrastructure** at the macro level through a project of this size. The emphasis needed therefore to be on the institutional technical infrastructure of the partner organisations and networking between them. Furthermore, the technology applications required were mainly existing 'basic' standards in wide use. The hardware to support them was also to some extent already in place, both with the main project partners - but significantly also with the regional partners identified in the definition phase.

One specific key change was the omission in each region of the (joint) most expensive single item on the original sample list: a satellite channel rental, which alone would have accounted for 195,000 Euro of the project's equipment costs, between the regions. It was also decided to purchase rather than lease equipment in all three regions.

These outcomes all reflected the fact that in the proposal which formed part of the contractual documentation, equipment costs were estimated on a speculative basis, using assumptions about hardware requirements which were not, two years later, entirely verified. See page 6 of the Contract TA, item 7 which reads:

'*Costings for all equipment are estimated on the basis that it will be leased. See the sample list which follows [not appended here]. The equipment cost estimates will be subject to review and amendment during the feasibility study'.*

For these reasons, it was decided after the Feasibility and Definition Study, that a comparatively major re-alignment of the budget was required to meet the project's objectives and that the main transfer required was from expenditure on equipment to staff and costs.

The second important cause of some reorientation was the evaluation of the project which the Commission instigated in September 1998. The project's response to and action on these points is detailed in the Interim Report submitted in October 1999.

These conclusions were reinforced as the project proceeded and a second major revision was requested and agreed toward the end of the project. Following this budget revision, the overall amount of the budget remained within the contracted ceiling, although actual expenditure on the project by all partners was somewhat higher than the claimable amount. Price rises and inflation in the period since the proposal was written, some 4-5 years ago, were a contributory factor, but the main purpose of adjustment was to take into account some of the real outcomes of expenditure on the project, in pursuit of its stated objectives.

The overall effect was a further transfer of funding out of the equipment category into the other cost categories. Whilst the total amount spent on equipment by the regional partners approached the amount specified in the existing budget, this equipment had all been purchased rather than leased and the rules on depreciation within the project period prevented a higher proportion of this expenditure being claimed.

Transfers were requested into the following categories:

Studies and expert reports: to meet the substantial extra costs incurred in the dissemination phase, especially those of researching, compiling and packaging ISTAR outputs and results for wider exploitation post-project.

Staff costs: to meet somewhat higher than expected staff costs at public service points in each region during the 12-month operational phase and in providing effective project management, co-ordination, monitoring and evaluation during the same period.

Mission expenditure to meet additional expenditure on the organisation of an inter-regional seminar for operational staff in Imathia during April 2000, in support of a Project Management Committee decision to deepen the level of inter-regional contact and shared learning and travel to management meetings, seminars in Portugal, Brussels and advisory visits

Promotion and publications: to meet the design and production costs of the enhanced ISTAR 'package' and website as described at a meeting with DG EMPLL officials on 31 March in Brussels, again to ensure Europe-wide access to and exploitation of its results.

General expenditure: to meet higher than predicted utility and telecommunications costs in all three application regions during the operational period, in consequence of heavily increased demand for ISTAR services during the second six months of the pilot service operational period

'Other' costs from unexpected costs of licenses to use training materials in the delivery of ISTAR services.

A net transfer into the Essex budget reflected the agreed need to centralise for the benefit of the project the contracting of certain aspects of the work

The effect across all project partners is summarised in the table below [figures rounded to the nearest Keuro].

Cost Category	First revision: difference from initial budget	Second revision: difference from initial budget
1. Study and experts' reports	+25000	+85875
2. Staff costs	+145000	+56297
3. Mission expenditure (travel and subsistence costs)	+16000	+37873
4. General expenditure	+33000	+35200
5. Promotion and publications	+5000	+35885
6. Meetings, conferences and seminars	0	+1000
7. Expenditure on equipment	-224000	-262162
8. Other	0	+10000

4.2 Evaluation of results obtained in relation to expected objectives

The following table gives the project's assessment of its results in relation to those expected [see Outline of Work Programme in Section 1]

R1.1 detailed identification of the driving economic sectors of each region	Incorporated in Feasibility and Definition Study [Section 1.1]
R1.2 detailed specification of the needs of SME and individual workers	Incorporated in Feasibility and Definition Study [Section 1.4 to 1.6]
R1.3 assessment of the extent of ability of current networks and services (public libraries and other agencies) to supply those needs;	Incorporated in Feasibility and Definition Study [Section 1.7 to 1.11]
R1.4 identification and assessment of those agencies with a possible role to play in ISTAR network development, including potential role of the private sector	Incorporated in Feasibility and Definition Study [Section 1.9, 2.6, 3.5]
R1.5 assessment of technological conditions and environment in the region	Incorporated in Feasibility and Definition Study [Section 1.11,2.8,3.9]
R1.6 assessment of affordability and price/subsidy requirements in the light of regional economic conditions	Incorporated in Feasibility and Definition Study [Section 2.11]; aspect of Service Specification within workplan; aspect of business/marketing planning within workplan
R1.7 assessment of service financial viability, taking into account cost-recovery opportunities etc	Incorporated in Feasibility and Definition Study [Section 1.7, 2.11]; aspect of Service Specification; aspect of business/marketing planning.
R1.8 evaluation of the opportunities, risks and costs in each region for technological and service development in the period of the pilot application	Incorporated in Feasibility and Definition Study [Section 3]; aspect of business/marketing planning within workplan
R1.9 initial assessment of the potential for transferability within Europe	Seen as high in the Feasibility and Definition Study - has now grown in the context of *Jobs in the New Knowledge Economy* and take-up of similar ideas in a number of European countries.
R1.10 detailed specification of the objectives for the pilot application in each region with evaluation criteria (see Workpackage 8).	See Feasibility and Definition Study [section 3.2] ; aspect of Service Specifications; extensive monitoring and evaluation programme specified in WP8.
R2.1 definition of a common specification format	Provided by Essex and used by regions.

R2.2 production of a fully-costed technical specification for the development of an ISTAR Network in each region including: staff; equipment; communications and interface standards, relevant electronic products and services, software, telecommunications and other equipment subscription costs, running costs, cost-recovery mechanisms and levels for the period of the pilot application	Service Specification provided; costed equipment lists were also produced.
R2.3 evaluation of specifications by project management	Took place November-January 1999.
R3.1 definition of the minimum essential level of contractual agreement required between the various agencies, services and suppliers, public and private sector, involved in ISTAR Networks in each region	Imathia obtained written agreements with ISTAR partners, including financial aspects. WELB is the overarching organisation responsible for libraries and education in its region and therefore incorporates many of the partners. Arrangements with the Folk Park and prison remain informal. Thüringen ISTAR centres are municipally-owned public libraries. Co-operation agreement signed between Landesfachstelle and Municipal partners. Other arrangements e.g. with job centres, remain informal.
R3.2 negotiation of agreements and contracting where necessary for the period of the pilot application.	With equipment suppliers, Internet Service providers etc - took place in all regions.
R4.1 procurement of goods and services for establishment of ISTAR Networks	Approximately 80% of the equipment envisaged (by value) was procured in the period January-August 1990, the remainder during the later project period.
R4.2 installation and testing of technology-based services	Equipment for basic training and information services [PCs, networks] was installed and tested in all regions. A major new Intranet and an automated library system was installed in Imathia.
R5.1 identification and appointment of staff of ISTAR Network centres and nodes	Completed in the period February-July 1999: Imathia appointed 2 new operational staff and redeployed a future 10 across its Centre and nodes. WELB appointed 4 new operational staff for ISTAR services at each branch; otherwise integrating ISTAR work ordinary staff duties and calling upon technical support from its existing Computer Services Department.

	Thüringen appointed 4 new operational staff and redeployed 23 operational.
R5.2 training of staff to specified level of competence in operation of services, use of technologies in ISTAR Centres etc	Regional Training Action Plans were produced.

WELB and Thüringen staff were mainly given basic ICT training through facilities available within their region. Essex provided workshop and consultancy based training for staff in Imathia, where few regional facilities were available.

European Computer Driving License (ECDL) was identified as a benchmark qualification for ISTAR staff. Arrangements were made to move towards this level of qualification and to provide ISTAR staff with training skills. |
R6.1 large scale promotional exercise to establish awareness among businesses, individuals etc available through ISTAR Networks, using for example local radio, tv, press and networks in addition to mailshots, posters, promotion at events etc as appropriate	Media campaigns were mounted in each region since the beginning of the project. A registry of media coverage was maintained by the project. Press launches were been mounted in Thüringen and WELB. The Greek Minister of Education opened the services in Imathia. Each region produced and distributed to the target audience extensive publicity materials for ISTAR services, using a basic design theme produced by Essex/EfC. Signing giving prominence to the ISTAR 'brand' is in use in all centres and nodes.
R7.1 full operation of the specified ISTAR services in each region, including user training programmes	First services went operational in May/June 1999 - a few basic services were opened in Thüringen, earlier. Initial services were mainly: Introductory Training; awareness raising; taster sessions, workstation access; Internet access and one-to-one problem solving. In Imathia a regional web gateway and web design facilities for the wine industry and business has been established. Initial demand/take-up of most services was high.
R8.1 evaluation of the internal effectiveness of specific tasks and stages of the project (e.g. see provision under WP 2 and 5)	Monitoring visits to each region were made by an inter-regional team drawn from members of the Project Management Committee during the project's duration. Each visit provided a report for consideration by the next meeting of the PMC
R8.2 evaluation and measurement of the impact and outcomes of ISTAR Networks on the target user groups	An extensive programme of performance indicators, evaluation instruments and supporting data collection instruments was designed and implemented. Its results are incorporated in this report *under Take-up and Impact* (below).
R8.3 implementation of mechanisms	At the management level, this was achieved through

for inter-regional comparison and learning;	inter-regional meetings and information sharing. A programme of exchanges and a workshop for operational level staff, intended to facilitate the exchange of experiences, was implemented in 2000, culminating in an inter-regional staff workshop held in Imathia during March 2000. Results of performance measurement and monitoring exercises in each region were used as a learning tool by those from other regions.
R8.4 full assessment for transferability across Europe.	There is now a very promising climate for the transferability of the ISTAR model and the learning from the pilot. Public libraries throughout Europe are beginning to seek institutional transformation in order to tie in with national and regional 'lifelong learning', democracy and citizenship and economic regeneration agendas and policies. Many of these developments require cross-sectoral and cross-domain institutional alliances such as those developed within ISTAR. Significant developments have taken place in some countries [e.g. New Library: The peoples' Network and University for Industry in the UK]. Following discussions with the Commission, the ISTAR consortium has decide to sustain the ISTAR brand as a not-for-profit company in support of the strategy for *Jobs in the New Knowledge Economy*. It is hoped that this will play an important role post-project in supplying quality assurance, support and accreditation structures across Europe, especially its peripheral regions.
R9.1 generation of widespread interest matched by facilities to provide information electronically	ISTAR generated widespread interest within European public libraries and their sponsoring Ministries and local government through participation in major conferences such as the EC PubliCA *Something for Everyone* event (Copenhagen, October 1999), Libraries Without Walls (Lesvos, September 1999) and its own seminars (see R9.2). It has updated its web site to include the evaluated results of the project and is publicising these results through direct contact and by a programme of publication in national, local and professional press.
R9.2 3 conferences with significant European key actor participation	A series of successful cross-sectoral seminars was held in Levi (Northern Finland), Oeiras (Portugal) and Malahide (Ireland) during March/April 2000. These were targeted at the range of ISTAR interest groups (SMEs, distance learners, teleworkers) as well as the public library community.

R9.3 arrangements for ISTAR network site visits by key actors from other European regions, mainly post-project	Expressions of interest in representing the ISTAR brand 'post-project' have been received from Finland, Italy, and Portugal [in addition to Germany, Greece and Northern Ireland, the thee partner countries], in addition to a number of associate member (Hungary, Romania) and other European countries (Albania, Croatia, Russia, Ukraine) have expressed interest. It is expected that site visits will play a part in the training and briefing process for these representatives and their 'customers'.
R10.1 integrated inter-regional team-based approach to project management and activity	Successfully established - a major sustaining factor of the project.
R10.2 verifiable project accounting and payments system	Established and functioning effectively
R10.3 reporting and submission of deliverables to the Commission in line with its requirements	Reports delivered up to date at time of writing. Some delays have occurred in submission of Regular Activity /MTBC owing to delays in submission of regional cost claims.

Services introduced
The following is an outline list of services introduced during the period of the ISTAR project.

A Awareness Raising

1.Computer Awareness Sessions
Imathia
Thüringen
WELB

Brief Description Short taster sessions (45-60 minutes), basic operations e.g. using the keyboard and the mouse, basic introduction to applications. Support on a one-to-one basis or in small groups, maximum size 4.
Objectives of service To provide local, easily accessible opportunities for members of the public to achieve a basic level of literacy in computer operation and raise awareness of computer applications

2. Office packages - awareness sessions
Imathia
Thüringen
WELB

Brief Description Short taster sessions (45-60 minutes), basic introduction to applications. Support on a one-to-one basis or in small groups, maximum size 4.
Objectives of service To make individuals and SME aware of the potential usefulness and the variety of packages available, and to provide opportunities for them to achieve a basic level of literacy in computer applications.

3. Internet Taster Sessions
Imathia
Thüringen
WELB

Brief Description Short sessions (45-60 minutes) using a Web Browser and emailer. Support on a one-to-one basis or in small groups, maximum size 4.
Objectives of service To raise awareness about the range of services available on the Internet.

1. Electronic Imaging Awareness
Imathia
Thüringen
WELB
Brief Description Short sessions (45-60 minutes) demonstrating the principles and practice of scanning images and OCR.
Objectives of service To raise awareness about the possibilities of using ICT to record, process and publish images

B Commercial Services

5. Use of Workstations.
WELB
Imathia
Thüringen

Brief Description Includes individual use of workstations for all purposes including internet café [including email], use of office software, access to independent and open learning resources etc. In most cases this will be a charged service but there will be exceptions at partners' discretion.
Objectives of service To provide local, easily accessible opportunities for members of the public to practise their information retrieval skills in an ICT environment

6. WEB site hosting
Imathia

Type of service Commercial [free in Veria]
Brief Description Rental of space on the central server
Objectives of service To provide individuals, community groups and SME with an opportunity to put into practice their training in Web site design and construction

7. Video Conferencing
Imathia
WELB

Brief Description Simple in-screen video, with shared white-boards
Objectives of service To provide the public with a means of communicating face-to-face with correspondents within the area and world-wide

8. Electronic Image Capture/Processing
Thüringen
WELB
Brief Description Scanning text and images at the request of the public and transforming them into electronic images for inclusion in the customer's documents
Objectives of service To utilise imaging equipment.

C Information Provision

9. Access to Business Information
Imathia
Thüringen

Brief Description Extension of information services to all ISTAR nodes
Objectives of service To provide local branch access for individuals and SME to information sources. To provide guidance and support to users in the retrieval of relevant information to assist them in the development of business opportunities. Construction of Business Information Web site

10. Access to Partners' databases/catalogues
Imathia
Thüringen
WELB

Brief Description Use of ISTAR resources as communication links to existing databases and catalogues other than normal web browsing.
Objectives of service To provide local access to the data bases and catalogues of other bodies to facilitate personal research. To distribute research from partners' databases, e.g. UAFP Emigration Database (WELB)

11. Access to specific information
Thüringen

Objectives of service *(brief description)* Provide special CD-ROMs through central server for all participating libraries and cooperating institutions; provide guidance and support to researching users; research and answer specific enquiries; presentation of hyperlinks on library homepage

D Training Packages

12. Training in specific office applications
Thüringen
WELB

Brief Description Formal courses - up to 6 trainees at a time
Objectives of service To identify and provide entry level training opportunities in the use of office applications

13. E-Mail Training
Imathia
WELB

Brief Description Formal sessions, no more than 12 users, 2 per machine
Objectives of service To raise awareness of e-mail as a communications tool
To extend the use of e-mail as a communications tool within libraries
To impart email skills to library users

14. WEB site design
WELB

Brief Description Formal sessions, no more than 12 users, 2 per machine
Objectives of service To raise awareness of web as a business tool
To extend the use of web by SME
To impart WEB design skills to library users

15. Self Tutored Core Skills
WELB

Brief Description Packaged, self-paced, tutorials for individuals
Objectives of service To allow users to learn about and practise core ICT skills

16. Effective website searching and evaluation
Imathia
Thüringen

Brief description Formal courses - up to 6 trainees at a time
Objectives of service Introduction to Web. To provide to Internet users a set of useful guidelines that will assist them in fast effective and relevant topic search and evaluate the Web sites visited.

Take-up and impact

Summary

The following is a report on the overall performance of within the project up to 27 April 2000, when the project ended. The framework for performance measurement within the project is the document agreed between the partners at a workshop held in April 1999 when it was agreed to use the following tools:
- Monitoring visits
- A baseline user questionnaire
- "Diaries" leading to statistical reports
- Case studies
- Focus groups
- A final questionnaire
-
All three regions contributed data:

The <u>case studies</u> show that ISTAR
- Helped people find work.
- Improved their skills.
- Strengthened families and friendships.
- Improved confidence.
- Improved social cohesion.
- Helped people at work.

The <u>focus groups</u>
- Supported the work of the project.
- Demonstrated that it had met its objectives.
- Made some valid suggestions for improvements.
- Overwhelmingly supported ISTAR's continuation.

The <u>exit survey</u> demonstrated that ISTAR
- Continued to reach its chosen targets groups.
- Achieved high satisfaction ratings for its services.
- Improved the skills of its users.
- Was successful in helping people find work.
- Was useful for business purposes.
- Encouraged people to learn more about computers and to use them more.
- Provided people with valuable information.

The statistical reports show that ISTAR services
- Continue to draw in customers and to grow at a rapid rate.

ISTAR services will continue in all 3 even though the project has officially ended.

Case studies

The purpose of the case studies was to provide evidence of the effects of the ISTAR services on individuals in the main target groups in a way which has impact at the human level. In all, the partners compiled 44 case studies, a sample of which are summarised at Annex III.

Focus Groups

A total of 6 focus group sessions were conducted in the partner libraries of the 3 regions. They aimed to cover groups which were important targets of the ISTAR project but for which it would not have been possible to obtain representative samples for a questionnaire action. The following is a summary of the main points which arose.

All groups liked the relative informality of ISTAR services which allowed them to try things out without making a big commitment of time or money. They liked the idea that ISTAR made these technologies accessible to everyone in the community.

Independent Learners
- Independent learners saw the ISTAR services as a logical extension to and modernisation of traditional library services.
- As library services have traditionally been free of charge, they thought ISTAR services should also be free.
- They liked the opportunity to experiment free of charge in ISTAR access points.
- For those without Internet access at home, ISTAR services made distance learning courses a practical possibility.
- In some respects, the ISTAR services were more convenient to use than those elsewhere [school, college etc.]
- Free use of ISTAR services was vital for groups which might otherwise be excluded [poor people, unemployed people etc.]
- BUT the access points needed to be open longer hours.

ISTAR Staff
- The ISTAR project improved public perception of libraries and drew in more clients.
- Staff skills in IT were enormously improved by the project.
- The dynamic nature of the IT scene made staff and management recognise a need for a constant updating of skills through training programmes and for new skills altogether.
- Some aspects of hardware and software and service delivery could have been better managed [e.g., there needs to be at least one "instant access" PC in each access point].
- A separate training room would have been an advantage in the German libraries [these were available in Northern Ireland and Greece].
- ISTAR provides an opportunity to reach certain client groups effectively [e.g. schoolchildren, local officials, unemployed people, older people].
- More could have been done to provide websites for libraries and others.
- Training programmes need to be extended and improved.
- Above all, all ISTAR services have been a success and should be continued.

Representatives of small businesses
- ISTAR has improved their perception of the value of the library.
- The library can play a key role in heightening perception in the community about the value and use of ICT.
- ISTAR in the library helps reduce workers' fears of new technology and can be a key resource for job-seekers and those seeking to develop new skills, leading to economic benefit for the whole community.
- ISTAR had improved their surfing skills and allowed them to make more productive use of the Internet.
- ISTAR had also refined their perceptions of the value and possibilities of e-commerce and caused them to progress such developments in their companies more rapidly than they would otherwise have done.
- ISTAR had also enhanced the value of traditional library services [e.g. inter-library loans.]
- The business websites created by ISTAR were thought to be of good quality but they had not been effectively submitted to the major search engines.
- For very small businesses, ISTAR provides crucial support in the early stages of their IT development.
- BUT the success of ISTAR was sometimes a problem [too much noise, not enough machines, need for an "instant access" machine].
- Inability to use services charged for on the net is a problem.
- ISTAR Networks could do more to provide specialised portals.
- Need for longer opening hours.

Unemployed people
- Provision of ISTAR services had changed their perceptions of the library and enhanced its value to them.
- ISTAR services had helped improve their IT skills.
- Familiarity with email and the Internet had radically changed their perceptions of what was possible and widened their horizons.
- ISTAR services provide an excellent opportunity for some groups to people to have a free and unthreatening encounter with ICT.

3. Comparison of final and baseline surveys

The 3 regions conducted baseline surveys on a rolling basis from the time they began to offer ISTAR services, which began to be available from March 1999. The structure of the survey was designed to explore the demographics and ICT skills of ISTAR customers at the very outset of their connection with ISTAR services. Clients were invited to complete questionnaires and most were happy to do so. These results were typical of ISTAR clients at the outset. It is not possible to identify representatives of small business by this method and the effects on these are explored through the focus groups and case studies described elsewhere in this report.

 This **baseline survey** was followed up with an **exit survey** at the end of the project which asked additional questions. In this report, the results of the 2 surveys are compared. It should be noted that the exit survey was not administered to the same people as the baseline survey.

Questionnaires completed

Table 1a: Baseline			
Imathia	Thüringen	WELB	Total
496	468	500	1468

Questionnaires completed

Table 1b: Exit survey			
Imathia	Thüringen	WELB	Total
195	312	500	1007

Demographics
Women as % of respondents

Table 2a Baseline			
Imathia	Thüringen	WELB	Total
66.3	54.9	54.2	58.5

Demographics
Women as % of respondents

Table 2b Exit survey			
Imathia	Thüringen	WELB	Total
65.1	54.6	51.8	57.1

This shows that Imathia was most successful at attracting women but that all regions succeeded in attracting significantly more women than men in both surveys. This will partly be as a result of targetted marketing and partly because public libraries normally attract more women than men and are a particularly good means of targetting this group.

Employment status

Table 3a Baseline	Imathia	Thüringen	WELB	Total
Self employed	45	8	26	79 [5.4%]
Employed	122	109	180	411 [28.2%]
Seeking work	229	41	85	355 [24.4%]
Looking after home	21	5	76	102 [7%]
Retired	3	14	63	80 [5.5%]
Students	76	283	70	429 [29.5%]
Total	496	460	500	1456

Employment status

Table 3b Exit survey	Imathia	Thüringen	WELB	Total
Self employed	9	12	26	47 [4.7%]
Employed	64	73	176	313 [31.3%]
Seeking work	79	42	93	214 [21.4%]
Looking after home	17	10	84	111 [11.1%]
Retired	12	10	71	93 [9.3%]
Students	14	165	44	213 [21.3%]
Total	195	312	494	1001

This table shows that, in the baseline survey, job seekers constituted 24.4% of people planning to use Istar services and that self employed people were another 5.4%. In the exit survey the figures were 21.4% and 4.7%, a slight fall. Once again, Imathia was most successful in attracting these groups but the numbers from the other regions are by no means negligible given the different circumstances. These figures show that although public libraries are by their nature open and available to all, they can, with proper marketing and liaison with other agencies, successfully attract specific types of users.

Age

Table 4a Baseline	Imathia	Thüringen	WELB	Total
Under 14	0	28	0	28 [0.2%]
15-19	58	187	57	302 [21%]
20-24	106	78	78	262 [18.3%]
25-34	245	57	102	404 [28.2%]
35-44	59	35	131	225 [15.7%]
45-54	28	30	65	123 [8.6%]
55-64	0	17	42	59 [4.1%]
65-74	0	7	25	32[2.2%]
75 or more	0	0	0	0 [0%]
Total	496	439	500	1434

Age

Table 4b Exit survey	Imathia	Thüringen	WELB	Total
Under 14	0	20	0	20 [0.2%]
15-19	5	141	33	179 [17.9%]
20-24	58	45	81	184 [18.4%]
25-34	77	32	104	213 [21.3%]
35-44	41	30	137	208 [20.8%]
45-54	13	29	68	110 [10.1%]
55-64	0	8	45	53 [5.3%]
65-74	0	6	29	35 [3.5%]
75 or more	1	1	3	5 [0%]
Total	195	312	500	1007

The age distribution peaks at 25-34 in both surveys, thought this is less pronounced in the exit survey. Only Thüringen and WELB encouraged schoolchildren to use ISTAR services. The numbers tail off sharply above age 55 in both surveys, possibly because this age group was uncommon in the groups targeted by ISTAR. However, anecdotal evidence from all regions indicated that this group, if attracted to use the service, found it useful and interesting.

Use of computers
Never used a computer at home

Table 5a Baseline			
Imathia	Thüringen	WELB	Total
328 [66.1%]	38 [8.1%]	287 [57.4%]	653 [44.5%]

Table 5b Exit survey			
Imathia	Thüringen	WELB	Total
123 [63%]	42 [13.5%]	284 [56.8%]	449 [44.6%]

This metric was little changed between the 2 surveys except in Germany, perhaps reflecting the rapidity with which Germany was beginning to catch up in this area in the last year.

Never used a computer at work

Table 6a Baseline			
Imathia	Thüringen	WELB	Total
340 [68.5%]	157 [33.5]	250 [50%]	747 [50.9%]

Table 6b Exit survey			
Imathia	Thüringen	WELB	Total
105 [53.8%]	133 [42.6%]	224 [44.8%]	462 [45.9%]

This metric was down overall, as may be expected with the passage of time as ICT becomes more pervasive in the workplace. Germany was the exception, perhaps because of the change in the age structure of the 2 samples [more pre-work and older people in the exit survey].

Never used a computer on a course

Table 7a Baseline			
Imathia	Thüringen	WELB	Total
315 [63.5%]	71 [15.2%]	158 [31.6%]	544 [37%]

Table 7b Exit survey			
Imathia	Thüringen	WELB	Total
110 [56.4%]	71 [22.8%]	202 [40.4%]	383 [38%]

Tables 5-7 showed that both Imathia and WELB were very successful in attracting people who had never used a computer before. The lower figures for Germany are to some extent explained by the incidence of younger people in their sample. These findings are confirmed by the skills levels demonstrated in the next table.

Skills [summary]
People who had not previously used the following applications

Table 8a Baseline	Imathia	Thüringen	WELB	Total
Word processing	305	23	130	458 [31.5%]
Spreadsheet	381	113	234	728 [50%]
Email	406	135	257	798 [54.8%]
Internet	368	89	234	958 [65.8%]
CD Rom	361	65	267	693 [47.6%]

Table 8b Exit survey	Imathia	Thüringen	WELB	Total
Word processing	63	26	27	116 [11.5%]
Spreadsheet	100	71	135	306 [30.4%]
Email	76	70	126	272 [27%]
Internet	82	13	99	194 [19.3%]
CD Rom	103	42	166	309 [30.7%]

Baseline survey: Overall the Istar regions were very successful in attracting clients who were complete beginners in one or more key applications. Once again the figures from Imathia are outstanding where at least 67% of clients had no knowledge of word-processing, ranging up to more than 80% for email. This was probably partly due to very focussed and energetic marketing, which benefited from the high profile opening of

a major new building but also partly to the relatively slow penetration of these technologies into education and business in this region. Email was the least familiar application in 2 regions but was topped by spreadsheets in Welb. Spreadsheets came second in the other two regions. Familiarity with the internet was third in two regions. Overall, taking all three regions together, Internet was the least familiar application, closely followed by email, spreadsheets and CDRoms.

In the exit survey, familiarity with the applications has increased substantially across the whole range by 20% or more. Whereas on average at the beginning of the project 49.9% of respondents were unfamiliar with all applications, by the end the number has fallen to 23.8%, a fall of more than half!

Skills [in more detail]
Numbers of people who could NOT

Table 9a Baseline	Imathia	Thüringen	WELB	Total
Start the computer	114	2	66	182 [12.5%]
Use the keyboard	103	0	83	186 [12.8%]
Use the mouse	111	5	80	196 [13.5%]
Create a file	187	37	71	295 [20.3%]
Save a document	180	14	75	269 [18.5%]
Close a window	161	9	55	225 [15.5%]
Format a disk	255	33	175	463 [31.8%]
Print a document	188	13	93	294 [20.3%]
Shut down correctly	164	20	83	267 [18.3%]

Table 9b Exit survey	Imathia	Thüringen	WELB	Total
Start the computer	15	0	33	48 [0.5%]
Use the keyboard	10	0	21	31 [0.3%]
Use the mouse	10	0	23	33 [0.3%]
Create a file	37	18	52	107 [10.6%]
Save a document	42	13	58	113 [11.2%]
Close a window	30	10	19	59 [5.8%]
Format a disk	76	20	116	212 [21%]
Print a document	39	5	12	56 [5.6%]
Shut down correctly	40	10	25	75 [7.5%]

Table 9 shows that substantial numbers of Istar clients lacked even very basic competences at the time of the baseline survey. Once again, skills levels were lowest in Imathia and highest in Thüringen. By the time of the exit survey, an average 7% of

respondents could do none of these things contrasted with 18.2% in the baseline survey. Formatting a disk gave most trouble to both groups of respondents – one wonders if it got left out of the ISTAR programmes?

Ratings for services.

No questions were asked about this in the baseline survey because it was expected to be completed by people who had not yet used the service. The results below come from the exit survey.

Summary of satisfaction ratings [all services combined]

Table 10	Imathia	Thüringen	WELB	Total
No. of respondents	1050	1073	2519	4642
Overall % rating services "good"	87	81.8	72.1	77.7
Overall % rating services "neither poor nor good"	5.1	14.4	22.5	16.7
Overall % rating services "poor"	7.8	3.7	5.4	5.5

Overall, 77.7% of respondents rated the services good and 5.5% rated them poor. Imathia, with the highest percentage of "good" also has the highest rating for "poor". Local managers are reflecting on the changes needed. Given that clients started from different levels and with different learning goals, these figures are creditable.

Table 11**: Satisfaction ratings in detail [numbers of respondents]**

Name of service	Tick if used			Good			Neither good nor poor			Poor		
Awareness Raising Services	**I**	**W**	**T**	**I**	**W**	**T**	**I**	**W**	**T**	**I**	**W**	**T**
1.Computer Awareness Sessions	185	290	146	175	199	124	5	81	18	5	10	4
2. Office packages - awareness sessions	174	279	111	168	203	85	1	70	18	5	6	8
3. Internet Taster Sessions	142	346	145	101	286	131	18	54	14	23	6	0
4. Electronic Imaging Awareness Sessions	0	68	75	0	27	51	0	14	17	0	27	7
5. Use of Workstations	97	229	72	85	198	56	5	22	10	7	9	6
6. WEB site hosting	71	0	0	57	0	0	7	0	0	7	0	0
7. Video Conferencing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8. Electronic image capture	0	87	55	0	7	42	0	31	7	0	49	6
Information Provision												
9. Access to Business Information	64	118	66	51	45	54	6	66	9	7	7	3
10. Access to Partners' databases/catalogues	75	0	55	61	0	48	4	0	7	10	0	0
11. Access to specific information provided by on CDRoms or Web	0	246	42	0	182	34	0	64	8	0	0	0

Training Packages												
12. Training in specific office applications	101	339	77	91	224	65	2	109	9	8	**7**	3
13. E-Mail Training	71	348	108	61	318	99	4	30	7	6	0	2
14. WEB site design	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15. Self Tutored Core Skills [using computerised learning packages]	0	36	0	0	24	0	0	7	0	0	5	0
16. Effective website searching and evaluation	70	133	121	64	104	89	2	19	31	4	10	1
Totals	1050	2519	1073	914	1817	878	54	567	155	82	136	40

Table 12**: Did you or a member of your family as a result of the ISTAR project [numbers of respondents]:**

	Imathia	WELB	Thüringen	Total
Go on a formal computer training course?	15	187	60	262 [26%]
Find a job?	13	15	37	65 [6.5%]
Obtain valuable information?	124	278	160	562 [56%]
Buy a PC or software?	44	98	63	205 [20%]
Total	196	578	320	1094

Table 13 is very satisfactory in terms of the original objectives of the ISTAR project. 6.5% of respondents claim that they or a member of their family found a job as a result of the project. In Thüringen, 11.8% of respondents make this assertion**.** 20% bought computer equipment and 26% went on a formal computer training course. More than half obtained information which they considered valuable.

Table 13: **What were your primary reasons for using ISTAR services [numbers of respondents]?**

	Imathia	WELB	Thüringen	Total
Business related?	20 [6.4%]	79 [15.8%]	68 [21.8%]	167 [16.6%]
Education related?	81	163	117	361 [35.8%]
Personal interest?	165	246	147	558 [55.4%]
Family related?	23	115	41	179 [17.8%]
Total	289	603	373	1265

Percentages in this table relate to total respondents [1007]. They total more than 100 because respondents could tick more than one box. Given the demographics of ISTAR shown in table 3b, namely that only 35% of respondents were employed or self employed, the fact that 16.6% of respondents used ISTAR for business-related purposes means that 47.4% of all employed and self-employed respondents made business-related use of ISTAR. This is a very significant finding for ISTAR and for public libraries in general though the result varies between regions in a way not accounted for by demographics.

4. Statistics of use

All partners agreed to keep the same statistical information in the same format. Whereas all regions have a breakdown by month and by service point which is used for monitoring purposes, it is more practical here to concentrate on the overall results over the period, broken down by region. It should be remembered that:

- ISTAR services were introduced at different times in different regions and even at different service points within regions according to local operational and financial circumstances.
- The characteristics of the regions differ – settlements in Imathia, for example are small as are total catchment populations.
- The number and characteristics of ISTAR service points differ from region to region.
- Not all regions planned to offer all services.
- Services have begun to change in response to local needs.
- Where comparisons are made between the first period [March-October 1999] and the second [November 99 to April 2000] data has not been standardised to show activity on a monthly basis [for the reasons given in the earlier bullets].

At the end of October, some regions were still planning to introduce new services as originally planned or even, in the case of WELB, to extend services to new locations which were not part of their original plan because of the success enjoyed by the original services. Therefore, whilst the figures reported here represent substantial activity and real success, they cannot be used overall as a guide to the future. Naturally, local managers are using them as foreseen as time series, to identify growth areas and areas where more marketing or more resources may be required.

Table 14a		
Summary all teaching activity and all users March-end October 1999		
Region	Sessions	Users
Imathia*	111	960
Thüringen**	405***	8812
WELB****	928	8352
Total	1444	18124
Notes		
* Services began June 1999.		
** Services began March 1999		
*** A session means a formal, pre-planned workshop teaching session for a number of people. In Thüringen one-to-one less formal sessions were also a significant feature of the planned service delivery. No less than 4393 were conducted reaching a total of 6124 individuals, a number which is included in "users" above. In WELB this less formal approach was also a significant feature of the planned service, but no breakdown of figures was requested or supplied.		
**** Services began June 1999.		

Table 14b
Summary all teaching activity and all users Nov. 99-end April 2000

Region	Sessions	People attending sessions	All users
Imathia	321	3297	Not stated
Thüringen	1592	1941	27469
WELB	1896	2534	17395
Total	3809	7772	

Notes

A session means a formal, pre-planned workshop teaching session for a number of people. In Thüringen and WELB one to one less formal sessions were also a significant feature of the planned service delivery.

Table 14 shows a huge upsurge in activity in the second period. This is all the more remarkable as the second period was shorter than the first. However, all planned services were up and running in all regions.

Table   15 a
Other activity March-end October 1999 not reported in table 1.

Region	Websites created	Income
Imathia	56	188973 Gr.Dr
Thüringen	2	Est. 11000 DM
WELB	0	All services free
	No of documents scanned	Use of the Internet
Thüringen	124	11136 hours

Table 15 a
Other activity November 1999- end April 2000 not reported in table 1.

Region	Websites created	Income
Imathia	34	1.2m Gr. Dr.
Thüringen	2	Est. 30000 DM
WELB	0	£3310
		Use of the Internet
Thüringen		16480 hours

Table 15c

Imathia's Web sites	No
Companies	50*
Organisations	9
Wine producers	7
Other	6
*34 web sites are created from the ISTAR centre	

Imathia was first into the field of website creation. The library's own website is impressive and regarded as a model for Greek public libraries. A huge percentage of all the business websites in the region of Imathia have been created by the ISTAR project. Income and use of the internet have increased greatly, partly as a result of natural increase, partly due to policy changes.

Table 16a Sessions on introduction to the Internet March-end October 1999		
Region	Sessions	Users
Imathia	50	368
Thüringen	108	591 [excludes individual tuition]
WELB	393	Not reported separately
Total	551	

Table 16b Sessions on introduction to the Internet Nov 99-end April 2000		
Region	Sessions	Users
Imathia	89	854
Thüringen	1961	3437
WELB	418	572
Total	2468	4863

Despite some inconsistencies in reporting during the first period, it is clear that this activity has gone from strength to strength and continues to be the most used service. For all the teaching sessions, group sizes vary according to demand and to the availability of space and equipment which varies from place to place. Introduction to the Internet has proved to be the most used service. In addition to formal sessions there was a great deal of informal use by individuals – though with trained staff available to help out, and a great deal of supportive interaction between the learners themselves. It is not surprising that this is the most used service as it is perhaps the most readily accessible. The basics can be quickly learned and provide access to a rewarding activity. The results of the more specialised internet search engines sessions are reported below

in table 19. Internet sessions tend to use examples relevant to the needs of the target audience whether job-seekers, small businesses or other groups.

An important point to note is that the open nature of the ISTAR services points and their friendly, unthreatening community environment leads to a great deal of social interaction between users of the services. The users ask each other questions and help each other. This provides an unforeseen informal community resource, accessible to all.

Table 17 a **Sessions on introduction to PCs March-end October 1999**		
Region	Sessions	Users
Imathia	37	233
Thüringen	150	1281 [excludes individual tuition]
WELB	160	Not reported separately
Total	347	

Table 17 b **Sessions on introduction to PCs Nov 99-end April 2000**		
Region	Sessions	Users
Imathia	71	386
Thüringen	1380	2574
WELB	341	543
Total	1792	3503

This was the second most popular service in the first period but was overtaken by search engines in the second. These sessions provide a foundation of knowledge and build confidence. As a result of these sessions, 20% of respondents in the exit survey claimed to have bought a PC or additional software. Once again, the level of activity increased enormously in the second period.

Table 18 a **Sessions on introduction to email all activity March-end October 1999**		
Region	Sessions	Users
Imathia	20	157
Thüringen	0	0
WELB	19	Not reported separately
Total	39	

Table 18 b		
Sessions on introduction to email all activity Nov 99-end April 2000		
Region	Sessions	Users
Imathia	55	402
Thüringen	279	550
WELB	217	261
Total	551	1213

All regions experienced initial difficulty with this service because of the system security risks perceived by local administrations to be inherent in allowing customers to use email. These perceptual, technical and administrative problems were gradually overcome and are now resolved. As a result, activity increased enormously in the second period.

Table 19a		
Sessions on introduction to search engines March-end October 1999		
Region	Sessions	Users
Imathia	19	149
Thüringen	76	441
WELB	130	Not reported separately
Total	225	

Table 19b		
Sessions on introduction to search engines activity Nov 99-end April 2000		
Region	Sessions	Users
Imathia	50	379
Thüringen	1592	1941
WELB	392	504
Total	2034	2824

These are more specialised Internet access courses, designed to equip people to be able to find specific information quickly and efficiently. In Thüringen at least 44 of the users were job-seekers looking for work with the assistance of the ISTAR staff. Some, having found work, went on to look for housing and other services in the areas to which they planned to relocate [see case studies]. Once again, activity in the second period far exceeded that in the first.

Table 20 a **Sessions on MS Word/Office all activity March-end October 1999**		
Region	Sessions	Users
Imathia	6	53
Thüringen	22	98
WELB	277	Not reported separately
Total	305	

Table 20 b **Sessions on MS Word/Office all activity Nov 99-end April 2000**		
Region	Sessions	Users
Imathia	54	396
Thüringen	3	12
WELB	528	654
Total	585	1062

These sessions require more commitment from the users and more in-depth skills from the staff. Start-up was slow in all regions due to the need to train staff in applications with which most were totally unfamiliar. This has now been done, the staff have gained confidence and a side-effect of the project is that this software is now used by the library staff on a regular basis for their daily work, not just for tasks connected with the project. Activity increased in the second period overall but decreased in Thüringen

Other activities not covered above.

Some activities are excluded from the above tables because they are carried out on a local basis.

Under the ISTAR badge, some of the Thüringen service points have begun to lend self-instruction software on a small scale. Access to partners' databases [mainly library catalogues] was also planned and implemented in Thüringen with great success [see case studies and focus groups annexes]. Thüringen also emphasises the value of CDRom information resources and has organised sessions on this theme. Use of CDRoms is also an important feature of the service in Northern Ireland.

Conclusion

To a large extent the 3 partner regions carried out the performance monitoring in a standardised way and provided the data requested. The baseline survey and the exit survey show a significant success in reaching the priority groups targeted by the project and also demonstrate that lack of the skills which ISTAR can teach is very prevalent and widespread. The exit survey shows that ISTAR is fully capable of substantially narrowing the skills gap. The statistics point to enthusiastic and widespread take up of ISTAR services which accelerated rapidly in the second reporting period. These

conclusions are supported by the perceptions of staff in the 3 partner regions who all report that ISTAR is making a real difference to their communities. Further evidence is provided by the case studies and focus groups and by the fact that all partner regions plan to continue with ISTAR despite the official end of the project.

4.3 'Community added value' approach of project and links with other Community programmes

There were significant variations in characteristic between technical, infrastructural and economic starting points in each region e.g.:

- Levels of Internet and PC penetration [lower in Imathia than elsewhere]
- Attitudes toward and prospects for SME and for private sector involvement, e.g. in public training provision [e.g. large Public Finance Initiative to establish private sector basis for operating educational training services in WELB]
- Role of and support for teleworking in the regional economy [e.g. less significant in Thüringen than in WELB]
- Role of and support for 'lifelong learning' and open/distance learning modes
- Internet access policies [e.g. large scale UK government initiative in United Kingdom but nascent in Imathia]
- Policies toward charging for services
- Precedent of partnership between public libraries and other social/cultural/ economic/educational institutions [already institutionalised in WELB, engineered during the course of the pilot set-up in Imathia, developing post-service launch in Thüringen]

None of these differences of characteristics appears at this stage to invalidate a Europe-wide approach to the awareness and training via networks such as those established by ISTAR. The range of services identified as feasible and demand-led in each region has a high degree of commonality. The content of these services is sufficiently common to give confidence that a European approach to the development of support systems and materials and perhaps standards for accreditation could be developed from the ISTAR pilot experience.

This conclusion was supported through the soundings made with the representatives of the libraries, distance learning, teleworking and other communities who attended the ISTAR seminars in Finland, Portugal and Ireland toward the end of the project. There appears to be an important need to roll-out similar services in order to help meet the Commission's goal for Jobs in the New Knowledge Economy 'to establish public Internet access points plus on-site information society literacy training in all communities e.g. libraries, post offices etc by the end of 2001'. It appears clear that ISTAR can offer an approach to good practice and quality assurance which will can provide effective support for the cost-effective establishment of similar services all over Europe, perhaps especially in its peripheral regions.

V   Future of the Project

5.1   The project in the future: sustainable, expanded, scaled down

The selection of public libraries as the 'core' institution for the RISI2 pilot offers extremely encouraging prospects for sustainability and for access. Public library services already have a user base of 73 million users throughout the EU, many of whom are members of the target groups for ISTAR. Since the original proposal was written in 1995, there is rapidly growing evidence of public libraries developing strategies to provide the kind of services which are central to ISTAR. Public libraries as a result need to find, divert or lever resources to these new Information Society-oriented services in order to achieve sustainability. There is already strong evidence in all three ISTAR of the potential benefits for regional development and the future 'market development' of the public library as an institution.

The ISTAR pilot in the WELB region is likely to be vastly expanded and to provide a model for mainstream public library services once the project is completed. The success of the services in Thüringen and Imathia is also attracting widespread interest and is likely to lead not only to their being sustained within the participating institutions and regions but to their extension elsewhere. The project's dissemination programme has stimulated this process.

Several key issues remain inconclusive, in particular the extent to which sustainable services are likely:

a)   to be provided free of charge at the point of service through local authority/regional public funding versus
b)   to be capable of deriving income from charges made to users
c)   be capable of transfer on a commercial risk basis to the private sector

There Has been a substantial upsurge of political interest during the project period in the idea that the training and access provided through ISTAR services are an important strand social and employment policies such as social inclusion and should therefore be provided free of charge at the point of service, funded at public expense. This may not however be an affordable reality in all countries, especially poorer countries or regions. It has been demonstrated within ISTAR (eg in Imathia) that the collection of payments for some services eg training activities, is viable and contribute significantly to service sustainability where necessary.

A second need is to define further the role of public libraries and their ISTAR partners vis a vis other providers, including those in the private sector and public sector providers in the in the further, higher or vocational sectors [the last being especially relevant in Thüringen]. It is accepted that ISTAR-style services will need to remain flexible and capable of adaptation to institutional, technical and market changes.

Our provisional conclusion is that services delivered through ISTAR Networks are perhaps most usefully focused on mass awareness-raising and introduction to ICT and

assistance with the acquisition of a general level of qualification such as ECDL, rather than with more formal, higher level qualifications.

5.2   Leverage effect

WELB is a clear example of such leverage. New libraries being built or planned at Creggan, Strathfoyle and Strabane will have provision to at least this level.
Imathia - funding for automation

The new public library in Veria, to a large extent because of the provision of the ISTAR services, is likely to have significant influence on public library development
in Greece. The Greek Ministry of Education has already provided additional funding for automation and is currently considering ways to increase funding for Veria to ensure that all ISTAR services continue after the end of the project. Other ISTAR Network partners in Imathia have allocated staff and resources to the project

In Thüringen, the experience of partnerships with other institutions and localities, the working experience gained in such a project and its monitoring and the development of new role models for libraries and librarians tie in well with the increasing awareness of the information society [e.g. the Federal Government's education and research initiative *Women online!*]. ISTAR participants are potentially well-placed to lever support from involvement with such initiatives.

The provision of an ISTAR 'branded' support and quality assurance service will in principle be self-sustaining post-project. Guidance has already been received from DG EMPL on the possibilities of leveraging funds from the private sector to achieve this and the ISTSAR partners are separately in contact with other public sector funders

5.3   Demonstration effect and spin-off of results

The project has begun to undertake implement its dissemination programme actively. There has been widespread coverage of ISTAR in all three application regions. A database of press articles is being maintained. Articles have appeared in the specialist (libraries) press at national and European level [e.g. *Information Europe* published by EBLIDA]. This strategy will from now on be extended to related professional sectors [e.g. teleworking, distance learning, business information] at regional, national and European levels.

The project Web site [www.istar.org] provides a single point of access or 'gateway' to all of the developing regional ISTAR Web sites and access to the project results. The Web sites will be extended post-project to provide a point of access to ISTAR quality assurance services.

ISTAR began its programme of participation in high-impact 'external' conferences and events with the Libraries Without Walls distance learning conference in Molyvos, Lesvos, Greece, 10-12 September 1999. This was followed by a presentation at the EC PubliCA *Something for Everyone* public libraries policy conference in Copenhagen on 14/15 October, attended by public library policy makers [including five Ministers of Culture and two MEPs] and senior professionals from 31 European countries. The title of the ISTAR paper was Public Libraries and Regional Development. The paper was given by Ioannis

Koukiadis an MEP from the Greek governing party. In both cases, the papers have been be published in the conference proceedings. ISTAR had a display stand for ISTAR at a Committee of the Regions Forum on Cross Border Connections: Regions and Cities Working Together in the Information Age on November 17/18 1999.

At National level, in Greece ISTAR was presented at the Conference of local authorities on Kephalonia on September 1999.

5.4   Transferability: evaluation of transferable nature of actions undertaken.

ISTAR has the potential to be a widely transferable action in view of the widespread political interest across Europe in development and transformation of networked public library and information services to meet the needs of ISTAR's major target groups. The timing of ISTAR in terms of its potential to influence and support these developments especially in peripheral regions, remains very good. This applies to:

* The content of the action: especially the design and delivery of its services.
* The model for intra-regional cross-sectoral partnerships between public libraries and other information and training providers.
* The model for training staff [e.g. ECDL as the basic qualification]
* The successful inter-regional partnership and the use of Inter-Regional Task groups to define areas of commonality on a dynamic basis.
* The ongoing successful process of financial support at regional level and political and financial interest and support at regional and European levels

ISTAR is also organised three dedicated cross-sectoral conferences under its own banner in the final two months of the project in Finland, Ireland and Portugal..

The project team is planning to build on the successful outcomes and experiences of ISTAR by offering a service to public library authorities in any European country wishing to develop the role of public libraries in support of 'digital literacy' and skills for citizens in the Information Society/New Knowledge Economy.

It is the EU's policy to create an e-Europe in which lifelong learning supports employment in the New Knowledge Economy. A specific target is to 'to establish public Internet access points plus on-site information society literacy training in all communities e.g. libraries, post offices etc by the end of 2001'. The achievement of this will be measured by the number of access points per 1000 population. Clearly, quality and relevance of service will also be an important issue.

The objective of the future ISTAR service will be to make it easier for public libraries to set up these services and to know that they are achieving an acceptable level of quality of service provision.

ISTAR therefore plans [during the next few months] to 'package', in print and web-based formats, materials which will support:

* service set-up, delivery and technical specifications;

- access to good quality training packages for staff and for delivery to users;

- marketing and business planning support;

- performance measurement and evaluation methodologies.

In addition direct workshop and consultancy support can also be provided if required.

ISTAR products and services will be licensed in a variety of ways to governments, professional associations or via local authorities and individual libraries and other access providers. Affordability to the institutions involved will be a keynote of pricing policy. Above all, we see ISTAR a quality mark. The ISTAR sign means that services will operate to high standards, that staff will be properly trained, and that the library and other institutions involved have committed themselves to high quality services.

Annexes

I - Consortium Agreement
II - ISTAR Draft Regional Partner Agreement (resource document)
III - ISTAR case studies

Annex I - Consortium Agreement

The following are the Partners in the inter-regional Consortium participating in the ISTAR Networks ('the Project'), funded on a shared costs basis by the European Commission ('the Commission') under European Social Fund Article 6 'Innovative Actions for Employment, Training and the Labour Market' as a Pilot Project in the Field of the Information Society.

- Essex County Council, United Kingdom ('Essex')
- Prefectura of Imathia, Greece ('Imathia')
- Thuringer Minsiterium fur Wissenschaft, Forschung und Kultur, Germany (' Thüringen ringen')
- Western Education and Library Board, Northern Ireland, United Kingdom ('WELB')

The above Partners are joint signatories to this Agreement. By signing it, these Partners agree to the following conditions of participation in the Project.

1	Each Partner will nominate one responsible person to represent it on the Project Management Committee. This person may be changed within the period of the project with the consent of the Project Management Committee. The Project Management Committee will be the sole decision-making body within and on behalf of the Partners in respect of the Project.

2	Essex is the Co-ordinating Partner of the Project Consortium and has the right to provide or nominate the Chair of the	Project Management Committee.

3	Each Partner will contribute to the Project's costs according to the contributions and Workpackage schedule listed in Annex	A (Revised Project Budget) attached. These contributions and this schedule may be revised from time to time by the Project Management Committee, where necessary with the prior or subsequent agreement of the Commission.

4	Each Partner will diligently carry out the tasks attributed to it in the Technical Annex to the contract with the Commission,	within the entire contracted period of duration of the Project. These tasks and this duration may be revised from time to time by the Project Management Committee, where necessary with the prior or subsequent agreement of the Commission.

5	Each Partner understands and agrees to conduct itself according to the project regulations specified in the Project Management Guidelines issued by the Commission

6	The Project Management Committee will as a rule attempt to make decisions by reaching a consensus. In the event of	dispute, a majority of votes on the Project Management Committee will determine the decision of the Committee. A vote taken by the Project Management Committee requires that all four Partners may cast a vote, if they wish. This vote must be	delivered by the responsible

person for each partner, either in person or in writing. In the event of a tied vote, the Chair will have the casting vote.

7   Each Partner will form a Regional Project Management Committee or Group to reach decisions concerning the operation of the project in its own region. Membership of this Committee will be drawn from the main agencies co-operating with the Partner to implement the Project in each region.

8   In the event of irrevocable dispute and withdrawal from the Project by one or more Partners, the remaining members of the Project Consortium will agree a procedure for termination and/or re-allocation of its financial and other responsibilities, in consultation with the Commission and in accordance with rules and regulations applied by the Commission.

9   Education for Change Ltd. (EfC) is appointed as Project Manager, subcontracted by Essex. EfC will carry out duties assigned to it by Essex and agreed by the Project Management Committee.

10   Each Partner will supply the information specified by the Project Manager which is necessary to complete the reports (Activity Reports, Progress Reports, Monitoring Table of Budgetary Commitments etc) required by the Commission, according to the schedule required by the Commission (specified in the Project Management Guidelines).

11   Partners may submit cost claims to the Project Manager on a monthly or any less frequent basis. Claims must be completed using the forms designed and circulated by the Project Manager for the purpose and enclosing receipts as indicated in the Project Management Guidelines. Claims will be checked by the Project Manager and Partners informed of any discrepancy within 10 days of receipt. The Co-ordinating Partner will ensure that all claims are paid by the Project Manager within 30 days of satisfactory receipt.

12   Considerations of intellectual property rights, copyright etc will be governed within the Project by the conventions, national and international laws applicable. Should materials, systems or prototypes be developed within the project by more than one Partner, rights to use or exploit them commercially will be decided by the Project Management Committee.

Signed by   Signed by
[designation]   [designation]
For and on behalf of Essex   For and on behalf of Imathia

Signed by   Signed by
[designation]   [designation]
For and on behalf of Thüringen For and on behalf of WELB

Annex II- ISTAR Draft Regional Partner Agreement (resource document)

The following is a suggested list of clauses from which regional partners may wish to choose to establish agreements for project partnerships with regional partners. Other, local clauses can be added where necessary.

1. NAME OF ORGANISATION agrees to participate in the ISTAR Networks project in NAME OF REGION, funded by the European Commission DG V under the Regional Information Society Initiatives (RISI) programme, for the remainder of its duration, in a manner agreed by the Regional Management Committee.

2. NAME OF ORGANISATION will nominate a representative to participate actively on the ISTAR Networks Regional Management Committee, to be chaired by NAME OF PERSON, NAME OF ORGANISATION and to abide by the constitution of that Committee.

3. NAME OF ORGANISATION will nominate a representative to participate actively on the ISTAR Networks Regional Technical Working Group, to be headed by NAME OF PERSON, NAME OF ORGANISATION.

4. NAME OR ORGANISATION agrees to work in partnership with NAME OF REGIONAL CO-ORDINATING ORGANISATION, NAMES OF OTHER ORGANISATIONS and accepts that the NAME OF REGIONAL CO-ORDINATOR will carry out a co-ordinating role.

5. NAME OF ORGANISATION will operate a service point ('node') of the ISTAR Network in NAME OF REGION for the duration of the project, according to a specification to be agreed with the Regional Management Committee.

6. NAME OF ORGANISATION will, as a minimum, commit staff time to work on the ISTAR Networks project to carry out tasks to be agreed with the Regional Management Committee over the duration of the project, as follows.

    STAFF LEVEL   NUMBER OF DAYS
    STAFF LEVEL   NUMBER OF DAYS

7. NAME OF ORGANISATION will commit resources of the following value to the ISTAR Networks project over the duration of the project, at intervals to be agreed with the Regional Management Committee.

    Staff costs [VALUE IN ECU]
    Study and experts' reports [VALUE IN ECU]
    Staff costs [VALUE IN ECU]
    Mission expenditure (travel and subsistence costs) [VALUE IN ECU]
    General expenditure [VALUE IN ECU]
    Promotion and publications [VALUE IN ECU]
    Meetings, conferences and seminars [VALUE IN ECU]
    Expenditure on equipment [VALUE IN ECU]

8. NAME OF REGIONAL CO-ORDINATING ORGANISATION will reimburse
    NAME OF ORGANISATION with AMOUNT ECU in return for undertaking work on
    ISTAR Networks as agreed by the Regional Management Committee.

Annex III - case studies

ISTAR HELPS PEOPLE FIND WORK.

George finds work

George, an immigrant in his 40s was introduced to the Internet through ISTAR. Having just qualified as a heavy goods vehicle driver he had been looking for a job by conventional means. He decided to extend his search using the internet. Soon he was back in the library to tell the staff that his internet search had paid off and he had been offered the job he wanted.

Mrs E. makes a fresh start

"*I was completing a qualification and could not see how I could use it in Meiningen, so I decided to try other local towns, but it did not occur to me to try Munich, which is where I have happily ended up thanks to the internet and Meiningen library.*
I was afraid of the internet but signed up for a half-hour introduction which led to many more hours surfing. Eventually I found the right job on the internet, applied, was interviewed and accepted… but the job was in Munich, a long way off. Next problem was to find a flat and for 3 or 4 weeks I was in the library every day, surfing the net for a flat. The library staff supported me all the way and we succeeded in finding what I needed.
I have had only good experiences from the internet and hope that many other job-seekers try this route. My thanks go to the ISTAR staff. Without their help and support I might have given up along the way."

ISTAR succeeds where conventional methods have failed

At the age of 27, Mrs R. was made redundant in 1992, following the Re-unification [of Germany]. Despite retraining she could not find work. She decided she did not have enough information about job opportunities and in May signed up for an ISTAR internet course. From then on, guided by the ISTAR staff to the likely sites, she surfed the net for jobs. In the late summer she intensified her efforts. In October she presented the ISTAR staff with a bottle of champagne and told them that she was starting a new job the following month.

Dr S. heads South

Dr S. is a freelance interpreter. In the summer she did the ISTAR introduction to the Internet then applied her new skills to checking out employment opportunities and salaries. By January she was able to tell the ISTAR team that she would shortly be leaving to work in Italy.

Mrs Melania makes an informed decision
From September to December 1999 she did her practice through the IAESTE program at Phillips. She found out about that possibility through the sites of European Union. She used our computers mainly to communicate with Phillips in order to arrange her contract.
She used to sent 4 or 5 messages each time she used our services. She believes that by using our services she was able to get in a very short time all the information needed to make up her mind in relation to two options she had: to join the company or join the university to continue her studies.
"It was very helpful as I used your services free of charge, being unemployed at the time and managed to be successful and get the job."

ISTAR helps employers find staff
Mrs Kalliopi is a chemical engineer. She often uses the computers at the ISTAR center. She used it to type the summary of her dissertation when she was examined for her degree. She uses the net for searching for jobs.
" I found an advertisement from Procter and Gamble, sent an e-mail with my CV, they called me back and soon they are going to interview me. As I do not have a PC at home, the ISTAR center has made a real difference to me."

ISTAR HELPS PEOPLE IMPROVE THEIR SKILLS

ISTAR makes distance learning feasible

Jane is a hotel manager and is doing a professional distance learning course. She enrolled on the course knowing that the ISTAR facilities made it feasible as she has no PC at home. Jill is intent on pursuing a further course relating to ICT as soon as her schedule will permit. She would be willing to pursue such a course through the library by distance learning, if it were to lead to an accredited qualification. She feels that the flexible opening hours of the library allow her to pursue her studies in addition to her employment, without having to return to fulltime study at another location.

Mrs Sarra makes her own luck
Mrs Sarra runs a lottery shop in Veria. She knew about computers and used them in her business (lottery programs etc.). She became interested in the ISTAR center because of the Internet which she now often uses.
"I am really astonished by the possibilities the net offers. I use e-mail a lot, practice word-processing every day and spend a couple of hours chatting. At work, it helps me tremendously as I very quickly get all the information (statistics, forecasts etc.) about all European football games.
I am using Greek and foreign web sites and sometimes I even get the score for games in real time. I have also started on-line trading. At the moment I am learning to use Front Page in order to design the web page of my brother's clothes business and my own business web site with forecasts and information about games etc.
I was very lucky to come across the ISTAR center and feel proud that my children have now started using computers as well."

Alec smartens up

As a self-employed painter and decorator, Alec needed to update his office skills and become computer literate. He wanted to learn about spreadsheets and produce a database of clients. Alec also wanted to learn word-processing skills so that letters to clients and suppliers would look professional. The Internet also interested Alec as he knew he could shop for materials, update on the latest techniques, and look at what other businesses are doing.

Alec has learned to use some office 97 packages at his own pace, with help from the ISTAR officer. He is now confidently using the Internet. He finds e-mail useful for contacting clients, suppliers and friends. Alec would like take a formal course such as CLAIT or ECDL, however time is a problem for him. Alec plans to use his new skills to make his own business posters and flyers.

ISTAR STRENGTHENS FAMILIES AND FRIENDSHIPS Anthony's family learn to speak the same language

Anthony is a retired civil servant. He wanted to learn to use a PC because his young daughter was coming home from school with questions he couldn't understand, never mind answer.

Anthony uses the ISTAR services twice a week. He can now word process, use the Internet and email to keep in touch with family and friends abroad. His wife has now also got the bug and family understanding is much improved.

Renata finds her father

Renata, is a 30 year-old Russian woman. For two years she had been trying to find her father who had emigrated to the States. She had tried many services concerned with missing persons, without success. Having tried one of ISTAR's internet introduction sessions, she asked the staff for help with her quest. Using one of the major search engines, with the help of staff she found her father's address and phone number in New York. She was completely amazed that this could be achieved so quickly and without cost.
"I had almost given up hope of ever hearing from him again."

Just keeping in touch

Mrs Marina lives in Greece. " I communicate with my relatives in Canada by e-mail; all of them have PC's at home. I come to the library now once a week and send a letter to all the members of the family. I did not know anything about e-mail, I learned everything from the staff and now I use hotmail.
I am not interested in anything else. My mother in law complains when she does not get letters so e-mail has become a very useful service for all of us."

ISTAR BUILDS PEOPLE'S CONFIDENCE

Susan widens her skills base

Susan is a psychiatric nurse, currently unemployed and pursuing a professional qualification in health care management on a distance learning basis. She has used ISTAR to broaden her understanding of ICT, with particular interest in **MS Office** packages such as **MS Word and Excel**. She hopes that these applications will help her studies and broaden her base, improving her employment prospects.

Within ISTAR she has made extensive use of both MS Word and Excel. She has also participated in a number of awareness sessions relating to **Internet, E-mail**, and the use of **Reference materials**, both in CD format, and on-line; (**Encarta, Britannica CD/ NOAH Website etc**.) She considers the availability of support from staff with ICT experience as crucial to this process of learning.

"Using **ISTAR** has been great. My IT knowledge has given me a lot of confidence and I would like to get a formal qualification."

Jim gets a helping hand
Jim is involved in the New Deal, which includes doing an ECDL course at a local college. He does not have a PC at home and had no previous IT experience. Jim was finding the ECDL course tough because he had no prior computer experience. His boss suggested he use ISTAR for two hours during work time so that he could become more familiar and confident with PC's. Jim also decided to spend two hours, sometimes more, of his own time working towards his ECDL exams.   ISTAR helps Jim with problems with his assignments and explains how to complete tasks. In the beginning Jim had to re-sit a few exams several times before passing, however he now gets through them first or second time. He is very pleased with his progress. Jim enjoys being able to work at his own pace in the library with the confidence that staff are nearby to help when he gets into trouble. Jim is looking forward to finishing his course.

Margaret keeps up with the youngsters
Margaret worked in an office until her recent retirement but had no knowledge of computers. Margaret's children and grandchildren use computers and have them at home. She felt inadequate when discussing IT. The family encouraged Margaret to learn IT skills but she felt family members did not have much patience when teaching her. So Margaret, after talking to her friend, decided to seek professional help at the library.

As secretary of the local Ladies Golf Club it is Margaret's responsibility to produce the agenda and minutes of meetings, send and reply to mail and so on. Having learned word processing skills Margaret can now easily produce her work. Recently she had the great satisfaction of producing posters on her own without help. Now when the family are discussing IT Margaret no longer feels left out and "it's great, I can add my own comments." "I feel very proud of myself, it is good to keep learning new things."

ISTAR HELPS PEOPLE AT WORK

Pat gets start-up help

Pat plans to set up a business selling flat-pack furniture. She joined ISTAR with a working knowledge of the main MS Office applications, but no previous use of Internet Explorer or experience of web searching. Initial assistance from ISTAR staff included awareness training on the Internet and E-mail transmission. In the course of formulating a business plan, she thought of sourcing new stock from overseas. Through use of the internet at Omagh library, she was able to identify potential suppliers in countries as diverse as South Africa and Thailand. On-going help was given during a number of visits to the branch, until a sufficient skills base was attained. Pat then made the decision to invest in a PC with internet connectivity for use with the business venture.   Again ISTAR staff provided advice on suitable PC solutions for the requirements

Michael gets going

Michael is a florist in Veria. "I've started again to use computers through the ISTAR centres, then I bought my own P.C., created a web page and started trying to do some on-line business.

At the moment, through the net I am getting information about how florists present themselves on the net and what kind of services they offer. I am just about to complete the web site of my business and trying to find out how to do more real business on the net."

Roger saves time and money

Roger is in charge of the stores for an electrical retailer with manual systems. Recently his suppliers have introduced electronic systems, for example discontinuing printed catalogues in favour of CDROMs. Faced with these changes, the business has introduced stock control systems based on IT and PC technology.

Roger came to ISTAR with no previous experience of PC technology. He was particularly keen to learn more about Windows 98, as this was the operating system installed on the new computer that had been installed to take over stock control and management systems. Over a period of time he has learned a range of service applications ranging from MS Windows 98, to MS Database and Internet Explorer.

Roger has derived considerable benefit. An increased understanding of MS Windows 98 means he can now utilise the technology more effectively within the business. He is now looking at further ways to introduce IT to support the more mundane and time-consuming aspects of the business. Staff in the repair department will shortly be able to go on-line to access databases of mainline manufacturers to download specifications and technical data of appliances under repair.

ISTAR ENSURES SOCIAL INCLUSION
Karen adds value
Karen works with handicapped children but does not have internet access. For her work she needs a lot of up-to date-information and constant contact with other colleagues. Using ISTAR she can do both these things and also get information on new toys and equipment for handicapped children.

Sisters keep up
G. and K. are sisters in their 20s who recently migrated from Russia but have not yet found work. They have done a training course and learned basic word-processing. Both are keen to find work and to improve their qualifications in office skills, book-keeping and marketing. They learned of ISTAR through the social security office and became regular users. They check out job opportunities on the net and practice their office skills and have learned Excel through ISTAR. They cannot afford a PC at home but ISTAR allows them to keep their skills current and keep in touch with vacancies

Brian keeps in touch
Brian is a frequent user of ISTAR services. He is registered disabled, currently unemployed, and helps to produce a monthly newsletter to which he contributes a column dealing with radio, amateur radio and related topics. His I.T. skills have been developed almost entirely in the library, with an emphasis on surfing the Internet and using E-mail (in relation to his newsletter production). He plans to improve his word processing skills through ISTAR and maybe to embark on a course of study.
"...this project has been just the thing. It has taught me a lot about the Internet and its capabilities. I regularly use the library and the ISTAR facilities to put together my column. The sheer amount and variety of information which ISTAR has given me is enormous. It brings the world into the heart of a small rural community."