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Research Report

WEFO Cross-cutting Themes Evaluation Equality and Sustainability

Date: March 2015



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Acknowledgements

The Cognition Team would like to acknowledge the contributions made to this research project by several groups of people: the members of the RME Team and the CCT Team at WEFO for their constructive advice and willingness to be interviewed; members of the PMC, all of whom have full time professional roles and who made themselves available for interview; the PDOs who took part in the interviews. A special thank you goes to the personnel from the 39 projects who gave a generous amount of time to the interview process and particularly to those sponsors and deliverers who attended the regional workshops and to those sponsors who agreed to contribute additional time and effort to developing the case studies. Without these contributions this research project would not have been possible.

Abbreviations

AIR	–	Annual Implementation Report
AV	–	Added Value
BP	–	Business Plan
CCT	–	Cross Cutting Themes
EIA	–	Equality Impact Assessment or - Environmental Impact Assessment
EO	–	Equality of Opportunity
EOI	–	Expression of Interest
ES	–	Environment Sustainability
ESF	–	European Social Fund
EMS	–	Environmental Management Systems
ERDF	–	European Regional Development Fund
EU	–	European Union
GDP	–	Gross Domestic Product
GR	–	Generic Recommendations
HR	–	Human Resources
ISO	–	International Organisation of Standardisation
ITT	–	Invitation to Tender
M&E	–	Monitoring and Evaluation
MER	–	Monitoring and Evaluation Recommendations
MR	–	Management Recommendations
NPR	–	Number of people responding
PDO	–	Project Development Officer
PIV	–	Project Inspection and Verification
PMC	–	Programme Management Committee
R&D	–	Research and Development
RME	–	Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Team
RQ	–	Research Question
SBBS	–	Synnwyr Busnes, Business Sense
SME	–	Small to Medium Enterprise
SR	–	Support Recommendations
UK	–	United Kingdom
WCVA	–	Welsh Council for Voluntary Action
WEFO	–	Wales European Funding Office
WG	–	Welsh Government

Executive Summary

This report presents the findings and recommendations of research undertaken to evaluate the development, support and delivery of the Cross-Cutting Themes (CCTs) of Equal Opportunities and Environmental Sustainability in the 2007- 2013 Structural Funds Programmes in Wales. This took the form of participatory research with two groups of WEFO staff: four Project Development Officers (PDOs), and five WEFO staff members who held or had held positions that had a direct impact on the management, delivery and the monitoring of the CCTs. Four Programme Monitoring Committee (PMC) members were also interviewed along with 39 projects. The research included 3 regional workshops with interviewees from the projects and additional stakeholders. This was a perception based study that aimed to pull together a range of perspectives on the CCTs from different groups. The research was also informed by a literature review that placed the CCTs in the wider contexts of Wales, the UK and the EU. The research was conducted during the first half of 2014.

Key Findings:

1. The CCT Team is highly regarded for the work they do by the vast majority of the people involved in the delivery of the Structural Funds Programmes in Wales. They have raised the profile of the CCTs and embedded them in the Welsh Structural Funds culture.
2. Welsh commitments to equality and sustainability help make Wales a leader within the EU in CCTs. Indeed, its CCT guidance has been praised as an exemplar by the European Commission. However some respondents think that the guidance produced could be better customised to the different client groups in the Structural Fund programmes.
3. Each client group values different kinds of evidence and arguments in support of the value of CCTs and would have different strategies in achieving them. This diversity is also reflected in the many different kinds of 'added value' identified by different groups.

4. The CCT Team is resource constrained given the number of projects needing support. Opportunities for projects to gain support on CCTs are currently limited by the size of the team.
5. Although the WEFO data collection system is not the direct responsibility of the CCT team, current measurement regimes do not capture the range of added value of CCTs. Although projects recognise a wide range of added value it is generally felt across all the interview groups that the current measurement does not capture significant elements.
6. The need to fulfil overall Programme targets is understandably a driver for the CCT support system, a system that includes both PDOs as well as the CCT team. This pressure can lead to more support being given to projects which are likely to succeed in fulfilling Structural Funds Programme targets. The unique high levels of skills and knowledge of the CCT team within WEFO can also lead them to take on the role of compliance and best practice advisor in regards to equality and sustainability legislation.
7. Some projects may be disadvantaged by the current system due to the uneven support resulting from the pressures on the CCT team. This can be made worse by perceived communication problems with regard to measurement and data requirements.
8. Despite diversity of projects, some overall consistency of approach to the CCTs across Wales is desirable. Projects are highly motivated to help each other succeed, indicating that peer learning would be a good additional support mechanism.
9. A perceived culture of adverse relationships between the projects and WEFO as a whole, amongst some projects, affects the generally very good working relationship that the CCT team has with the projects. Problems with the communications systems are identified by participants and a greater understanding of the constraints and drivers for WEFO would help overall understanding of the Structural Funds system.
10. There is a lack of shared understanding about CCTs between projects and the different delivery and beneficiary groups in structural fund projects. This

adversely affects the relationships for delivery of CCTs. Further progress means making changes - better systems and a strategic role for the CCT Team are two key ways forward. Gradual change can be achieved by making small, complementary changes to linked parts of the system without disrupting its ability to keep functioning.

11. There is a significant difference between the achievements of vertical and horizontal projects with vertical projects performing significantly higher in both their general and CCT aims.

Recommendations: revising the system

The suggested general recommendations are designed to be complementary across different areas of the CCT system. This strategy promotes systemic change¹ whilst allowing delivery to continue with minimal interruption.

- Develop a more systematic approach to development, support and delivery of CCTs within the context of the wider Structural Funds system.
- Define the different kinds of Added Value of the CCTs and how they can be planned for and delivered.
- Clarify and support working relationships and responsibilities for CCTs in the CCT team and wider WEFO staff. Provide management support strategies for these relationships including more PDO training and peer support networks.
- Improve regular communication and cooperation between WEFO and projects. Communicate a corporate mission to 'make Wales a Better Place', linked to a more holistic take on the three CCTs (Equal Opportunities and Gender Mainstreaming, Sustainable Development, Tackling Poverty and Social Exclusion) for the forthcoming programme.
- Support and encourage better relationships between projects, deliverers and beneficiaries with regard to CCTs. All projects should plan to explain the benefits of CCTs to all these stakeholders as part of the delivery plan.
- Strengthen the fledgling Community of Practice in the Structural Funds system and support its development through peer exchange and learning

¹ Change that spreads throughout all parts of a system, taking into account the interrelationships and interdependencies among those parts.

mechanisms. Set up and use feedback systems to keep WEFO apprised of project perspectives and learning.

Further detailed recommendations are presented under the headings: Support, Management, and Monitoring and Evaluation in the conclusions and recommendations chapter of the report.

1. Introduction

Chapter Summary

This chapter outlines the background to the study, the structure of the report, and the aims of the evaluation. It also provides a brief rationale for each of the key research questions explored.

1.1 Background to the project

WEFO commissioned this study to evaluate CCT progress and to inform ways forward for the next round of Structural Funds.

The aims for the evaluation were to:

- Assess the integration of the CCTs into projects' delivery of activities across both the European Social Fund and European Regional Development Fund in Convergence and Competitiveness Programme areas;
- Examine the progress and delivery of the CCTs Indicators for the 2007-2013 Structural Funds Programmes in Wales;
- Assess barriers to consistent delivery of the CCTs by EU-funded projects;
- Assess the support provided to sponsors by the CCTs Unit and identify areas of best practice; and to
- Make suggestions for any further support that projects may require in delivering these Themes.

This evaluation addresses the aims through the experience and views of participants in Welsh Structural Funds programmes. The Cognition team established an evidence base of perceptions from groups of participants with different roles and interests.

A central purpose of this study was to use this evidence to feed into system improvements and inform a clearer, realistic vision for the CCTs in Structural Funds programmes. The research also considers how success is measured, assessing procedures and goals in terms of their capacity to move towards the vision. In this process the study aims to help create new and shared understanding as the basis for an approach that can be sustainable in the Welsh context.

1.2 The Structure of this Report

This Introduction sets out the aims of the project and the background to the study. The Methodology section discusses the approach taken to the evaluation and outlines the use of a systemic perspective. The sampling and methods are discussed together with the principles behind the data analysis.

The Findings section summarises key points from the Literature Review, then proceeds to the primary research with participants. Some of the findings are presented in graphical format with narrative to highlight the links between the findings and the success and/or failure of the CCTs in the projects. This is followed by a discussion of how a baseline might be established for the current practice. The final section highlights some of the key points in common across the different data sets.

The Conclusions section indicates how the findings answer the research questions for the study. Recommendations follow from the conclusions and are designed to be implemented in a systematic way to provide gradual change towards excellence in CCT delivery in Wales.

The appendices contain additional information demonstrating the research methods along with a series of case studies which highlight some of the lessons learned in relation to the CCTs in the 2007-13 Programme

1.3 Key research questions

The list below identifies the key research questions which underpin the evaluation, with some consideration of terminology and other issues with implications for the research.

I. Integration and Mainstreaming of the CCTs

What is the nature and the extent of integration and mainstreaming of the CCTs in the delivery of the projects? The research focus here will be on the project sponsors, delivery organisations and beneficiaries.

II. Added Value of the CCTs

To what extent do the CCTs add value to the projects and the programmes? What is the perception of the concept of added value held by different participants?

III. Guidance and Support on the CCTs

How effective is the support provided to sponsors by WEFO? What examples of best practice exist in terms of support and development? Here we distinguish clearly between direct support and written guidance. As the CCT team has limited time, the nature of the written guidance becomes more important.

IV. CCTs Indicators and Programme Targets

Identify progress and delivery against the CCTs Indicators for the 2007-2013 Structural Funds Programmes in Wales. How effective and appropriate are the CCTs Indicators and Programme Targets?

The biggest issue here is one of a lack of clarity – there are no specific ‘CCT targets’ only indicator targets which may relate to the CCTs. This issue of definition has caused confusion regarding status and reporting; not only among the sponsors and deliverers, but also the PDOs. There is also confusion around the term ‘ESF targets’. Issues with the measurement and definition of targets are a key part of the research.

V. Barriers

What barriers prevent the consistent delivery of the CCTs by EU-funded projects?

VI. Best Practice and Innovation

Where, and what, are the examples of best practice and innovation in respect of the CCTs?

1.4 Benchmarking

One of the aims of this evaluation was to benchmark the delivery of CCTs. This comprised several dimensions:

- a) Meeting WEFO target indicators for CCTs set in the agreement with the EU
- b) Achievement of the wider aims of the CCTs from a Welsh perspective.
- c) Comparisons between delivery of Structural Funds Programme CCTs in Wales and elsewhere in Europe

2. Methodology

Chapter Summary

This chapter describes the study methodology and the rationale for the adoption of a systems approach, which was seen as essential in understanding the CCTs in context. The methods comprised:

- Literature review of grey and academic literature including evaluations
- Interviews with the following groups:
 - WEFO staff related to CCTs
 - Project Development Officers
 - Programme Monitoring Committee
 - Project sponsors
- Regional workshops including sponsors and deliverers
- Case studies of projects' experiences delivering the CCTs
- Additional discussion with the WEFO commissioning team in research progress meetings

In this chapter, the sampling for the different groups in the study is outlined and the methods used to collect the data are presented. The chapter also sets out the approach taken to the analysis of the data and the robustness of findings. It concludes with a reflection on how the research evolved during the course of the project.

2.1 Background to the Methodology

The main aim of this evaluation was to provide useful information to the managing authority CCT team and to seek possible areas for improvement in future rounds of funding. In order to answer the research questions this evaluation proposed to look at many aspects of the CCT system, going beyond simply assessing achievements in relation to fixed goals. This meant engaging participants in reflecting on their experiences within the system and at the nature and usefulness of the current measurements of success, for example, whether they capture the added value of CCTs.

A qualitative approach, focused on the knowledge and perceptions of participants was considered most suited to addressing these types of question. We describe this as 'perception-based' methodology. A key strength of a

perception-based study with stakeholders is that much of this knowledge and experience can provide useful information on a range of more practical delivery issues and be fed back to improve the system and communications. A recognised limitation of this methodology is that at times participants' views may be coloured by their subjective interests, may be inaccurate, and/or may involve misinterpretation of the questions. Where this is a strong possibility, it is noted in the findings.

In the literature, this type of perception-based study fits into a grounded theory approach (Holton, J.A. & Glaser, B.G., Eds. 2012). The research is founded in perceptions and information provided by participants through the project interviews. This means that the themes are allowed to emerge from the data, rather than researchers applying or testing a pre-existing hypothesis. This is suited to drawing out complex, interlocking issues such as those presented in the CCT system. Grounded theory also allows for the presentation of different angles on the same phenomenon and the effects of perceptions on behaviours within a system. This was important as the stakeholder groups were positioned at different locations in the overall system and thus had different perspectives, interests, and knowledge, including participants' own ideas about how improvements to CCTs could be made.

A Systems Approach

The emphasis on systems and the incorporation of a 'systems approach' (Gregory, A. J. 2009) has been critical as the Structural Funds programme in Wales has been identified as a 'complex system' (Guilford, 2013) and CCT delivery should be seen as a part of this system. This approach provides ways to discuss the interacting elements of the system and to analyse participants' responses in terms of information about the system. This works well with grounded theory as the characteristics of the system are allowed to emerge from participants' descriptions.

A systems approach can also recognise processes that take place in the system over time – in this case, particularly in the lifetime of projects. This timeline dimension is important in determining the points at which guidance and support are most needed and to identify project milestones to help in planning. Further benefits of a timeline approach are that significant events in the project

timeline create a narrative which is an easily accessible way of learning (this is evidenced by the case studies included in the appendices).

Programme success and failure

There are different orders of evaluation questions and it is important to clarify which ones are most appropriate for this study and why. A systems approach recognises that programme success and failure can be of two different kinds (and any mixture of these):

1. Conception good/poor and helpfully or not helpfully formulated for the task in hand.
2. Implementation good/poor. This includes issues regarding resources, follow-through and staff training and motivation.

It was the role of this evaluation to help to discover what was working and what was not in both of these areas. This evaluation aims to assist WEFO in developing a system that is realistic and sustainable, and with a clear conception and vision.

Participatory Ethics, Goals and Systems

The commitment of the research team to participatory research had two dimensions. Firstly, there was a commitment to communicating the participants' views as fully as possible, while maintaining strict confidentiality, and assisting the WEFO CCT team to find ways to respond to these views through making constructive recommendations. Secondly, there was a key concern of helping WEFO with their systems, in terms of strengthening and reforming some systems to better enable the CCT team to carry out all the necessary tasks. These two areas can be seen in the grid below.

Table 1 Procedural logic and values

Procedural logic/systems	Values/overall goals
Goals	Aims
Targets	Visions
Indicators	Place in wider beliefs and policy commitments
Procedures	Relationships
Operational systems	Engagement
Compliance	Culture

A systems view includes both, and seeks for the optimal fit between the two elements rather than prioritising one over the other.

2.2 Research Methods

a. Secondary research: Literature review

This literature review provides information regarding the differing approaches to CCTs undertaken elsewhere in the UK and wider EU. On this basis it contributes to the comparative benchmarking of the practice of CCT planning, monitoring and delivery in Wales from 2006 – 2013, assessing this in comparison to some other EU programmes. The literature review also explores possible areas for further development/s in CCT implementation. In addition, the review provides an overview of issues of CCT delivery in Structural Funds programmes, bringing a wider perspective on some of the problems encountered in the Welsh context.

b. Primary Research

The sources of data for this section of the research are the participants in the system that delivers and assesses the CCTs. This main data source is supplemented by processes of reflection and engagement, to deepen understanding through the workshops (which provided the opportunity to dig deeper into some issues) and to triangulate data to add validity to the findings. Primary data from the research also contributes to the benchmarking with regard to practice – especially elements of CCT success not captured in the current monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system.

- **Participant interviews**

The interviews were undertaken to answer the main research questions from a number of different perspectives, taking into account the different roles of the interview groups in the Structural Funds system. The semi-structured questionnaire was adapted in each case for this purpose.

- **WEFO staff related to CCT interviews**

The interviews were designed to elicit the perceptions of a number of WEFO staff as to the successes and failures of CCT development, delivery and monitoring. These interviews also helped to inform a view of the Structural Funds system as a whole and the role of CCTs within that.

- **PMC interviews**

These interviews aimed to elicit perceptions and information about the roles and function of the PMC and its relationship to development, delivery and monitoring of CCTs.

- **PDO interviews**

These interviews aimed to elicit perceptions and information about the PDO role and particularly focussed on the project success and failure factors for CCT development, delivery and monitoring; and the nature, timing and usefulness of the support accessed with regard to CCTs.

c. Workshops

The participatory workshops were designed to help bring in links to practice.

The workshops were intended to fulfil three objectives in the research:

- Gain triangulation on the research results
- Contribute a narrative and process dimension through use of timeline activity
- To broaden participants individual project perspectives to a 'community of practice', testing the potential of peer learning and regional peer support events.

Three workshops were held in June 2014 with a total of 29 participants representing 20 projects. Details of the structure of the workshops can be found in Appendix A. Three forms of data were gathered from each of the workshops.

- A written record of the discussions (at least two members of Cognition at any one time were recording the comments made in the discussions.)
- Completed timelines from the group activity
- Evaluation forms from workshop participants.

Benchmarking: What does this mean for methodology?

This evaluation covers the ways in which CCTs have been measured, in addition to the actual results according to the existing measurement frameworks, and it assesses whether or not the frameworks capture the breadth of practice.

This means there are two different kinds of benchmarking discussed here:

- 1) **Baseline:** Establishing the current state of delivery of CCTs with a view to measuring progress in the future.
- 2) **Comparative Benchmark:** A broad comparison of practices and success in delivering CCTs in Structural Funds programmes in other areas in the EU.

Developing a baseline required reviewing the progress on CCTs, starting with the 2000 - 2006 programmes, in an attempt to measure progress over time, and to provide a baseline for tracking future progress. Follow-up and review from the research conducted by Cognition may establish an explicit baseline that can be referred to and developed for future iterative evaluation and review.

In terms of the primary data, participant and perception-based qualitative evaluation is more suited to a broad summary of the current situation that can be used for purposes of future comparison. This summary is included in the research conclusions.

2.3 Research Samples

The research sample consisted of projects, WEFO staff, including PDOs, and members of the PMC. These different groups of interviewees occupy different roles within the Structural Funds system, and while they have different concerns and interests, they were all extremely well informed about the system, allowing the triangulation of findings.

a) Project interviews – 39

To maximise the usefulness of this evaluation and in order to understand why some projects succeed in relation to CCTs while others do not, a project sample was developed, consisting of three parts:

1. Ten projects succeeding in the delivery of their CCTs.

WEFO provided Cognition with a sample of projects that were considered to be achieving on their CCT aims. From this sample, Cognition selected 10 projects that represented a diverse Programme, project sector and geographical spread.

2. Ten projects that were not succeeding in the delivery of their CCTs.

WEFO provided Cognition with a sample of projects that were considered not to be achieving on their CCT aims. From this sample, Cognition selected 10 projects that represented a diverse Programme, project sector and geographical spread.

3. 18 randomly selected projects.

Cognition selected 18 projects using a random number generator. This part of the sample was included to increase the possibility of unexpected insights and to ensure that findings were gathered from projects across the success spectrum of CCT aims delivery.

This gave an initial total of 38 sponsors to be interviewed. Later, this was increased to 39 as an additional project was included in the case studies. The sample of 39 included all four Structural Funds programmes and a range of associated priorities as outlined below:

Table 2 Number of projects in sample

Number of Projects in Sample				
Priority	ESF		ERDF	
	Convergence	Competitiveness	Convergence	Competitiveness
1	4	1	8	
2	3	3	4	1
3	7			
4			2	2
5			4	
Total	14	4	18	3

Projects were also distinguished by being either vertical (the main task of the projects fall within the concepts of the CCTs) or horizontal (main task of the projects are not directly related to the CCT themes). Ten of the 39 projects were vertical in nature with the remaining 29 being horizontal. The relatively small sample was in keeping with the participant-based qualitative

nature of the study, allowing for in-depth investigation. This purposive sampling process was designed to be valid in terms of assisting in answering the main research questions.

b) WEFO staff related to CCTs interviews – 9

A total of nine WEFO staff members were interviewed and they fell into two groups

1. WEFO Project Development Officers – 4

The first and most clearly defined group amongst those staff interviewed were the four PDOs. This group were asked questions directly relating to their role within the delivery of the CCTs.

2. WEFO staff connected to CCT – 5

The second group of five WEFO staff members held or had held positions that had a direct impact on the management, delivery and the monitoring of the CCTs. We ensured that their roles were differentiated, with minimum overlap, covering the key roles involved in the CCTs.

3. PMC members – 4

Four members of the PMC were selected, to reflect a selection of roles and backgrounds.

2.4 Data analysis

This section describes the data analysis as a step-by-step process guided by the need to answer the research questions and to find potentially useful patterns in the data. The grounded theory approach is applied here in the categorisation of responses, where participant responses identify certain emergent key groups of responses. The stage of identifying links between these responses is guided by their relevance to the research questions and potential usefulness to the CCT team.

Robustness of findings

We use the term 'links' as these do not necessarily imply causation. For example, a link between understanding of added value and project success might show how these factors feed into or reinforce each other, rather than a

simple causal relation. The advantage of a systems approach is that it is possible to take a holistic view of the pattern of links and draw stronger conclusions about relationships than individual one to one comparisons. In this context, 'strong evidence' and 'positive relationships' between different factors means that we found a high proportion of responses in agreement and from different groups of respondents.

a) Inputting Data: The first step in analysis was inputting the data from the interviews into a spreadsheet / HyperRESEARCH hybrid system that allowed for the data to be manipulated in two ways:

1. Separated according to different categories, such as the type of Structural Funds Programme or
2. Success and failure in relation to the CCT Comparisons, drawn between categories that reveal potential links between different sub-sets of the data.

b) Categorisation of responses: observation/review of data and identification of main themes arising, illustrated with quotations.

c) Links: another layer of data analysis focussing on answering key research questions – looking at relationships between different data sets. This is especially useful in looking for success and failure factors.

- Relating data sets of success and failure in CCT achievement to other factors (for example CCT success and project success)
- Relating different types of projects to other factors
- CCT aims and project aims related in terms of success and failure
- How CCT aims were created and relation to success

d) Presentation of findings: contribution to answering key research questions

e) Conclusions: referencing primary (interviews, workshops) and secondary data (literature review) and identifying the significance of findings in the wider context of CCTs and Structural Funds.

f) Recommendations: applying conclusions to the account of the system and leverage points and recommending changes accordingly.

2.5 Success factors

There were some clear ‘success factors’ that could be captured. In accordance with the process nature of the system, these success factors need to be situated in a project timeline. Identifying the success factors at different levels in the system, and at different points in the project process, produces a complex set of relationships. These then gave rise to some questions that could possibly be a focus in further research. The same reasoning was applied to enable the identification of barriers to success. Some are single point failures, while others are more systemic in nature.

2.6 Reflections on process

The initial conception of the research changed as the project developed. The extent of the systems issues behind the more specific CCT outcomes had not originally been recognised, and they emerged strongly throughout the research process.

It was initially intended that beneficiaries would be interviewed but it proved problematic to include them in the workshops as planned, as many projects had concluded and/or beneficiaries were no longer involved and could not be contacted.

3. Research Findings

Chapter Summary

In this section we present the findings from the various data collection methods employed in this research. The first section summarises the findings from the literature review (secondary research).

The second section contains the majority of the findings and relates to the primary research. These findings are presented in relation to the groups interviewed (WEFO staff, project sponsors and the PMC members) and the data gathered from the regional workshops.

In the final section, the primary sources of data are triangulated, followed by the specific findings in relation to: the issue of added value; a baseline for the CCTs; and the performance of the CCT Team.

3.1 Secondary research - Literature review

The literature review comprised evaluations and summaries of CCT achievements. It starts by providing an overview of Structural Funds in the EU and the role of CCTs within Structural Funds. A summary of perspectives from Welsh policy documents and WG reports then leads into the more detailed account of CCT delivery in Wales. This includes how success in EO and ES CCTs is measured and more specific issues of CCT support for projects. Finally, an indication of information gained from evaluations in some other regions of the EU is provided.

3.1.1 The wider EU context of Structural Funds and CCTs: 'Tensions' in approach to CCTs

Consideration of CCTs in Structural Funds programmes needs to be set in the wider context of EU funding programmes and political considerations.

Much EU regulation has been described as 'soft politics', where a steer is given but member states have discretion on how to take up the regulation in their own contexts (Cini, M., 2001). CCTs seem to fall into this area of policy, with no clear mandatory guidance provided about CCT assessment. A further ambiguity is introduced into this picture by the need for Structural Funds programmes to agree on some limited range of equality and environmental targets to be

delivered in a portfolio manner across the programmes. Provided that programmes can demonstrate progress towards these more limited targets on behalf of some projects, the wider dimensions of CCT delivery are left up to member states (Taylor, S., Polvirari, L. & Raines, P. 2001). This reflects tensions in the EU itself – some agencies in the EU may not be interested in the wider delivery of the CCTs and for others they will be very important. The net result for Structural Funds programmes is a combination of very ‘hard’ delivery requirements in limited areas, together with ‘fuzzy’ areas where guidance can be developed to suit local conditions.

A key overall message from some critical commentators on the European development project is that equality and environmental sustainability are in tension with the central model of economic development (Gore, T. & Wells, P., 2009). This links to wider European discussion of the need to extend the concept of the aims of society to a richer concept of social well-being than GDP allows (EC, 2014). For these commentators, it is not surprising that CCTs are often seen as an ‘add-on’ in projects. The wider structural imperatives in the economy ensure that the drive for jobs assumes paramount importance. Questions of ‘what kind of economy?’ and ‘what kind of jobs?’ assumes a secondary place.

This situation could be exacerbated by the financial crisis, which for many reveals the essentially harsh nature of the imperative for global competitiveness. This means that the limited initiatives dedicated to mitigating the economic system by social and environmental elements such as CCTs become even more important. In all these respects the CCT team in WEFO can be seen as operating in a field with competing pressures: the need to focus on economic outcomes (‘jobs and growth’) whilst also delivering social (EO) and environmental (ES) objectives.

Political commitment: EU and Wales

At the same time, the ‘social model’ of capitalism officially espoused by the EU is very important politically and ideologically and the commitment to social and environmental conditions is unlikely to be dropped for these reasons (Gore, T. & Wells, P. 2009; Dickinson, P. & Lloyd, R. 2011). Given this context Wales, with

its strong commitments to both social justice and the environment, should make the most of opportunities presented by the CCTs to deliver Welsh policies in these areas. The additional challenge is to move beyond compliance with the programme targets negotiated with the EU, and to persuade people of the real benefits of these policies. CCTs provide a powerful way of delivering on Welsh policy, as is recognised in One Wales, One Planet, (Welsh Government, 2009).

“The Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) manages Structural Funds programmes which have social, economic and environmental activities and outcomes. Through the requirement to mainstream environmental sustainability, equal opportunities and diversity across all projects WEFO also ensure that Structural Funds programmes contribute to sustainable development.”

However, it has been argued (Gore, T. & Wells, P., 2009) that there is a tendency to underplay the roles of the ‘framing’ of Structural Funds programmes in the EU and a failure to consider how they might be more fully developed with stronger civil society support. This echoes the concerns expressed by the National Assembly for Wales Finance Committee (2012) report. There is a sense throughout this report that, although WEFO is good at delivering the spend of the European Union Structural Funds in Wales; it is less good at planning for, or measuring, strategic outcomes including any enduring legacy from these funds. However, it must be noted that the document also refers to a lack of strategic direction from Welsh Government as being a key factor in the perceived weaknesses of the Structural Funds measurement mechanisms.

With regard to these associated points about the wider impacts of the Structural Funds spend on Wales, the potential role of the CCTs is not fully recognised. It is possible the Finance Committee is falling into the trap of seeing the environmental and the social dimensions as separate from the wider business and economic case.

The University of Strathclyde Report (Taylor, S. Polvirari, L. & Raines, P. 2001) on mainstreaming CCTs in Structural Funds programmes argues that the CCTs need holistic approaches that can build up common understanding and values

and that this requires capacity building among stakeholders (p1). This raises the issue of being realistic about what CCTs can actually achieve in both the EU and Wales in terms of mitigating the environmental impacts of an economy with certain deeply embedded structural features such as a reliance on cheap energy and cheap labour. To change these features would, arguably, require a considerable joined-up effort across many areas of governance, in which CCT delivery could possibly play only a supporting role. It is not possible for the CCTs to change the economic system single-handedly so it is important to be clear about what CCTs potentially can deliver. It also serves to underline the need for strategic guidance from WG on the role and mission of the Structural Funds in wider Welsh politics and society. The role of WEFO to assist in EU and Welsh policy delivery is clear:

WEFO is part of the Welsh Government and manages the delivery of the Convergence and Competitiveness programmes in Wales.² It is focused on creating sustainable jobs and growth in line with European Union's Lisbon and Gothenburg agendas, and the policies and strategies of the Welsh Government

(National Assembly for Wales Finance Committee, 2012).

Evaluating CCTs as helping to deliver policy:

Policy development on Equality and Sustainability in Wales has been significant, with documents such as One Wales and the potential of the Future Generations and Well-Being legislation. A key question is to what extent CCTs help deliver equality and sustainability policy in the EU and more specifically in Wales. Broader delivery of policy through Structural Funds programmes is very hard to assess fully owing to some of the considerations outlined below.

Previous evaluations of Structural Funds in Wales present a complex picture regarding equality policy delivery. Many different interlocking policy areas exist with initiatives that cover specific areas such as prioritising marginalised groups.

Regarding sustainability, the EU has claimed that the Structural Funds programmes are a means to drive sustainable development in individual administrations and across the EU as a whole.

“...there remains scope for a considerable improvement in the extent and manner in which the Structural Funds contribute to sustainable development. As an EU policy tool, the Structural Funds, with due initiative and improvement, has the potential to be a constructive motor for sustainable development” (GHK, 2002, p 84,)

Meanwhile the challenges of delivering environmental sustainability in projects receiving support from Structural Funds remain similar to those facing equality. The interpretation of sustainability policy ranges from a very narrow environmental sustainability compliance approach to much wider concepts that include sustainable livelihoods. There are implications here for the complexity of the knowledge base required for CCT advisors and support staff, indicating a possible need for expert support where appropriate.

3.1.2 Evaluating CCT Progress

The ability to measure progress, as opposed to levels of activity, in monitoring and evaluating equality is an issue identified in the Equality Impact Assessments. The aim is to,

“Develop and maintain a rigorous monitoring and evaluation strategy with specific equality objectives and indicators for measuring progress against them.” (Mott Macdonald, 2014)

The literature reviewed here comprises monitoring and evaluation reports that comment on progress from 2007 onwards.

Each of the four Annual Implementation Reports (AIRs) for 2012 has a common introduction to the CCTs which sets out WEFO's commitment to the CCTs.

“For the 2007-2013 Structural Funds Programmes in Wales the Cross Cutting Themes are Equal Opportunities and Environmental Sustainability. In line with Commission guidelines, policies have been put in place by WEFO to mainstream the Cross Cutting Themes through all the European Programmes.”

The Programme Monitoring Committee monitors the progress of the Programmes using Programme Monitoring Reports produced by the WEFO Research, Monitoring and Evaluation (RME) Team at every PMC meeting. These reports outline progress against all the monitoring indicators, including the CCT indicators.

The Programme Monitoring Reports for the January 2015 PMC suggest that none of the Equal Opportunities targets are likely to be achieved across the Programmes. The picture is more mixed for Environmental Sustainability: the majority of targets are unlikely to be met although the target for ERDF Convergence Priority 2 has already been met, whilst those for ESF Convergence Priority 3 and ESF Competitiveness Priority 2 have been substantially exceeded.

As will be seen later in this report, there is general agreement across WEFO and project sponsors that these indicators do not capture the achievements of the CCTs.

The 2014 WEFO document 'Cross Cutting Themes Key Document European Regional Development Fund' reports that the 2007–2013 programmes had developed when compared to the previous programmes:

"Set within an evolving policy context, the picture of integrating the CCTs in Wales is one of steady progression and improvement from previous programmes. Increased awareness, positive developments in legislation and policy, matched by changes in attitudes has, combined with lessons learned and a clear focus from the European Commission to push the agenda forward." (p 3)

Progress and the need to build on this, is recognised in the 2014-2020 ESF and ERDF Operational Programmes (WEFO, 2014). The National Assembly for Wales Finance Committee (2012) report also recognises progress in CCTs.

There is evidence in the reports to the PMC that CCT delivery in projects has improved in the period from 2007- 2013. These reports provide summaries of the progress in relation to the proportion of projects rated as 'High', Medium' or 'Low' in achieving targets. The series of reports over this period shows gradual

improvement in some areas combined with some areas where achievements have remained the same.

The background to the achievement and measurement issues identifies some key concerns that are reflected in this research:

- Measurement regimes and targets do not capture all the good practice
- Some measurements (e.g. energy saved) do not come in until late in the programme
- Some targets do not fully take into account the starting point of the projects and the ability to deliver on targets

Support for CCTs and implementation

The AIRs for 2012 highlight the support that projects need and receive in relation to CCTs and monitoring and evaluation, both in terms of training and staff involvement. The achievements of the CCT team in working across diverse projects are recognised. All four of the AIRs for 2012 emphasise the need for involvement in the business planning stage of the projects to support both the CCT elements of the projects and to establish the monitoring and evaluation procedures.

3.1.3 UK Evaluations of Practice

This section of the literature review considers a selection of evaluations from other parts of the UK: Northern Ireland; East of England and London.

Benchmarking on CCT practice

The evaluations reviewed here are useful in terms of benchmarking Welsh practice and approaches against those elsewhere. There are few available evaluations that cover the CCTs fully at present and areas that do cover elements of CCTs more fully include those that specialise on environment (Regeneris, 2010) but not on Equality. The cursory attention to CCTs in these evaluations can be compared with the more substantial treatment in Welsh evaluations. This suggests that a more serious strategic commitment to CCTs in Wales is reflected in the commissioning and terms of reference of evaluations of Welsh Structural Funds programmes.

Transferable Lessons

There are some useful lessons to learn from other reported practice and there are some particularly interesting examples from areas that have a specialist sustainability focus. For example, these include: a useful matrix that links policy documents to projects to show how they help deliver on policy (Regeneris, 2010); a rationale for linking social enterprise with sustainability and equality CCTs – that could also link with a local economy perspective (Regeneris, 2010); a typology of ‘Strategic Added Value’ (Regeneris, 2010); different ways that PMC responsibilities are structured e.g. in Northern Ireland CCTs are covered by a PMC Working Group (Price Waterhouse Coopers, 2013).

An evaluation of East of England ERDF Competitiveness Programme (Regeneris 2010) recommended training for Government Officers and Advisors, Commissioners and Advisors of projects. An evaluation of London’s 2007-13 ERDF Programme (Regeneris 2012) worked on establishing a benchmark for CCTs in projects linked to the concept of Development Pathway Assessment (DPA).

Example Paths on the DPA:

- Path A: promote activities that simply meet environmental regulations
- Path B: Clean up the mess from past activities or actions that promote physical regeneration
- Path C: put in place environmental infrastructure to reduce the negative environmental impact of development activities
- Path D: Help organisations to meet increasing environmental standards
- Path E: Improve the resource efficiency (‘eco-efficiency’) of existing activities
- Path F: Encourage new types of activity using fewer environmental resources, or producing less pollution, than existing activities in the area.’

Further work to assess the practicality and usefulness of these recommendations in the Welsh context could be of great value to future Structural Funds Programmes.

3.2 Primary Research - Interviews

This section presents the findings from all the interviews and workshops across a range of issues.

In this evaluation the bulk of the primary data came from interviewing two cohorts:

1. Project Sponsors

Representatives from 39 projects were interviewed

2. WEFO Staff and PMC Members

Nine WEFO staff members were interviewed. The first and most clearly defined group amongst those interviewed staff were the four PDOs allowing for their questions to directly relate to their role within the delivery of the CCTs. The second group of five interviewed were WEFO staff members who held or had held positions that had a direct impact on the management, delivery and the monitoring of the CCTs. Because of the different positions represented in this second group, the questions asked were more reactive to the individuals' position regarding the CCTs

Finally, the findings from the four members of the PMC that were interviewed are presented.

3.2.1 Findings from project, PDO and other WEFO staff interviews

Summary of project interviews

The project interviews reveal some key links that have been taken forward into the conclusions. The substantive links uncovered by this evaluation are:

- Links between projects achieving their CCT aims and:
 - achieving their general project aims (particularly for vertical projects who reported greater success in both areas compared with horizontal projects)
 - how the aims were created
 - the projects perception of the appropriateness of their CCT aims
 - the projects understanding of the two CCTs
 - problems in data collection
 - projects' perceptions of the concept of added value and their achievements in this area
 - how the projects deliverers/partners understand the CCT aims
 - how projects supported their deliverers/partners
- Link between early WEFO intervention and CCT integration
- The separated responses for ERDF and ESF reveal links between Programme type and both barriers and perception of the assessment process.

Summary of WEFO Staff interviews

- The work of the CCT team is valued by WEFO staff. It is recognised that the resources of the CCT team are small compared to the task of integrating CCTs across all projects.
- There is a need to improve the understanding of CCTs across WEFO staff generally.
- There is a lack of consensus on what is meant by added value in relation to the CCTs.
- There is a lack of consistency in the messages WEFO gives to projects in relation to CCTs.

- The importance of delivering appropriate support to projects at the right time in their development is recognised and needs to be addressed.
- Vertical projects are essential in order to meet Structural Funds programme targets.

For some of the following charts, absolute numbers of projects have been replaced with percentages to allow for a visible comparison between different groups (where a different number of projects were within the groups being compared).

As well as presenting the findings from the perspective of the projects, the comparable or contrasting responses of PDOs and other WEFO staff have been incorporated to give a more holistic view of each question area. Appendix B presents a table showing the triangulation of evidence in relation to the outcomes from the interviews that would lead to recommendations for the future management of CCTs.

3.2.1.1 General Project and CCT Aims and Achievements

Identifying which factors were key to the successful implementation and delivery of the CCTs firstly required an assessment of each project's achievements in respect of the delivery of their general project aims and their CCT aims.

Participants were asked whether the overall general aims of the project were achieved and the majority (around 8 in 10) reported that they had achieved or surpassed these aims while around 2 in 10 reported that they had failed. Participants were then asked whether the CCT aims of the project were achieved and two thirds reported that they had achieved or surpassed these aims while one third reported that they had failed.

There was an initial tendency for some projects to report that they had been successful in delivering these aims when it later emerged from further answers given that they had not. Where this was identified by researchers the answer was corrected to reflect their more complete answer. In the main, the impression was that the projects that had clearly failed were not afraid to say so, as they usually had a substantial number of reasons to cite with these reasons emerging throughout the interview.

These mediated responses were later used to discover links between ‘successful’ projects and project activities associated with the key research questions. Although ‘definitive’ judgements of success would require a thorough assessment of the type beyond the scope of this evaluation, this ‘rough’ assessment provides an integral component of the analysis within the resources and timeframe available for the study.

3.2.1.2 Links between project achievements in CCT aims and general aims.

The projects’ assessment of their delivery of their general project and CCT aims appeared to show a connection between projects achieving or surpassing their CCT aims and having success in their general project aims.

Nearly three-quarters (23) of the 31 projects that reported that they had achieved or surpassed their general project aims, also reported that they had achieved or surpassed their CCT aims. This is in sharp contrast with the projects who reported that they had not achieved or surpassed their general project aims where only two of the seven projects reported success in their CCT activities.

3.2.1.3 Links between project achievements and vertical projects

A ‘vertical’ project is one that is directly focussed on one of the CCTs. The project sample contained 10 ‘vertical’ projects with 9 of them reporting successful CCT delivery, compared with less than two thirds of horizontal projects reporting success in delivering their CCTs.

The difference between the vertical and horizontal projects is even clearer when considering whether projects surpassed both their general and CCT aims with over two thirds of vertical projects reporting that they surpassed general aims and half reporting that they surpassed CCT aims. This can be compared with horizontal projects where less than a third felt they had surpassed general aims and only 5 out of the 29 felt they had surpassed the CCT aims.

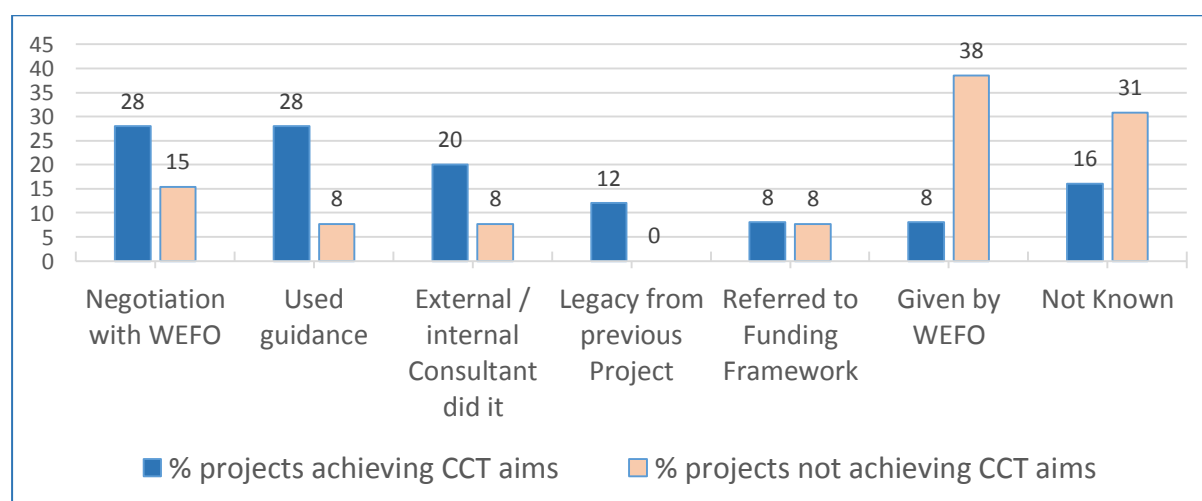
There was a consensus from three of the five ‘WEFO staff connected to the CCTs’ that vertical projects are essential to reach programme targets overall and this appears to be backed up by the views of project sponsors. PDOs expressed more

ambivalent views on vertical projects and two of the PDOs did not know what vertical integration meant in the context of CCTs. As there seem to be significant differences in the achievement of CCTs between the vertical and horizontal projects this would be a key learning point. Although only a small number of PDOs were interviewed this suggests there may be a need to promote the importance of vertical projects to the CCTS more widely in WEFO.

3.2.1.4 CCT achievements and aims creation

The bedrock of any project is its aims, as this is from where all its activities are derived, so the research sought to discover how the projects' CCT aims were created and whether this process was linked to perceived project success. There appears to be a clear connection between perceived success in achieving or surpassing CCT aims and how the aims are created. We asked the interviewed projects; **'How were your CCT aims created?'** The 39 projects gave 45 responses and the difference between the response profiles of those projects succeeding in their CCTs and those that are not, is laid out in Chart 1.

Chart 1 CCT achievements and aims creation



Indicative quotes...

"There was good dialogue between the project and WEFO when the BP was being developed. With WEFO they are good because it is more of a two-way process rather than the more usual submit and wait. They shape and guide a lot more than other funding streams."

“They just arrived in agreement letter, ridiculous targets really, totally impossible to reach, we just saw no sense in them so did nothing until our first review meeting.”

“We inherited these indicators from the previous project but we did have to make some changes to take into account the now shorter timescale”

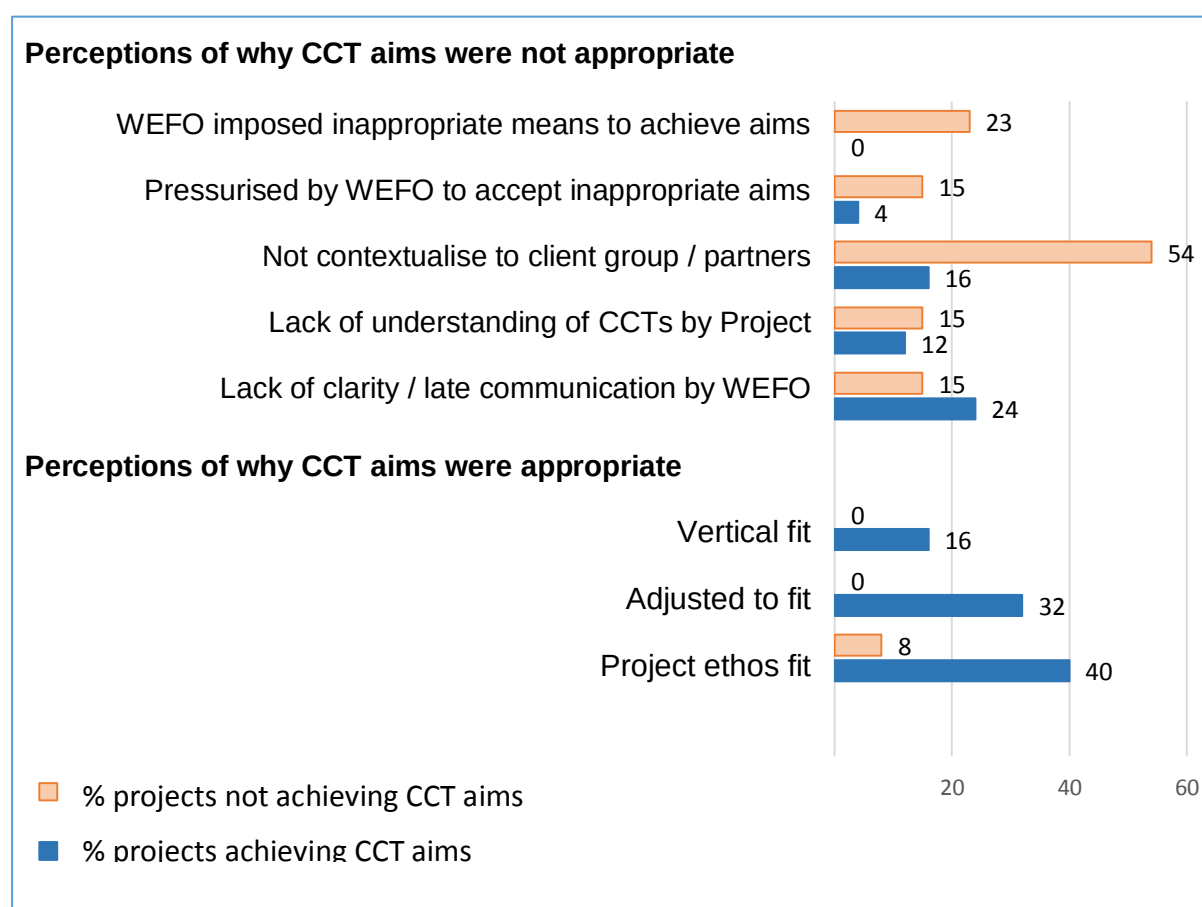
Projects that reported CCT success appear to be far more proactive in the creation of their CCT aims. This is indicated by the higher incidences of ‘Negotiation with WEFO’, ‘Used guidance’, and ‘External/internal Consultant did it’. Interestingly, all three of the projects that appeared to have carried forward their CCT aims, albeit with some ‘tweaks’ from the previous round, are among the 25 projects that reported success in their CCT delivery. This supports comments from the projects about the importance of continuity between funding rounds and avoiding a long hiatus during which staff and expertise can be lost.

Three of the four PDOs suggested the CCT Team were the most appropriate negotiators with regard to CCTs in plans, and that there is a general expectation that the team will lead on CCTs with projects. The other WEFO staff cohort, in direct contrast, felt that that developing CCTs with projects needed to be embedded in the work of the PDOs, with the CCT team taking more of a strategic support role.

3.2.1.5 Perception of the appropriateness of the projects’ CCT aims.

Interviews with project sponsors suggested a strong link between the perception of the appropriateness of the projects’ CCT aims and their success in achieving them with three quarters of ‘CCT-successful’ projects compared with just 1 of the 13 ‘CCT-unsuccessful’ projects reporting that their CCT aims were appropriate. However, as it is a current measure of how appropriate projects believed the aims to be, it is important to understand that the link does not necessarily imply that viewing the aims as appropriate led to their achievement. It is similarly possible that those projects who achieved their aims are more likely, with hindsight, to consider the aims as appropriate. Chart 2 breaks down the nature of these answers on the perception of the appropriateness of CCT aims, for both successful and unsuccessful projects in regard to their CCT achievements.

Chart 2 Perception of the appropriateness of the projects CCT aims



Indicative quotes...

“ES and EO is ingrained throughout the project and mainstreamed into all aspects, as opposed to a tick box exercise”

“No, the CCTs were bolted on afterwards in our case and it is not worth any of the paper it is written on”

“CCT have costs as well as benefits, as such it is sometimes necessary to weigh up the costs and benefits of using a CCT approach and it should only be used if it is likely to offer significant benefits to the project”

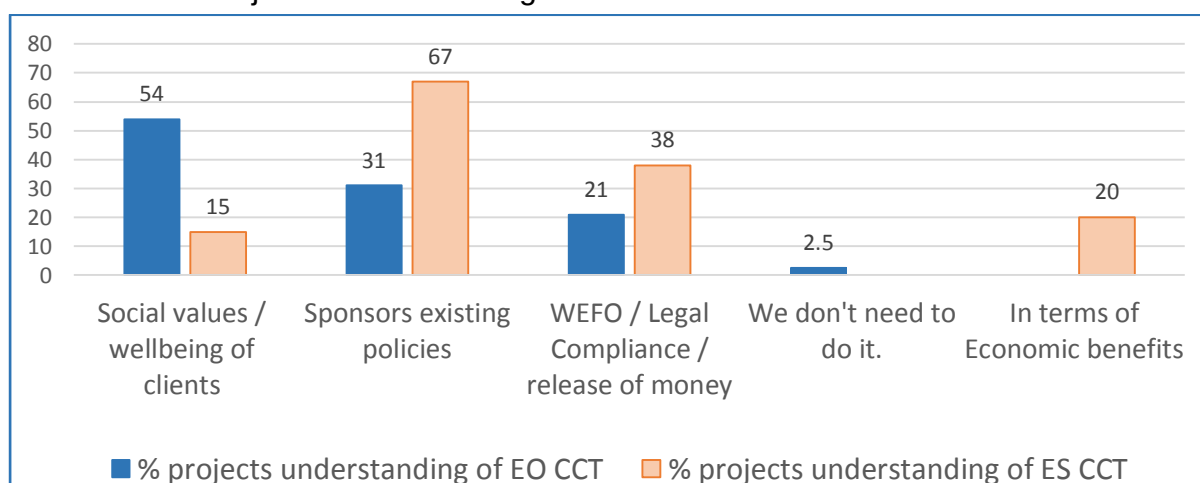
In response to questions about measurement of CCTs three out of the four PDOs and four of the five WEFO staff cohort connected to the CCTs felt that wrong and/or unhelpful targets are a real issue. WEFO staff also argued that targets should be more suited to context. Whilst the wider drivers of political priorities contributing to the current kinds of measurement were acknowledged by three of the WEFO staff, it was also felt that there is a lot more to CCT delivery than the targets.

The issue of targets also came up in the regional workshops with a consensus that targets were not based on what could be achieved. Workshop attendees argued that there was a need to look at the projects' target groups before allocating CCT targets and that targets set at the beginning were often unrealistic.

3.2.1.6 The projects' understanding of the two CCTs

The research sought to explore sponsors' understanding of the two CCTs. Whilst around half of the projects understand the EO CCT in terms of social values only 6 of the 39 projects recognise the ES CCT in those terms. In contrast, the ES CCT was more likely to be understood in terms of sponsors own existing policies, compliance and economic benefits.

Chart 3 Projects' understanding of their CCTs



Indicative quotes...

"...everything we do has to be linked to economic benefit, so pretty much everything is jobs, growth and wealth. Environmental is easier because there is a direct link and the economic bottom line is an improvement, so you can immediately see the benefits there. It is a bit harder on the EO strand it does have an economic impact, but it is much longer term. So our aims are always linked to job creation and growth. "

"To qualify for a grant, the projects must have equality and sustainability policies or be working towards one..."

"In a word – legacy"

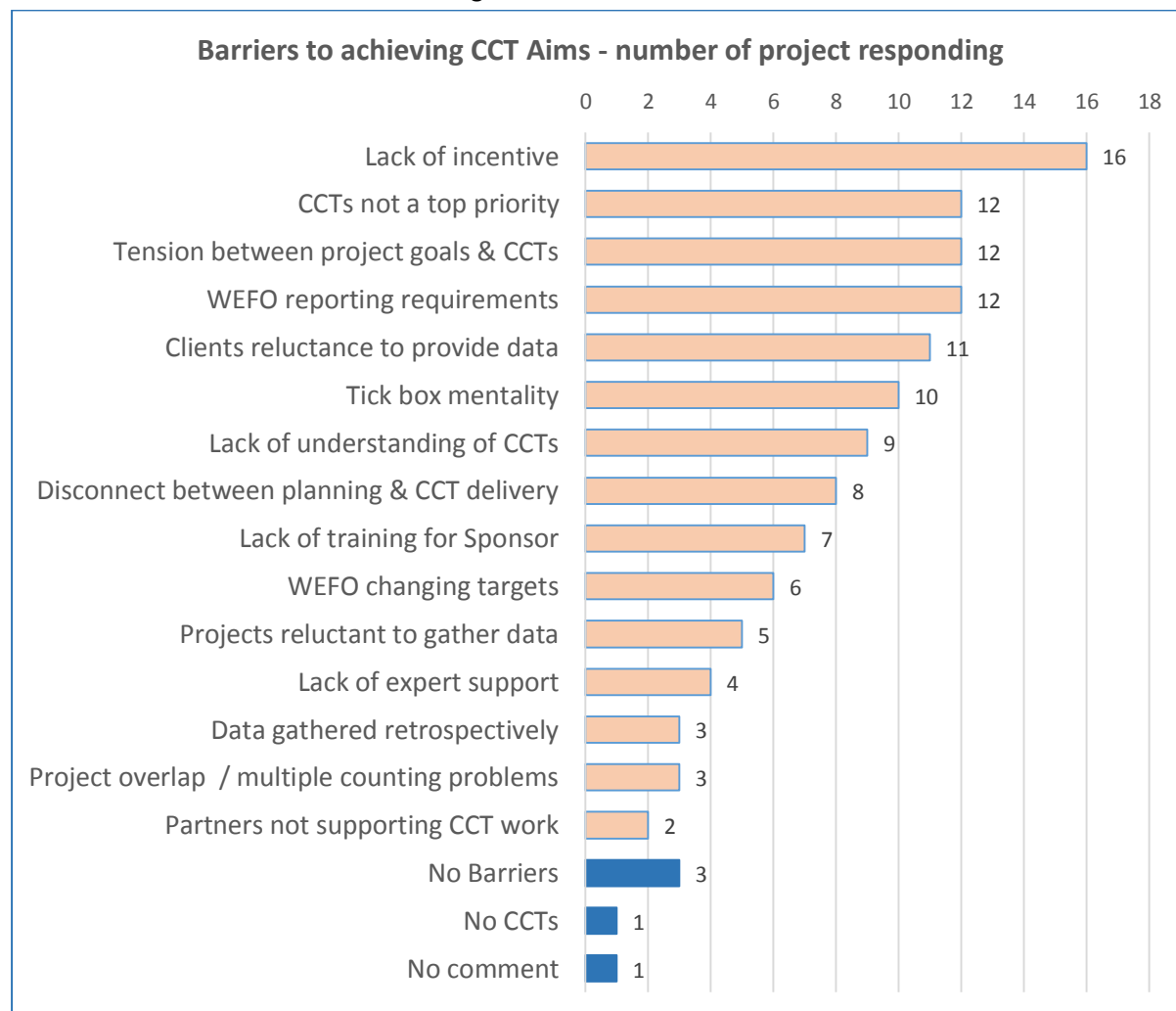
Of the (non-PDO) WEFO staff interviewed three said that ES is easier to achieve than EO because the business case is more direct. In addition, two respondents suggested that ERDF focuses on ES targets while ESF focuses on EO targets. Two respondents argued that indicators could be part of a change process but it was also recognised by two respondents that for some projects, indicators/targets are simply a means to unlock funding. PDO respondents tended to agree with the other WEFO staff that ES was easier to achieve, whilst noting that WEFO has equal emphasis on both. PDOs also referred to the different focus between Programmes (ERDF-ES; ESF-EO) but argued that ultimately it is the nature of the project that would determine the balance between the CCTs.

In contrast to WEFO staff, three of the four PMC members interviewed thought that EO has more profile than ES as it is easier to understand. PMC members also expressed concern over poor performance on ES.

3.2.1.7 Barriers to achieving the CCT Aims

Both successful and unsuccessful projects identified barriers to achieving their CCT aims and these are outlined in the Chart below.

Chart 4 Barriers to achieving the CCT Aims



The lack of incentive to achieve their CCTs was the single most reported barrier (highlighted by 16 of the 38 projects with CCTs). This lack of incentive was both financial and also because there is a belief that non-compliance will not lead to a sanction:

“There needs to be a financial incentive. We have another scheme in which the CCTs are embedded in a financial commitment.”

“We knew that we were not going to be penalised if we did not say meet Green Dragon Level 1, so the CCT can lack teeth.”

In their interviews, the PDOs recognised the problem of the lack of leverage and incentive for projects to meet CCTs. PDOs also suggested that spend imperative in the Structural Funds system was a key problem for CCTs. For nearly a third of the projects interviewed, the CCTs were not seen as a top priority. This was often a by-product of lack of integration and a general lack of understanding regarding how the CCTs can benefit what is seen as the projects' main deliverables.

"I think the biggest reason for a lack of CCT work is that because we have had so, so many problems that the CCT were a fair few notches down the scale of importance."

Nearly a third of projects reported a tension between project and CCT goals. This separation could be seen as a problem in itself, as its recognition indicates a lack of integration within the project. However, for some projects there were real structural tensions which sometimes reflected poor initial CCT goal settings:

"We are working with a fixed workforce so it is not my problem if that workforce demographic is not politically correct with all the different types of people that WEFO want us to work with."

WEFO reporting requirements were highlighted as a barrier by nearly a third of responding projects. Projects saw the complexity of the data gathering and the project resource that this process consumed as having a big impact on their ability to deliver their project deliverables, including their CCTs. This does not simply refer to CCT reporting but reflects reporting in general:

"To retrospectively be told you have to go back and collect it all caused huge issues in setting up the programme, but also cause embarrassment of going back to clients 4 or 5 years down the line and asking for information."

While both ERDF and ESF projects gave a similar number of responses, there does appear to be some differences between the two funds with ERDF projects reporting higher levels of 'lack of incentive' (nearly half of the ERDF projects compared with less than one third of the ESF projects) and 'tick box mentality' (one in three projects for ERDF compared with one in seven for ESF). ESF projects reported higher levels of 'lack of training for Sponsor' (one quarter of the ESF projects compared with one in ten of the ERDF projects), 'WEFO changing targets' (one in five ESF compared

with one in ten ERDF) and 'Partners not supporting CCT work' (one in ten ESF projects but none of the ERDF projects).

We further sought to identify where and when these barriers emerged by asking the projects. Over half of the barriers are identified when the project delivers its activities. Only one in five projects interviewed identified the barriers at the business plan stage, so adjustments would need to be made retrospectively which is more difficult to achieve. This echoes the earlier finding that some projects sign up to unrealistic CCTs without a clear delivery plan.

This was supported by two of the WEFO staff cohort who thought planning is disconnected from the management of CCTs in projects and that the CCTs suffer from what this cohort perceived to be a generally risk-averse culture in WEFO. All five of the other WEFO staff agreed that changes in the overall approach to managing CCTs were needed along with the view that, with the exception of the CCT team, WEFO managers generally do not fully understand the implications of the CCTs, or manage with CCTs in mind.

Interviews with the PDOs also show a reasonable awareness of projects' key barriers. The main internal barrier identified by three PDO respondents is that 'WEFO does not manage for CCTs'. Two PDO respondents believed that CCTs are not seen by the projects as integral to the business case which was projects' second most reported barrier. This links with other comments regarding the gaps between planning and implementation and tension between wider project goals and CCTs. Other barriers suggested by PDOs were the projects' cost/benefit calculations to approaching the CCTs, the 'bolt-on' nature of CCTs, and the perception that companies did not want to engage with the CCTs.

3.2.1.8 Assessment

The ongoing WEFO assessment of indicator targets for CCTs built into a project's business plan plays a key part in measuring the projects' potential, and ongoing and final achievement. The assessment regime for CCTs has implications for providing targeted CCT support and for addressing some of the barriers to delivering CCTs. Accordingly, we sought to understand when CCTs are assessed, the appropriateness of the assessment, whether partners / deliverers understand the assessment, and if there were any issues regarding the collection of data. It seems important here to distinguish clearly between the realities of the CCT support structures and the perceptions of participants. We therefore begin this section with a description of the actual roles of the CCT team and other teams in WEFO with regard to data collection, assessment and evaluation.

Scope and nature of the CCT Team responsibilities regarding assessment

A Cross Cutting Theme (CCT) Assessment is produced by WEFO's CCT Team as part of the formal assessment of a Business Plan (BP). It consists of an analysis of the proposed contribution to be made by the Operation's Lead Beneficiary for each of the CCTs, including indicators, objectives, monitoring systems and reporting and makes recommendations to be considered before approval for funding is given. The CCT assessment provides both the PDO and the Lead Beneficiary the narrative to develop the opportunities further and ensure the mechanisms are in place for actions to be delivered.

An overall CCT rating is given (Minimal, Low, Medium, High) which is considered alongside ratings for other areas and forms part of the overall rating for the BP. The CCT Assessment rating can be amended upwards if recommendations made are accepted and added into the BP. Likewise an assessment can be amended downwards if, as the BP is developed further, the Lead Beneficiary withdraws some of the commitments originally made.

Once a project has been approved, there are no further CCT assessments, though the CCT Team may be involved in project reviews.

Research, Monitoring and Evaluation team's data collection and assessment

The research has identified that some sponsors have experienced significant issues with the collection of monitoring data. The CCT team is not responsible for the

collection and checking of any data, this role resides with WEFO's Research, Monitoring and Evaluation (RME) team. The data required by WEFO is varied and includes such things as beneficiary name, address, NI number, company information etc. which sits alongside demographic data. Because this broad range of data can have relevance for both the setting and the monitoring of CCT target indicators, the issues that arise with data collection are often referred to as being associated with the CCT's. As a result projects can wrongly perceive these data collection problems to be the domain of the CCTs Team.

Research Participant Perceptions

We turn again now to the reported perceptions of the research participants.

We asked '**When were the CCT assessed?**' All 39 projects responded, with the majority stating 'All the way through'. Seven projects believed they were assessed 'Towards the end of the project', five projects responded 'Occasionally' and 2 projects reported that they had not yet been assessed. There were no major differences by Fund. This highlights that sponsors' interpretation of the term 'assessment' may be inconsistent. Assessment could potentially be seen as the formal 'audit' process conducted by the Project Inspection and Verification (PIV) Team, requests for monitoring data from the Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Team, reporting back on CCT progress at regular project review meetings or other perceived forms of CCT 'assessment'.

When asked whether the assessments were appropriate for their CCTs, 15 of the sponsors responded positively while 22 did not believe the assessments were appropriate providing 30 responses of dissatisfaction with the process. This high figure means that the negative respondents must include successful CCT projects.

The responses were separated into different types. Eight projects reported that the measurements were not appropriate to their clients / partner group. Six projects were of the opinion there was insufficient support regarding data gathering, while five projects stated that the data gathering placed a disproportionate impact on the work of the project.

Indicative quotes...

"We have quarterly meetings and any issues are brought up there verbally and then followed with a written update or mini report. That would then get

transferred to the cross cutting themes team for assessment and then if they wanted to come to us direct they could, normally you go to your PDO first, but then normally Chriss or someone from her team would come to us direct. Chriss has been brilliant throughout, always supportive, helpful. You know always insightful and helpful comments on things and steering us in the right direction.”

“Aim was to make sure that improvement happens through the internal targets and CCT targets. The project exit survey is an opportunity to measure success. Holistic measurement is needed. Currently the targets and reporting do not allow you to capture the whole story. Forms, publicity etc. are part of our excellence but only acknowledged informally.”

“They’re saying that they want a CCT report, but I have had no guidance on what that looks like – no one here had ever submitted anything like it to WEFO before me. No one had done anything to be honest.”

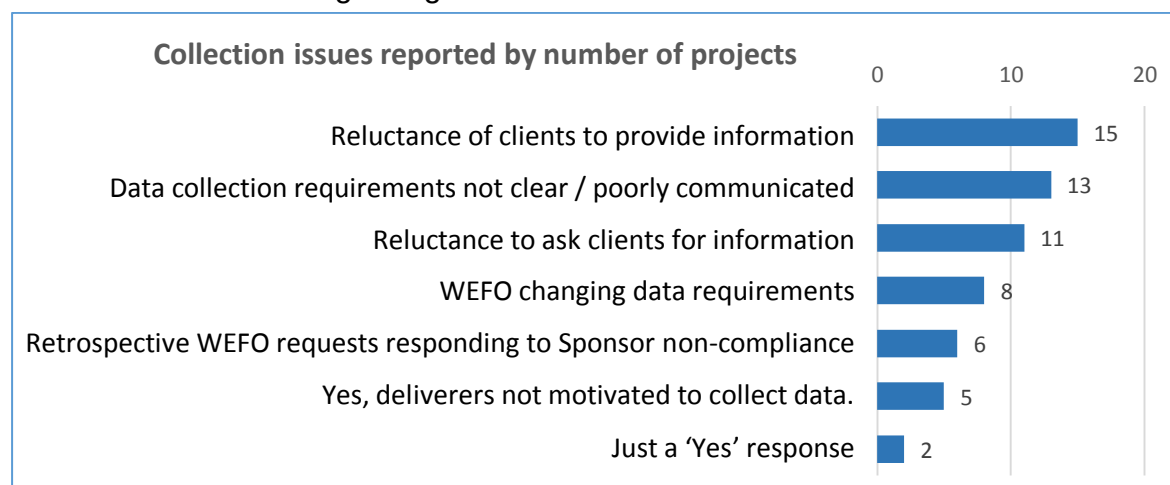
“On a number of occasions there hasn’t been a clear understanding of the requirements on collecting or reporting on data.”

We also wanted to explore the impact of audit requirements² amongst the projects’ partner / deliverers in terms of the CCTs. When asked whether their partners / deliverers understand the audit requirements around one third said that they did while around two thirds said they did not.

When asked whether there were any issues regarding the collection of data 12 of the 38 projects (nearly one third) reported no issues while the remaining 26 (two thirds) reported 60 data collection problems which were grouped into six types and are displayed in the Chart below.

² Project sponsors were asked about audit requirements but, as previously described, it is uncertain how the term has been interpreted. Answers could therefore refer to regular project reviews, RME data requirements or more formal project inspections (by the PIV team).

Chart 5 Issues regarding the collection of data



Of the 26 projects reporting data collection issues, 15 stated that clients were reluctant to provide information for reasons that included a perceived rudeness in requesting their age and disability status. Several projects also reported that some clients could not complete forms because they were dyslexic / illiterate and were too embarrassed to ask for assistance. A lack of clear understanding regarding data collection was reported by 13 projects who felt that these requirements were poorly communicated by WEFO. The combination of collection issues resulted in over a quarter of the projects interviewed being reluctant to ask clients for information they are required to provide.

Indicative quotes...

"The beneficiaries' forms are very onerous and we have developed shorter versions, fill in a lot of the questions that we can before meeting with clients and again spend time explaining the purpose of collecting all of the data. Data collection needs to be addressed"

"Initially a struggle, but once we started putting in place regular audits from about 6 months in; we laid out exactly what we needed in terms of WEFO's requirements"

"Initially WEFO didn't tell us that they wanted beneficiary data with each claim and they didn't tell us until 2012. We found out when we had a major re-profile"

Of the 13 'CCT-unsuccessful' projects, only two reported no problems in collecting data compared with 10 of the 25 'CCT-successful' projects. Just under one third of

the unsuccessful projects also report that their deliverers are not motivated to collect the data compared with one eighth of the successful projects.

There were related findings from the views expressed in the Regional Workshops. There were consistent comments from all three workshops that the assessment of projects and also the monthly reporting was more concerned with accurate processes than with the overall achievements of the projects. This was described by one participant as the monitoring process being “*set up to catch you out, with WEFO just interested in the paper trail*”. There was a general sense amongst the projects we interviewed that WEFO did not value the quality of what projects were delivering as much as having all the ‘boxes ticked’ for record keeping. The numerical targets allocated at the start of projects are too blunt an instrument to reflect the achievements of a project.

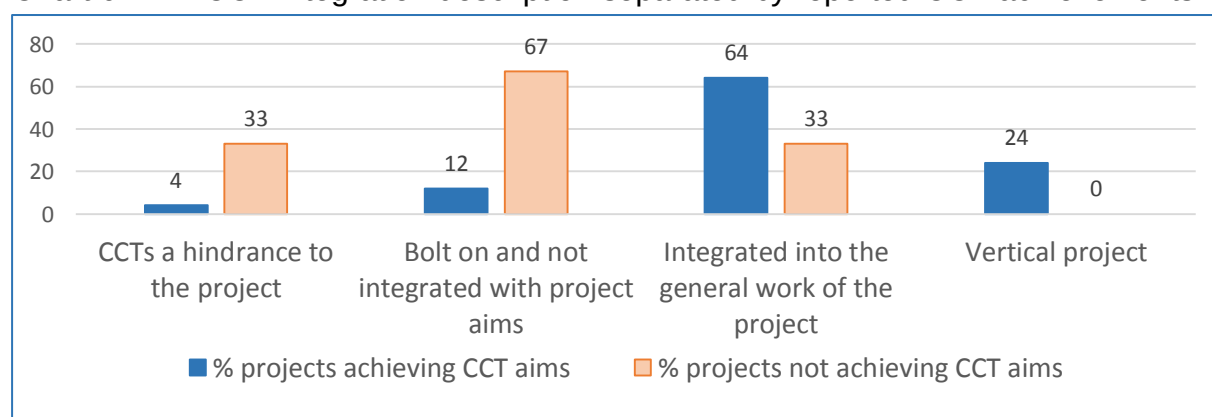
3.2.1.9 Integration of CCTs

The aim of fully integrating the CCTs of EO and ES in projects funded by the Structural Funds is set out in the CCT Guidance provided by WEFO and available on the WEFO website. . For the purposes of this research we have treated the concepts of ‘integration’ and ‘mainstreaming’ as one, adopting the term ‘integration’ to describe them both. However, the interviews revealed the potential differences in understanding between these two terms on the ground. Mainstreaming has been perceived in some of the interviews as EO and ES becoming common practice (e.g. via university equality / environmental policies or as part of the planning system). In contrast, two of the PDOs suggested integration really meant consistency of standards across Wales on CCTs. As a result some sponsors are not actively considering how to integrate the CCTs: they acknowledge the existence of the policies and consider this to be ‘covering the CCTs’. The integration of the CCTs into general aims and activities of the projects has been seen as a challenge by many projects. This has already been illustrated in the way CCT aims are created.

To further examine the perceived level of CCT integration, we asked sponsors to describe the level of integration of the CCTs within their project. Half of the projects (20 of the 39) reported that the CCTs were integrated into the general work of the project and a further 6 projects implied this was the case due to their being vertical projects, specifically aimed at CCTs. The remaining 16 projects did not feel that the

CCTs were integrated into the project aims, with a little over a quarter (11) describing them as a ‘bolt on’ and 5 describing the CCTs as a hindrance to the project. Likewise the PDOs and other WEFO staff displayed differing views regarding the success of the integration of CCTs with one PDO claiming there was a high level of integration and another PDO claiming the opposite – that CCTs are a ‘bolt on’. Chart 6 presents projects’ perceptions separated by reported level of CCT achievement.

Chart 6 CCT integration description separated by reported CCT achievements



Indicative quotes...

“I struggle when trying to make these things real; say looking at the integration of a marketing strategy and how to embed ES into it? We are not a model project regarding CCTs. CCTs have been a bit of a bolt on.”

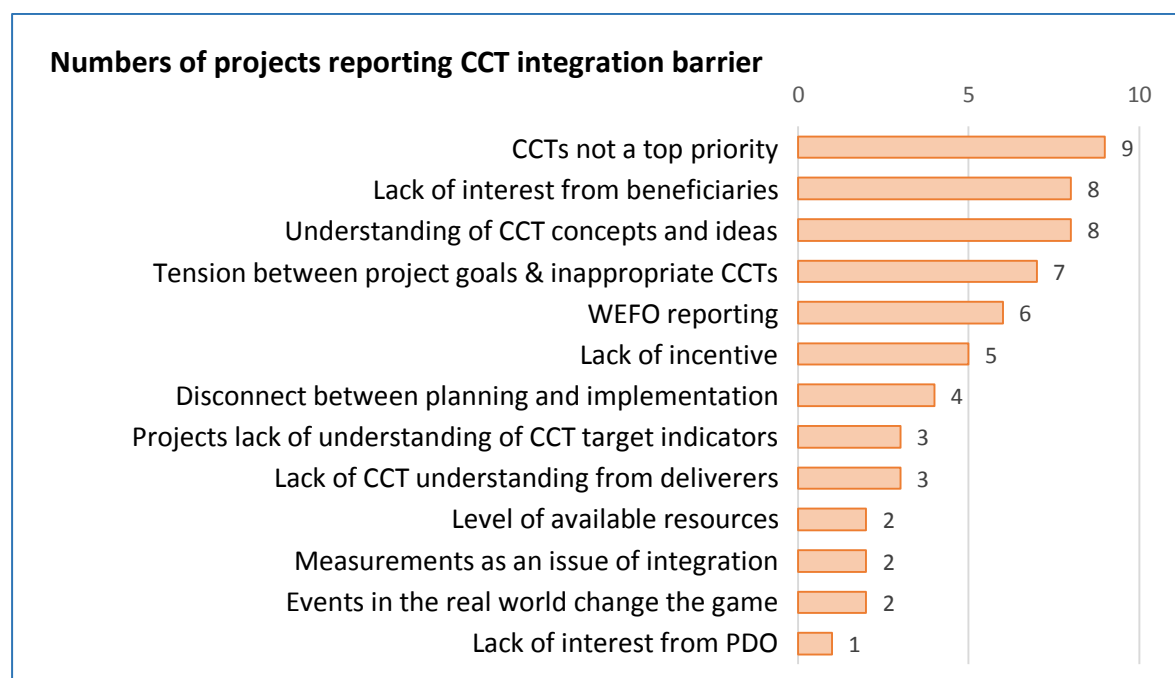
“The CCTs weren’t detrimental but they were not the main focus of the project, you could say that there is a hierarchy of targets.”

“Initially we dealt with the targets individually and very quickly realised that the client needed a holistic approach to the service we provide – so everything under one banner, finance, HR, marketing, forecasting, legal status, legal compliance, EO and ES, business planning etc. etc. so all the client sees or experiences is one piece of work with everything bundled up together. This way people are less like to pick and choose what they want to do and what they don’t want to do.”

There appears to be a strong link between successful CCT activities and perceived good integration. This echoes the connection between successful CCT activities and a proactive approach to developing CCT aims.

When asked what barriers there were to CCT integration seven projects reported no barriers. A total of 60 barriers to integration were suggested by 30 respondents which we have grouped into 13 response types displayed in the chart below.

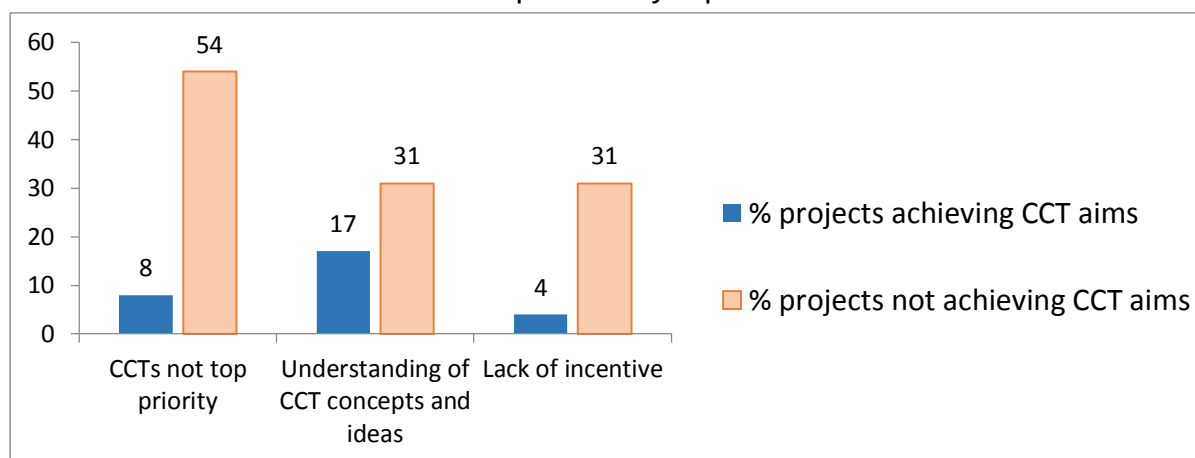
Chart 7 Barriers to CCT integration



Around a quarter of the projects indicated that the lack of CCTs being a priority resulted in low CCT / project work integration. This lack of priority may have been driven by a lack of understanding in regards to CCT concepts and ideas and how they can be integrated into the projects' other deliverables. One in five projects suggested that a lack of interest from beneficiaries was the reason for the lack of integration claiming that many beneficiaries could not see any benefit from one or more of the CCTs. For instance, businesses often found it easier to understand how the ES CCT could be of benefit as it could offer immediate cost savings, which may not be the case for the EO CCT.

Responses can also be grouped into their indicative causes, with seven linked to a lack of resources, seven referring to real world events that changed the working landscape, while the other 46 responses related to attitudes and lack of knowledge. The responses also revealed a link between the reported success of CCT aims and the reported incidence of barriers to integration with a much higher proportion of projects who did not achieve their CCT aims reporting barriers (Chart 8).

Chart 8 Barrier root causes separated by reported CCT achievements



Indicative quotes...

“Well there was a lack of knowledge in some areas and a passive attitude towards the crosscutting themes which we had to address. There is also the question of values and attitudes which can lead people away from working in this area.”

“Initial problems with engaging beneficiaries. Eventually overcome by offering a financial incentive to action and complete CCT action plans”

“No real work done to ensure CCTs are integrated – just rely on LA to do it.”

“We needed more support from WEFO CCT team right from the start and not 4 years in.”

“Having it as a separate section in the BP does not encourage integration. You are sometimes forced to bolt on rather than integrate in order to respond to the demands of WEFO.”

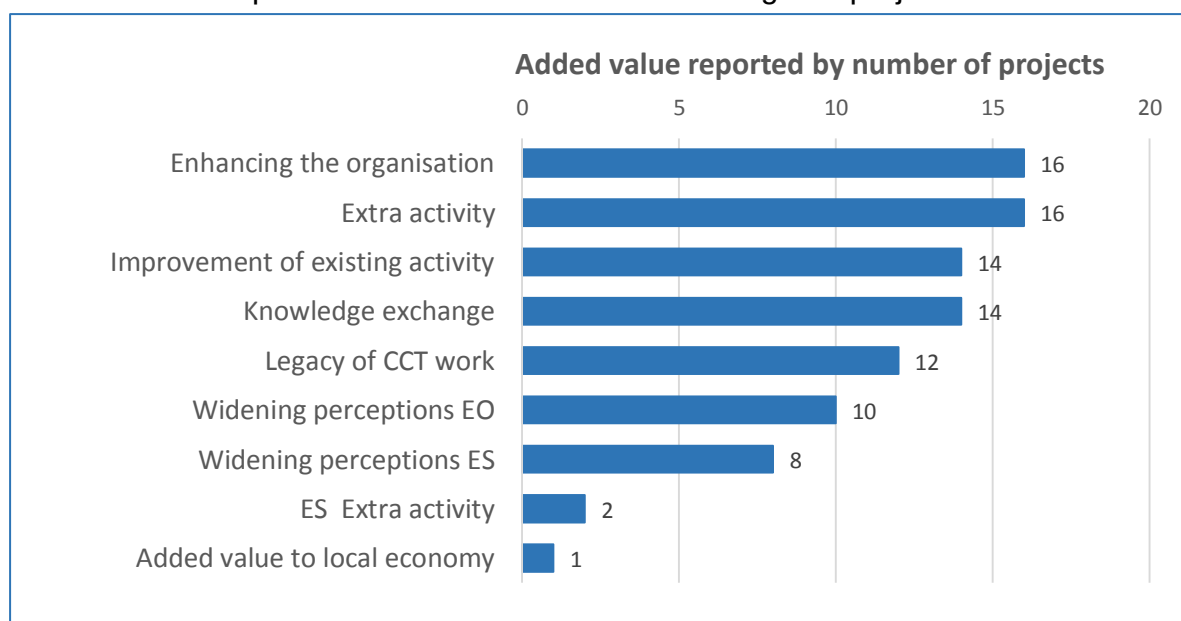
WEFO staff (both the PDOs and other WEFO staff cohort) recognise the good work of the CCT team on integration, but also recognise the need for a broader, cross-departmental approach to the way WEFO as an organisation administers the CCTs. The other WEFO staff cohort stated that changes in the overall approach to managing CCTs were needed along with the view that, with the exception of the CCT team, WEFO managers generally do not fully understand the implications of the CCTs, or manage with CCTs in mind. These respondents also recognised the problem of the lack of leverage and lack of incentive for projects to meet CCTs. Three respondents from this cohort agreed that the spend imperative in the

Structural Funds system was a key problem for CCTs. In addition two respondents indicated the planning and the management of CCTs in projects are disconnected.

3.2.1.10 Added Value

Of the 38 projects that responded, 8 reported that the CCTs contributed no added value to their project, while the 30 remaining projects gave 96 responses outlining how the CCTs did add value to their project. These responses were grouped into the nine forms of added value that can be seen in the chart below.

Chart 9 Reported Added Value that CCTs brought to projects



Indicative quotes...

*“It refers to anything that is over and above what the original project aimed to do. So whatever your project set out to achieve with **additionality**. So the CCTs to me have definitely added value to the project.”*

“It is an enormous source of innovation and it allows us to enter new avenues of collaboration, target organisations and groups that we would not otherwise have been able to access because they wouldn’t have been part of our usual core areas of work.”

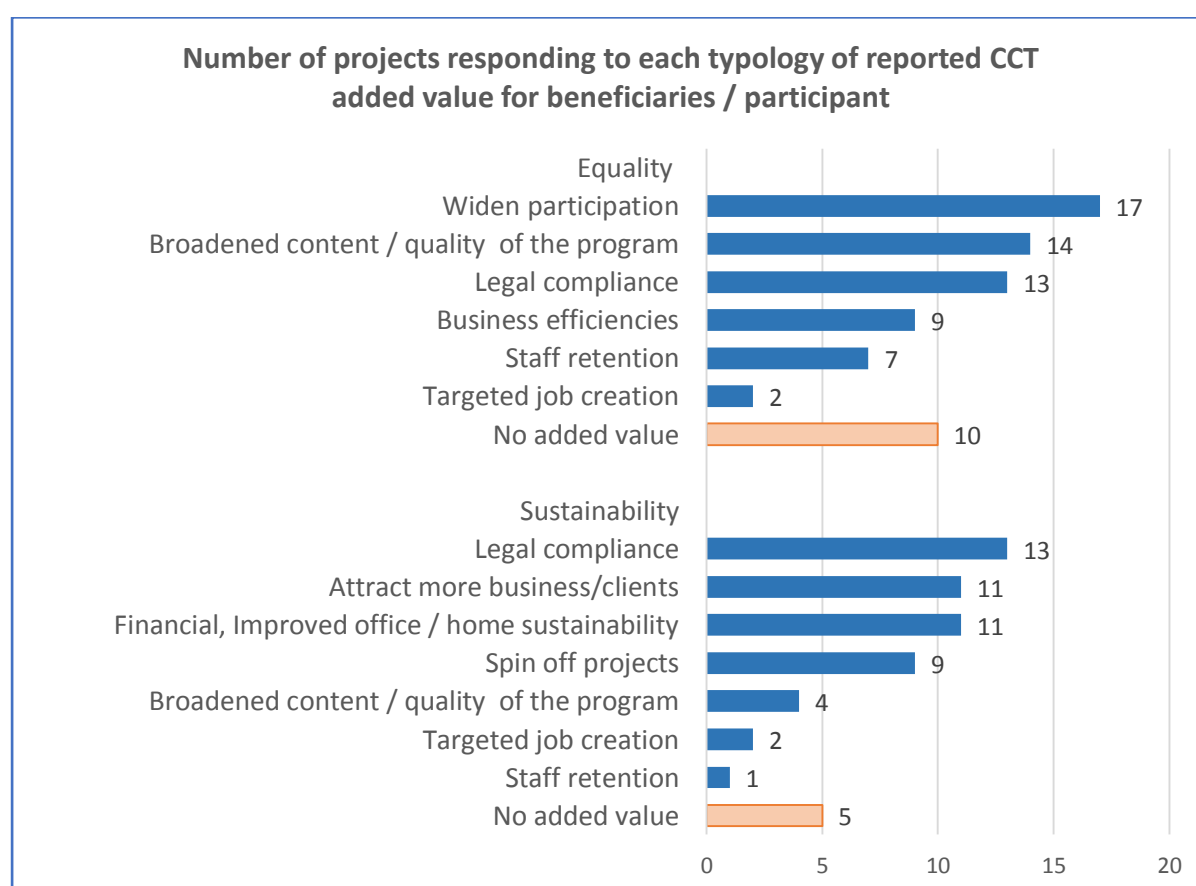
“I don’t think it always means monetary value either – I would say the community benefits have been excellent – the greater community cohesion, the increased working relationship and trust between the community and the council...you can’t put a figure on it, but the effects are massively positive.”

The responses showed very different ideas of the concept from projects that were claiming that they had successfully delivered their CCT objectives and those who had not. Successful projects had a greater understanding of the added benefits from the CCTs that they could have in regards to their own organisation, the projects activities and the issues around social value and legacy.

Eight respondents stated there was no added value and a further three stated that there was no added value in regards to the EO CCT.

We then asked about the added value of CCT activities to beneficiaries/participants: 38 projects gave 132 responses. Some of the responses differed for each of the two CCTs, so we grouped them separately in the Chart 10.

Chart 10 Added Value type for beneficiaries / participants - reported by projects



There were 72 responses for the EO CCT while for the ES there was 56 indicating that the projects generally found it easier to identify added value for the beneficiaries / participants within the EO CCT activities. The largest EO response was 'Widen participation' with this type of response being unique to the EO CCT reflecting the people centred nature of the EO CCT. The ES related responses were far more focused on organisational, financial and business development. For both the EO and

ES CCTs, 13 projects identified 'Legal Compliance' as added value for the beneficiaries / participants. However, this being the highest response for the ES CCT, coupled with it also representing a far higher proportion of the ES responses, suggests a greater compliance attitude towards the ES CCT.

Project sponsors who perceived their projects were successful in delivering their CCT aims were more likely to report added value than those who did not. However, the reverse was true for the 'legal compliance' responses, with those projects that did not perceive their projects as successful in delivering their CCT aims more likely to report added value of the CCTs in relation to legal compliance.

This lack of a common understanding of added value was also reflected in the responses of the interviewed PDOs and other WEFO staff. This understanding included interpreting added value as 'extra activity or improvement of existing activity' (two PDOs and two other WEFO staff), the 'widening perceptions of Equal Opportunities and Environmental Sustainability' (two of the other WEFO staff cohort) while the other two PDO respondents suggested that CCT added value benefits are the 'soft' achievements and are therefore not easily reported on.

3.2.1.11 Relationships

The research examined the relationships between the projects and their deliverers / partners and how these relationships affected delivery of the CCTs. Over half of the respondents (22) said the project deliverers / partners were not involved in setting the CCT aims for the project. Only, two said yes, two did not know and the remaining 11 responded that they were sponsor deliverers.

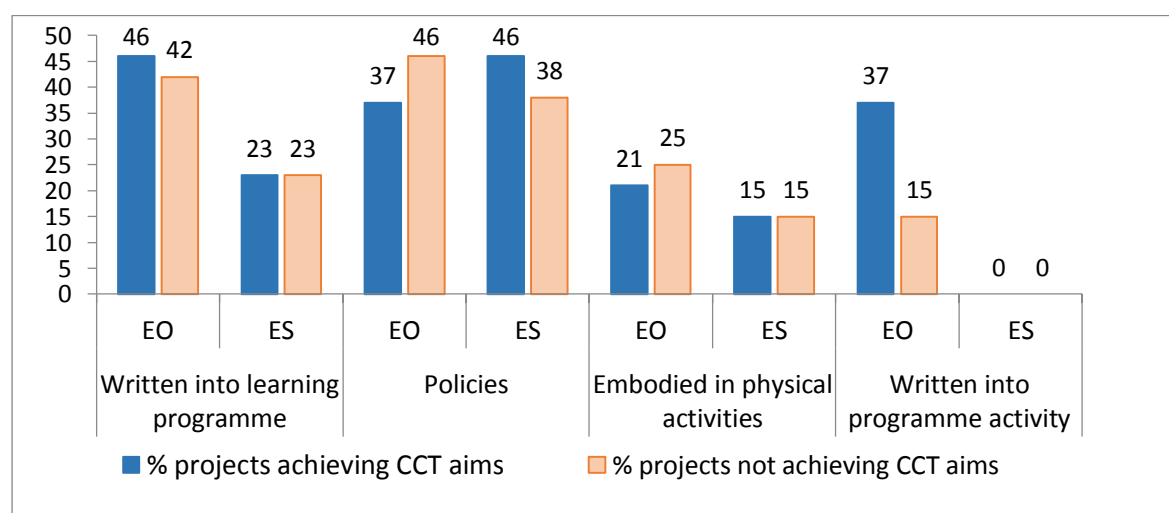
“One of the things I would change is, having a lot more involvement with the stakeholders at the beginning. We’ve learnt that from the external evaluations. So that is something we are looking to do for the next round.”

We wanted to discover if there was a pattern between how the projects' deliverers / partners understand the CCT aims and project success in that area, so we asked the question: **'How did project deliverers / partners understand the CCT aims?'**

There were 69 responses from 24 successful projects and 31 responses from the 13 unsuccessful projects. The responses were grouped into types. For some projects the question was not relevant as they were sponsor deliverers. For a small number of projects no CCT information was provided to project deliverers / partners. This

was more often the case for projects not succeeding in the delivery of their CCT aims than those projects that were more successful. These projects commented that either the deliverers / partners did not need to know or that with hindsight the information should have been given. Where projects responded that CCT information had been provided to deliverers / partners (chart 11), their responses are expressed as a percentage of each cohort (achieving and not achieving CCT aims) to allow a direct comparison for each response type.

Chart 11 Project deliverers' understanding of the CCT aims separated by CCT achievement



Overall responses were similar for projects succeeding in delivery of their CCT aims and projects not succeeding. One exception was for the EO CCT, where more projects who felt they had achieved their CCT aims responded that the CCTs were written into programme activity (no projects reported this for ES).

Indicative quotes...

"In regards to the process like the forms and also regarding case by case issues....., things like access, language, disability and the rest. These equality issues could be complex and not simply put into a guidance note, they would have to be discussed face to face work where these complex equality issues could be worked through."

"Within the delivery structure, we have dedicated people looking at ES and EO. For instance we also bring in special guests and experts that will give workshops or seminars on certain subjects. Recently, we had some one come up from Whitehall and gave a seminar explaining the changes to the Equality Act and the impact it will have on businesses in Wales."

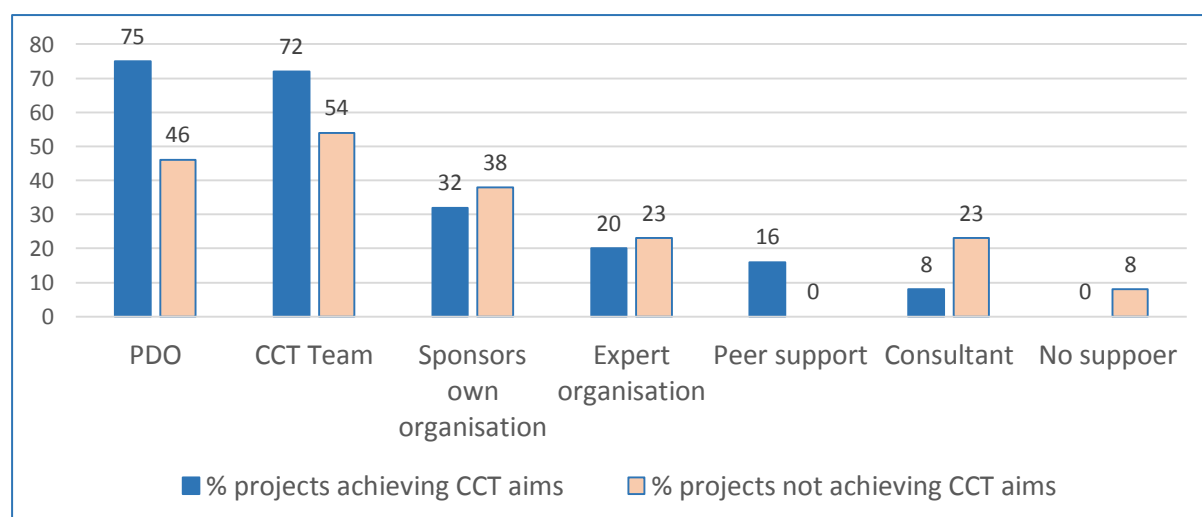
“There has never been a meeting between us and the partners where we have said these are our targets, you need to do this.”

3.2.1.12 CCT guidance and Support

This theme is a key research question within this evaluation. The section focuses initially on the direct support provided to sponsors by the CCT team, by WEFO staff or from other sources, followed by perceptions of the written CCT guidance and finally on the support provided to sponsors’ deliverers / partners. Some respondents found it a challenge to separate one form of WEFO guidance from another. We became aware of this throughout the interviews so we shaped the questions and the interview structure (using recapitulation techniques) to illicit the projects’ opinions on the WEFO CCT Guidance. For this reason, some projects’ responses may relate to WEFO Guidance as a whole rather than simply WEFO CCT Guidance, resulting in the possibility of misplaced negativity towards the CCT Guidance. The project perceptions on WEFO CCT guidance do not reflect views on the newly developed guidance for the 2014-2020 Structural Funds Programme.

The research sought to explore if, and where, there was a difference between the support sources of successful and unsuccessful projects. Results are shown in the chart below.

Chart 12 Source of support separated by CCT achievement



Indicative quotes...

“PDO very supportive and always refers to CCT team”

“Chriss O’Connell or David Thomas. They were both very good - they were completely overworked but they did answer our questions.”

“Informally use peer support from neighbouring similar regeneration projects.”

The key sources of direct support reported by projects were from the PDOs and from the CCT team, followed by support from the sponsors’ own organisation. The CCT-successful projects more often reported receiving support from the CCT Team and from their PDO (although these were also a key source of support for projects who did not achieve their CCT aims). A greater proportion of ‘CCT unsuccessful’ projects received support from external consultants and only projects who perceived themselves to have successfully delivered their CCT aims reported receiving support from peers.

The key issues identified by WEFO staff connected to CCTs were the small size of the team relative to the number of projects, the importance of the timing of the support, and the issue of whom within WEFO has responsibility for developing the CCTs with projects. Communication and support issues regarding targets were raised by three of the WEFO staff cohort which can be linked back to issues with measurement of the aims. WEFO staff other than PDOs suggested that CCTs need to be embedded in the work of the PDOs with the CCT team providing more strategic support.

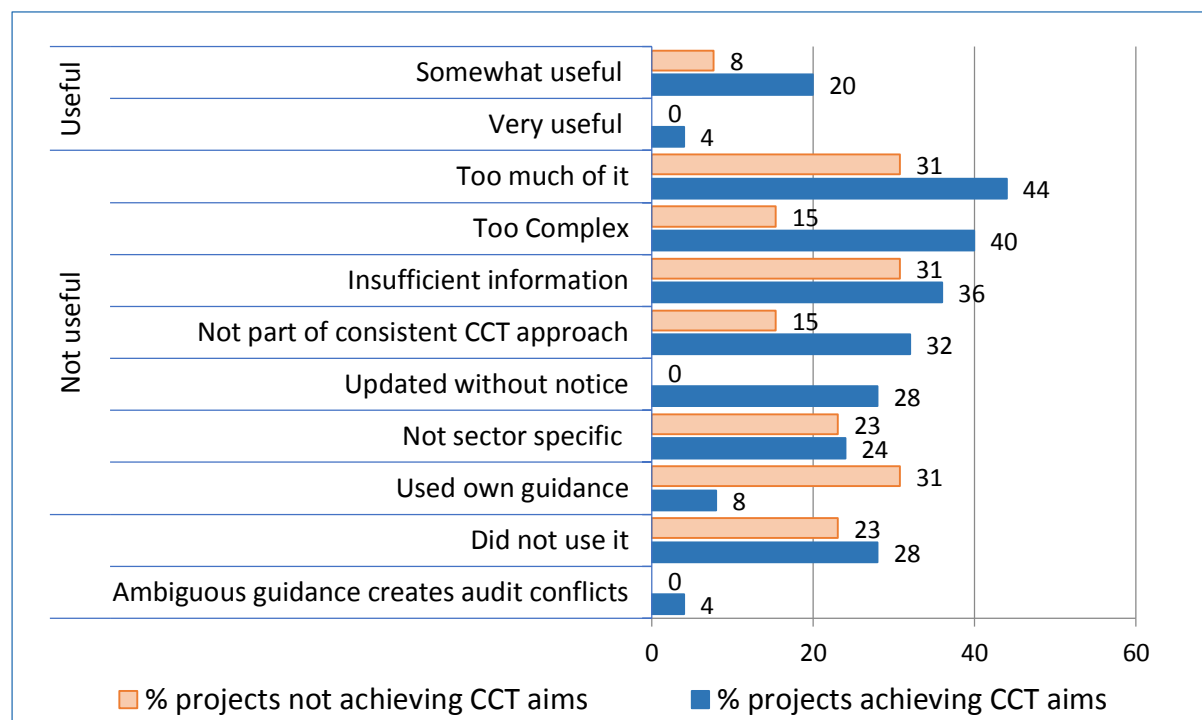
Three of the four PDOs showed an appreciation of the CCT Team and that they can be relied upon for CCT advice. Support from outside WEFO was also mentioned as important by two PDO respondents though only up to a third of projects had mentioned any one of the sources outside WEFO. This is worth considering given that when asked about best practice, three of the PDOs suggested that sharing knowledge is the most critical factor.

Chart 13 provides a breakdown of comments on the WEFO CCT guidance. It can be seen that both CCT unsuccessful and successful projects had issues with the guidance, though these issues varied between projects with no particular pattern to responses.

PDOs had mixed views on the quality of the CCT guidance, with two PDO respondents saying it was good and useful and two expressing the opposite opinion.

The other WEFO staff generally felt that the guidance provided was not useful and that it did not form a part of a consistent WEFO message on CCTs.

Chart 13 Projects response to WEFO guidance separated by CCT achievement



Indicative quotes...

"There was a lot of WEFO guidance and quite a lot was not relevant.

The guidance is very wordy. The guidance needs to be written for the deliverers with less jargon. There needs to be separate guidance for ESF and ERDF."

"They update their guidance and don't tell anyone? It's quite bizarre considering they're asking projects to work towards targets or whatever and then to change the goal posts and not tell anyone."

"It isn't easy to understand. The problem I think they have is that they are trying to give advice to all types of businesses and it doesn't always work – sometimes I read it, understand what it is trying to say, but then struggle to try and make it apply. Or how does that apply to this specific business that we are trying to help. I try to avoid using it myself."

Sponsors' deliverers / partners often need support in different aspects of the project and the research sought to discover where this support was coming from and

whether there was a difference between projects that are successful and unsuccessful in regards to their CCT work. When asked whether they had at any time provided support to their deliverers/partners on CCTs and/or refer them to any other sources of support, half of the CCT-successful projects provided CCT support through 'Internal employed support people' while no support was offered this way by the unsuccessful projects.

WEFO staff connected to CCTs identified three areas that CCT support can be further developed:

1. Easy to understand guidance that relates to 'on-the-ground' issues
2. Peer support mechanisms
3. A bespoke project that concentrates on CCTs.

Views expressed at the three Regional Workshops centred on earlier involvement of the CCT Team, sharing of guidance / case studies and the importance of consistency and clarity.

3.2.1.13 Messages received by the projects on CCTs

The research has indicated that a key factor to success is ensuring the motivation of all those involved in delivering the CCTs. Strong positive messages about the importance of CCTs could help to improve understanding and may act as a motivating factor. We asked each project questions regarding the messages that they received from WEFO about the CCTs.

We asked: **Did you get any messages that the CCTs were important in:**

1. Helping to deliver the European Structural Funds programme?
2. Helping to deliver Welsh Government policies on Equality and Sustainability?
3. Helping to deliver your own organisation's equality and environmental / sustainability objectives?

Of the 38 responding project sponsors, 12 reported that they had not received any of the messages, while the remaining 25 projects had received at least one. There was a fairly even mix between projects who answered that they had or had not received each of the three messages, which were provided equally by both the PDOs and the CCT team. The majority of respondents who received these messages did not find them useful in assisting in their understanding of the CCTs. There was some

evidence that the messages are less useful when they remain at a European policy level and are not linked directly to the work of the project.

3.2.1.14 Overall reflections on CCTs contribution and relevance

When asked to summarise their overall reflections about the CCTs, nearly three quarters of the 38 projects saw the CCTs as useful to the project and at best essential or sparking innovation. The remaining 11 projects judged the CCTs to be a hindrance and /or not useful to the project. This is in keeping with a view expressed by the PDOs, some of whom felt that generally CCTs ‘rounded out’ a project (and gave greater prominence to EO and ES), but at a cost to projects of being time-consuming. However, there is a marked difference between how the successful and the unsuccessful projects, in relation to CCT achievements, view the CCTs. Just two of the 25 successful projects judged the CCTs as a hindrance and not useful to the project compared with over two thirds of the unsuccessful projects. These responses are laid out in chart 14 and are expressed as a percentage of each cohort to allow a direct comparison for each grouped response.

Chart 14 Summary of projects reflections on the CCTs separated by CCT achievement

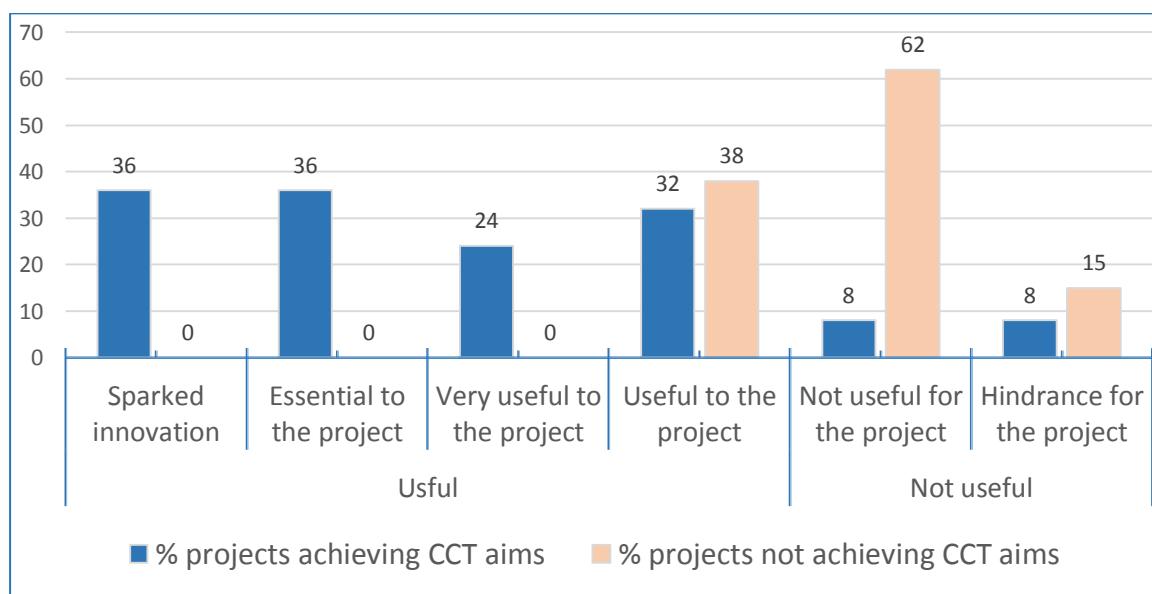


Chart 14 clearly indicates that none of the unsuccessful projects responded to the three most positive response groups, ‘Sparked interest’, ‘Essential to the project’ and ‘very useful to the project’. WEFO staff felt that projects are able to progress from compliance to innovation and that this progression can take many different forms.

Around a third of the projects who succeeded in delivery of their CCT aims felt the CCTs had sparked innovation. In general, the lack of links or concepts regarding innovation from PDOs was perhaps something to think about in terms of flagging up the opportunities for innovation that CCTs provide.

Indicative quotes...

“Organisations can sometimes see the need to meet the CCT requirements as a time consuming barrier to receiving assistance. Through innovation the project was able to help organisations address CCT requirements in a quick and easy manner.”

“We have done what we were asked to do but this work was never of any high importance for the project.”

When asked about the reasons for the projects' performance in relation to the CCT aims, a third to a half of successful projects reported the reasons for their CCT performance as; 'we had a dedicated person / team', 'good initial planning', 'not core activity but organisation is committed to CCTs', 'support from CCT team' and 'it is the organisations' core activity'. For the projects that were not succeeding, responses included; 'lack of WEFO support', 'lack of resources / time', 'lack of PDO advice consistency / continuity' and 'lack of motivation'. This demonstrates that for successful projects, the majority of the responses were considered to be internal factors (dedicated / committed project team etc.). For unsuccessful projects more of the reasons were related to external factors (e.g. quantity and quality of advice and support from different sources).

Indicative quotes...

“Having a dedicated person that co-ordinates it all together and having clear goals at the beginning of the project.”

“I don't think it would work if you haven't thought or addressed the CCTs from the very beginning in the BP”

“We work very closely with the CCT team and they are very, very helpful indeed.”

“WEFO needs to produce a sort of cook book with this is exactly what we need from you, this is what you need to look out for, this is what you need to

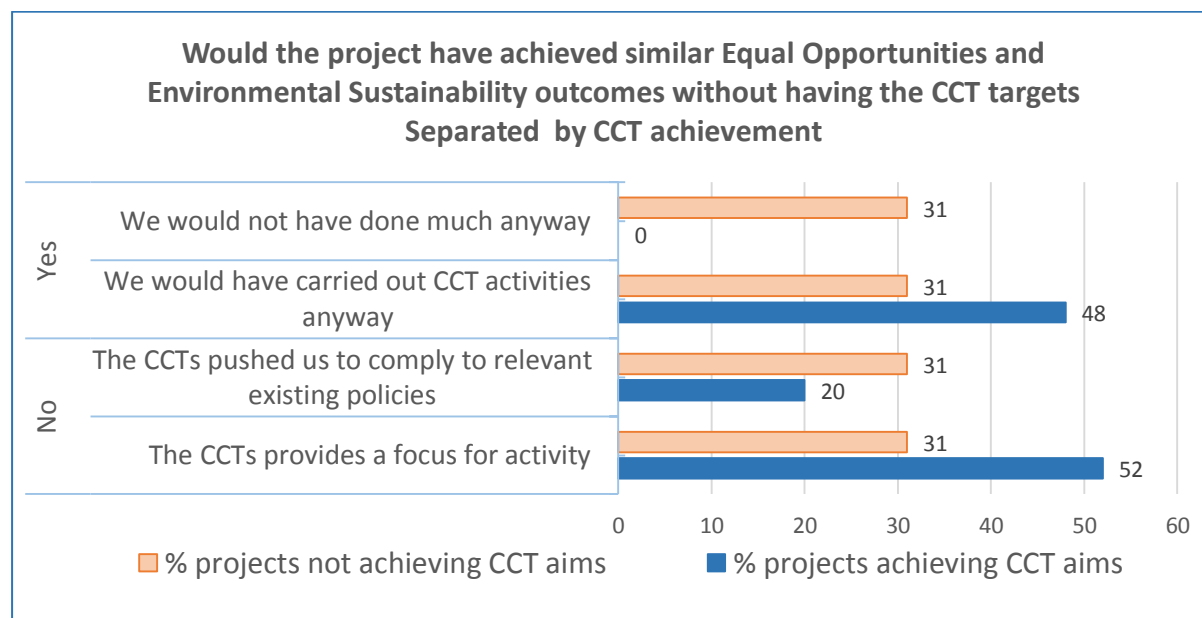
do, this is what they need to do and so the clearer you are on what to look for, if you've never been involved in something like this [CCTs] before."

When asked whether the project would have achieved similar Equal Opportunities and Environmental Sustainability outcomes without having the CCT targets responses tended to suggest that the CCTs offered a practical framework to carry out or to improve their CCT related activities. The difference between the CCT successful and unsuccessful projects was also apparent in that four of the unsuccessful projects gave the impression they may have carried out little CCT activity regardless of whether or not CCTs were included.

Chart 15 illustrates the responses for the percentage of projects who achieved their CCT aims in contrast with the percentage of projects that did not.

There were 46 responses from the 38 projects. This was because 8 projects gave 2 responses reflecting their different views of their EO and ES CCT activities. As the table below indicates, these extra responses resulted in groupings that total more than 100%.

Chart 15 Perception of potential CCT achievements without CCT targets



Indicative quotes...

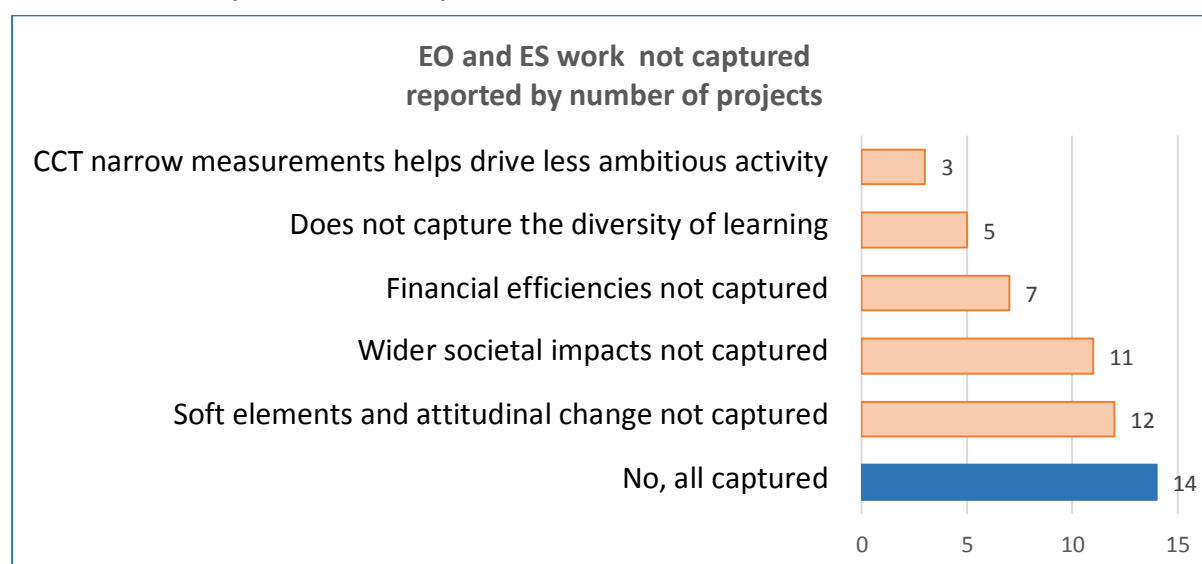
"The CCTs did make a difference helped you focus the mind."

“However on the plus side CCTs contributed to requests to partners for Equal Opportunities and Sustainability policies – though these were not necessarily followed up on.”

“Yes but the CCTs helped us get there quicker and with more structure.”

Nearly three quarters of projects reported that there were **project achievements in the areas of Equal Opportunities and Environmental Sustainability that were not captured in the CCT aims**. Chart 16 shows the variety of activity that projects reported as not captured.

Chart 16 Good practice not captured



Indicative quotes...

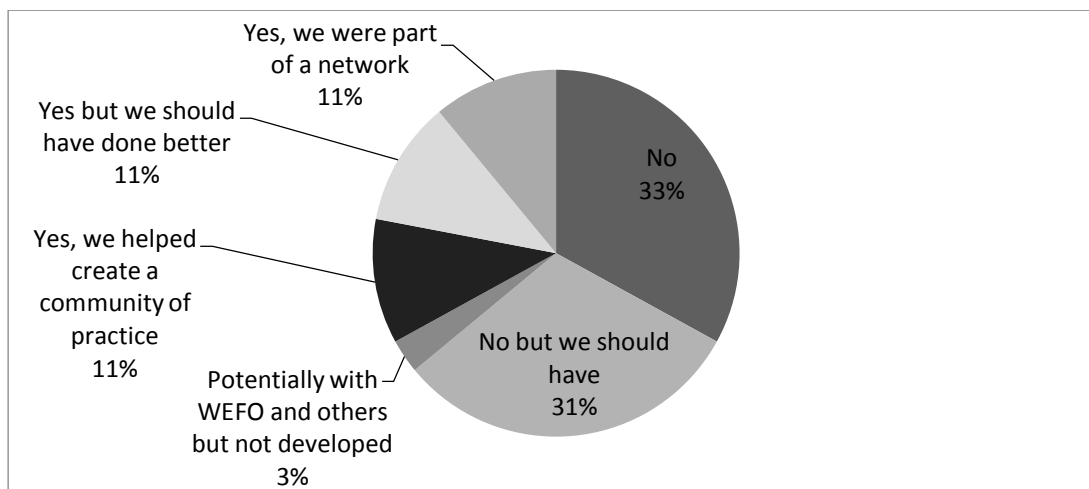
“I would say the community benefits have been excellent – the greater community cohesion, the increased working relationship and trust between the community and the council...you can’t put a figure on it, but the effects are massively positive.”

“One organisation for instance saved £80,000 because of our equality work with them, and this is not captured by the WEFO system.”

The interviewees were asked to consider whether, in the light of the connections created by CCT work, they felt at any time that they were a member of a ‘Community

of Practice' for example sharing experience and ideas on CCT achievement with other projects. The majority of respondents did not feel part of a Community.

Chart 17 Projects perceptions of feeling part of a Community of Practice



Indicative quotes...

"No but we should have. The thing that covers it is working together. Working together with WEFO, working together with other projects, rather than this adversarial approach."

"Yes we helped to create that – The forum is one good place to network. Linking with other programmes – exchanging information."

"Yes, we have a network where we discussed the CCTs, this was useful"

Three respondents felt that that there is a lot more to CCT delivery than the targets acknowledge and a further three acknowledged the wider drivers of political priorities contributing to the current kinds of measurement. There were also related findings from the three Regional Workshops:

- *"WEFO needs to be less adversarial"*
- *"We want to feel part of the same team making things better for Wales."*
- *"Group support sessions would be something that we would attend – it is a good way if capturing equality ideas across all sectors and having a wider perspective"*

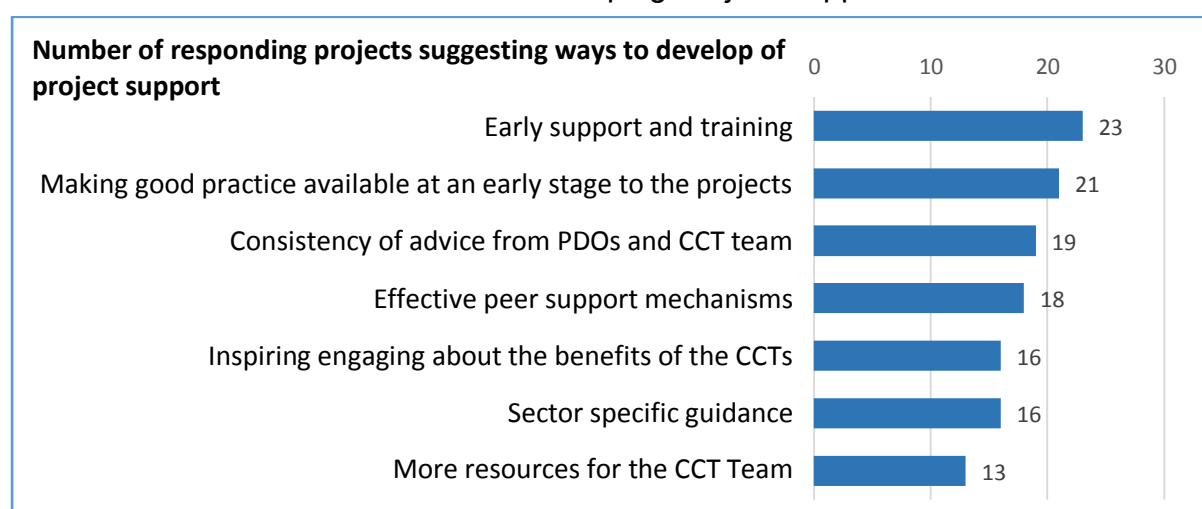
3.2.1.15 Recommendations from the projects

To complete the project interviews we sought the interviewees' recommendations on how to further develop WEFO's CCT activities by asking how projects could better achieve their CCT aims. The responses were grouped into three areas; Support, Management and Monitoring and Evaluation. Projects may have responded in multiple ways within each category.

a) Developing Project Support

Most of the projects responded that improved project support would assist in achieving CCT aims. These responses were grouped into seven distinct areas (chart 18). Early support and training in CCTs, including identifying appropriate aims and developing a delivery plan for those aims, was the most important area for most respondents across the interview groups (Projects, PDOs and other WEFO staff). This covers training projects but also training WEFO staff themselves and the PMC members. The next most important issue is finding ways to make good practice and experience available to be built on. A further important area is that the advice from the WEFO teams – CCT team and PDOs needs to be consistent, giving a clear message to projects. The project respondents particularly felt that making the CCTs inspiring is important for motivation and that guidance needs to be made more relevant by being customised for the different sectors in Structural Funds programmes. More resources for the CCT team was a key recommendation, especially from the projects who generally appreciate their efforts greatly.

Chart 18 Recommendations - 'Developing Project Support'



Indicative quotes...

“I think that people/projects bidding for funding should receive training right at the very beginning on why equality [and environment] is important and why the design of the project will be influenced by it. Right at the beginning, at the business plan stage and not afterwards because it’s often too late then. You need the time and effort at the beginning to allow people to understand why EO and ES should be a goal of the project and not the add-on at the end.”

“Access to a framework of specialists from WEFO to help with CCT work who we could call on with confidence. That would be very helpful.”

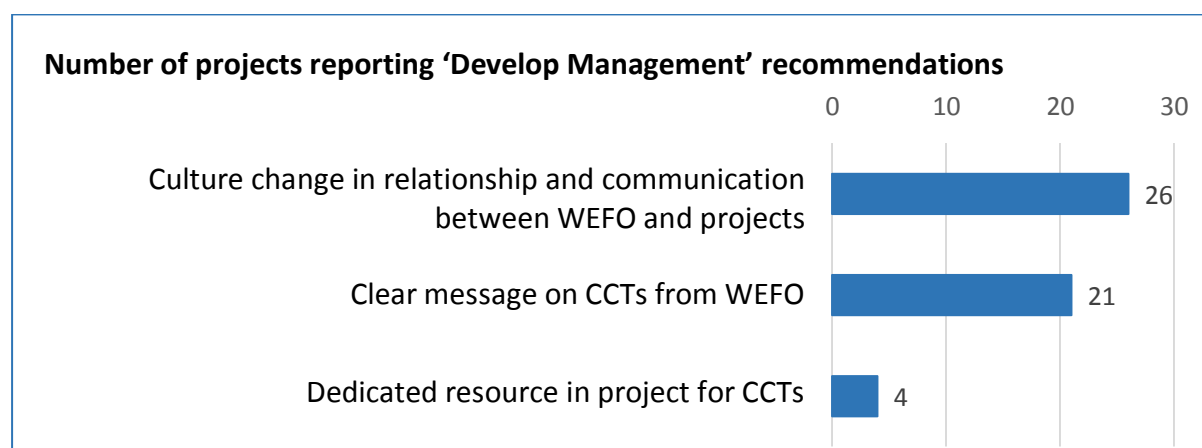
“More qualitative goals to achieve. WEFO says ‘you can report these things but we’re not really interested. A standardised approach to CCTs is needed – how can WEFO get a standardised output if not a standardised input?’

“We need very clear guidance and to be able to put things in the contracts for the LAs – we need examples of contract clauses for both LA and the other contractors we employ – that will say look if you want the contract you must do dot, dot, dot...because you know if it’s not in the contract you can’t enforce it, so this is what you need to put into the contract upfront. That is the kind of practical thing that we need. “

b) Develop CCT Management and Communication Systems in both WEFO and Projects

The majority of projects responded that some types of improvement to ‘Management and Communications’ would better support projects to deliver their CCT aims. The ‘developing management’ category refers to different ways that CCT delivery might be delivered and supported and is not a comment on current means of addressing these issues. The key area of concern for recommendations here from across the projects (and echoed by the WEFO staff groups) was the need for a culture change in WEFO’s relationships with projects. The development of a clear set of messages on the CCTs across WEFO was a critical issue so that different parts of WEFO support each other. Some (including 4 projects) recommend that there should be dedicated resource for CCTs in projects.

Chart 19 Recommendations - 'Develop Management'



Indicative quotes...

"WEFO doesn't communicate their own constraints or the system they are working to so no-one understands why they do what they do. [WEFO is a] Black box."

"Communication would help to create feeling that all are in the same team. WEFO are our funding masters, I don't feel able to just pick up the phone and ask for help, you are putting yourself up for WEFO scrutiny."

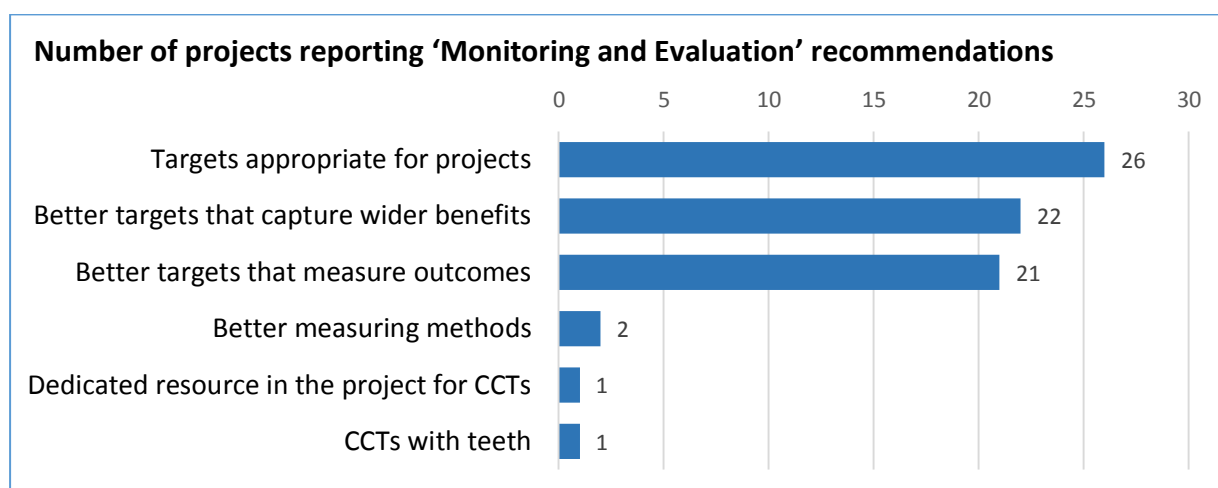
"There needs to be a consistent message to all sponsors."

Comments from WEFO staff on this issue were mixed but had a common thread of management change and attention to different aspects of the system to make an overall improvement.

c) Develop Monitoring and Evaluation

Suggestions which focused on developing monitoring and evaluation were grouped into six areas. The responses clearly indicate the need for more appropriate targets that capture the wider CCT benefits and that measure outcomes (chart 20). The main recommendation is that monitoring and evaluation should be more appropriate for projects and that this should involve taking into account the differential ability of projects to deliver on CCTs. Milestones were also suggested as a project process and guide. Targets and aims that capture wider benefits of CCTs were seen as a priority by many, including the linked desire for measurement of tangible benefits such as cost savings made. This links back to the desire for early training in these areas.

Chart 20 Recommendations - 'Monitoring and Evaluation'



Indicative quotes...

“There needs to be an emphasis on quality and not just ticking boxes. The targets need to show the quality of what is being done.”

“Much better targets, for instance, if there was a target that was to make a saving on our electricity bill we could have something real and meaningful which would focus our work. These targets could also develop as project goes on, reflecting how well we are working in some areas helping this push our work even further.”

“ESF should be about additionality, but there won’t be unless they have targets to meet. If it does not have to be measured it does not have to be done.”

3.2.1.16 Comments relating specifically to the CCT Team

Throughout the project interviews, projects reflected on their opinions of the CCT Team. Over a third of projects commented that they had received good support from the CCT Team which had helped with the integration and achievement of the CCT aims. However, slightly under one third of the projects felt that CCT Team support was needed earlier in the process (for example at the expression of interest or business planning stages). Some projects felt that more support was needed from the CCT Team but these generally recognised the Teams' lack of capacity and only two projects commented that they felt support from the CCT Team had been poor.

Indicative quotes...

"Chriss has been brilliant throughout, always supportive and helpful. You know always insightful and helpful comments on things and steering us in the right direction."

"We met with two members of the crosscutting theme team who were helpful in explaining what it was all about."

"When I got involved with the support people at WEFO I was surprised how low their resources were I cannot see how it is possible to support the projects with the resources they have in the CCT team. I just wonder how they do their job. If we think the crosscutting themes are important they may clearly need more resources."

"Last year we met with the CCT team several times, we are now on the right path. Until then we were left to our own devices."

"The earlier the CCT team get involved in the projects the better – Ideally that would be at the idea/BP stage."

3.2.2 Findings from the PMC member interviews

Summary

- PMC members perceive their primary role as monitoring progress based on targets established at the start of their current round of Structural Funds, rather than influencing any changes in policies or practices. However, there is some tension between members of the PMC regarding the extent to which they should have a strategic influence.
- PMC members are conscious of the potential for the CCTs to support Welsh Government policies and they are keen that this should happen.
- PMC members are not concerned with the wider UK policies relating to Structural Funds.

Four members of the PMC were interviewed with the findings discussed below.

3.2.2.1 Roles in the PMC

The different PMC members all had different remits to represent different interests. Three members cited the links to their professional roles and experiences relevant to the delivery of regeneration and Structural Funds projects.

3.2.2.2 How do CCTs feature in the PMC?

There was agreement from three members that the CCT team raised the profile of the CCTs in Structural Funds delivery in Wales. Two respondents said that the main way the CCTs featured at the PMC is through specific CCT reports.

3.2.2.3 Balance between Equality and Sustainability?

Three respondents thought that EO has more profile than ES as it is easier to understand and that there has been concern on poor performance on ES.

3.2.2.4 What role does the PMC play in supporting and integrating the CCTs in WEFO and in the Programmes?

All four PMC members agreed that the role of the PMC is limited to monitoring what has already been agreed. Two respondents argued that the

PMC does not have a role in integrating CCTs but raising questions to do with reporting.

3.2.2.5 What more should the PMC do in terms of supporting and integrating the CCTs? Why is more not being done? What are the barriers?

Two respondents argued that because of the nature of the Structural Funds it was the 'spend imperative' that dominated. However, two respondents also thought that the PMC could ask for a review of CCT delivery.

3.2.2.6 Are the values associated with equal opportunities and environmental sustainability reflected in WEFO's practice?

Two respondents argued that WEFO reflects government priorities and they are happy with that being the case.

3.2.2.7 Has a strategy for supporting and integrating the CCTs ever been discussed in the PMC? Do you or any other members of the PMC have strong views about developing a higher profile for the CCTs?

Two respondents thought that the PMC needed some further education on the CCTs and two respondents thought the focus should be more on the long-term legacy. However, two respondents also stated that driving change on CCTs was not the role of the PMC.

3.2.2.8 Do you see the PMC as a body that gives direction and vision to WEFO?

There were some tensions across the views expressed in response to this question with two respondents claiming that it is not the role of the PMC to give direction to WEFO. However, respondents did claim that the PMC could provide direction in the context of monitoring.

3.2.2.9 Do you believe the indicator targets for the CCTs are appropriate or helpful?

A range of dissatisfactions were expressed with the monitoring and evaluation arrangements.

3.2.2.10 Delivering on Welsh policy on Equality and Sustainability

There was strong agreement that PMC is very interested in delivering on Welsh policy, but one respondent did not think this appropriate.

3.2.2.11 UK Policy on strategic frameworks for Structural Funds delivery

There was agreement from all four that this was not a role of the PMC.

3.2.2.12 Importance of EU set CCTs in Structural Funds process

It was agreed by all respondents that it is important to meet EU conditions.

3.3 Regional Workshops

Summary

- There is a strong desire for early intervention from WEFO at the business planning stage of projects in the form of support for integrating the CCTs.
- Diverse experiences in terms of relationships with WEFO staff and in terms of communications from WEFO. The majority of participants in the workshops called for a change in the cultural relationship with WEFO. They were looking for a collaborative relationship to support them in succeeding in terms of delivering their general and CCT aims.
- Peer support on CCTs has the potential to complement support from WEFO.

A project timeline activity was conducted in the workshops, which has provided a useful summary of how the issues identified in the wider research fit into the project narrative. It will also help in understanding how to make support for CCTs more effective (see timeline summary in Appendix A). There was a good deal of focus on the early part of the timeline, where comments supported findings in the interviews. For example:

- Early support for understanding CCT requirements and setting aims is a key factor in achieving success – *“We need early intervention for the CCTs.” “Work on a delivery plan for the CCTs early on so that it can be built into contracts.”*
- Sponsors found it difficult to retain good staff experienced in the CCTs towards the end of a project. Accumulated knowledge and expertise is being lost between funding rounds. In some cases this could be alleviated with a more rapid approval process for projects in a new funding round: *“The turnover of staff in a project between the end of one round of funding and the next round of funding is a problem because all the*

expertise is lost and you have to start again from zero. One cause of this is the length of time it takes to get a response from WEFO regarding the acceptance of a new proposal. People have mortgages to pay.”

A strong message came out from all three workshops regarding the perception of the relationship between WEFO and the projects. At one extreme it was described as ‘adversarial’ and generally WEFO was seen as criticising projects without providing constructive input to improve performance. While appreciating WEFO’s need to assess and evaluate there was a general desire for WEFO to be more collaborative in approach, particularly early on in the lifecycle of a project, in order to achieve a common understanding of requirements:

“WEFO needs to be less adversarial – ‘We want to feel part of the same team making things better for Wales.’” “I think the PDOs should be working with you at the very beginning, at the BP stage; working with us on how to integrate the CCTs and not come down two years later looking for what we haven’t done.”

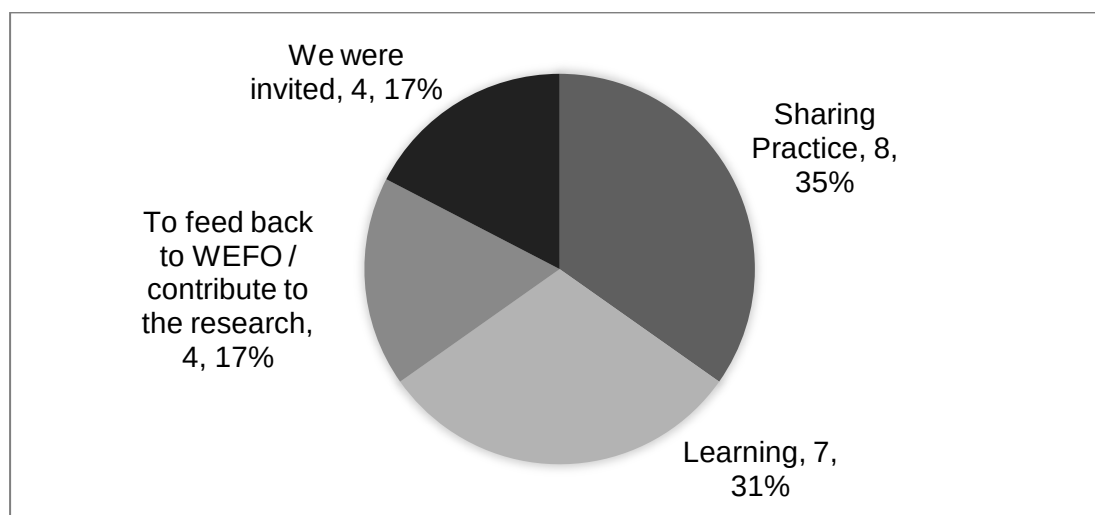
The workshops also included evaluation sheets which contained four questions:

- a) What was your motivation for attending the Workshop?
- b) Did you find it useful to share your experiences of CCTs with other sponsors and deliverers?
- c) Do you have any suggestions on how the workshop could be improved?
- d) Do you have any final points you would like to make about the CCTs in the European Structural Programmes?

a) What was your motivation for attending the Workshop?

There were 23 responses to this question. For over a third of respondents the motivation was around sharing good practice with other projects and just under a third were interested in learning outcomes. The remaining responses were evenly distributed between those who wished to participate in the research and feed back to WEFO and those who simply attended as they were invited.

Chart 21 Motivation for attending workshop.

**Indicative quotes...**

- **Sharing Practice**

"To share our experiences in the hope that lessons learned will be incorporated in the future"

"Wanted to give views and thoughts based on experiences of project sponsors"

"Find out the experiences of other people – give feedback on our own"

- **Learning**

"To improve my understanding of CCTs and to understand problem/successes of others"

"To find out some of the issues/good practice that other projects are experiencing"

"To meet other projects and to hear their experiences"

- **To feed back to WEFO / contribute to the research**

"Wanted to contribute to the inquiry"

"Good to have taken part in the workshop and feed back to WEFO"

- **We were invited**

"Requested to attend but having attended found it extremely useful to share experiences with other providers"

These positive responses clearly indicate a wish for peer learning through the sharing of good practice.

b) Did you find it useful to share your experiences of CCTs with other sponsors and deliverers?

Of the 23 responses all but one were positive (the one response was 'not sure'), indicating that these events were viewed as beneficial by the participating projects.

Indicative quotes...

- **Yes**

"Shared and learned a great deal – everyone on same page"

"I thought that the structure of the workshop allowed experiences to be shared – it was good to find out the experiences of others"

"It was comforting that we are not alone and useful to know where others had been successful"

"Good not to feel isolated in problems and to hear how others dealt with them"

"Very cathartic and I feel less alone!"

"Yes – CCTs are integrated into our project for some time – service delivery has been consistent. Very eye opening to see its effect on other projects"

"Yes – but the diversity of the projects and the ESF/ERDF differences reduced usefulness"

"Useful to see different ways of implementing and achieving CCT targets"

- **Not sure**

"I'm not sure. Maybe I'll realise the significance of what others have said in a few months' time. However it is always nice to note that our frustrations are general."

c) Do you have any suggestions on how the workshop could be improved?

The majority of respondents were happy with the workshop organisation, content and facilitation. It was suggested that some tasks could have been allocated pre-workshop to maximise on the learning time together. More time for discussion was also proposed as the sharing of experience was felt to be very beneficial.

d) Do you have any final points you would like to make about the CCTs in the European Structural Programmes?

The majority of respondents felt that most issues had been covered in the workshop. Some additional comments were:

- 'Strategic leadership needs to be shown by WEFO'
- 'There needs to be a focus on integration of CCTs into projects'
- 'There should be more effort to develop appropriate targets'
- 'Communicating best practice is a priority'.

3.4 Baseline

There was no real opportunity to develop a baseline relating to the start of this project cycle under investigation i.e. in 2007 as there was insufficient data available. In terms of the perceptions of the participants in this study a great deal of progress has been made since then.

This research has established the current state of play with regard to the CCTs, which could form a basis for a practical baseline if appropriate indicators can be adopted in line with recommendations at the end of this report. This baseline could be used to chart further progress. According to our findings, the table below represents a snapshot of the current CCT management, processes and guidance.

Table 3 Baseline

1. CCT development and support
• Early intervention and assessment of CCT aims contributes to reliable achievements. • Support is felt to be good when it is available – but not to be equally available to all • The CCT Team is seen as dedicated, well informed and essential – but there are also some inconsistencies identified in message and in delivery. • The guidance and the website are not well used or liked by projects. • Sustainability and Equality are broadly on a par but seen differently in different programmes and by different Structural Funds actors.
2. Evaluation and Outcomes
• Many excellent outcomes and good work – but recognition that much is not captured in current measurement regime. • Evaluation of CCTs is known to be difficult – combining a consistent evaluation system with the diversity of the projects is the main challenge. • Evaluation suited to the measurement of programme targets and compliance to key monitoring areas of EU, but not as a process that is developmental and holistic. Can it achieve both roles? • Evaluation culture is seen as punitive and the lack of support for projects to achieve results is de-motivating for many. • Willingness of Monitoring and Evaluation to consider alternatives to the

current measurement regime and recognition of achievements and progress in monitoring from 2007 baseline.

- Processes of monitoring and providing information to projects needs attention.
- There may be some useful further research to be done on beneficiaries' awareness of CCTs.

3. Management

- Perceptions of WEFO are extremely divided between being supportive and being punitive.
- Issues of role across PDO and CCT Teams are compromising delivery.
- Perception that managing CCTs is not a primary function of WEFO.
- An ambiguous stance re CCTs as putting Welsh policy into practice – contribute to muddy message.
- Communication and culture issues between WEFO and projects are barriers to further CCT achievements and need to change.
- The obvious drivers of Structural Funds targets and the imperative of project spend are not being sufficiently mitigated by WEFO systems.
- Delays in feedback from WEFO on the CCT activities or inconsistent messages at any stage of the project lifecycle cause decision-making problems at the project level.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

These conclusions are structured as answers to the main research questions with some additional areas to consider.

The Structural Funds System

It is useful to place the findings in context of the Structural Funds system and the CCT system within that.

There are major drivers in the system originating from different levels of governance and monitoring of Structural Funds programmes, including legal compliance issues. The EU, the UK and the Welsh Government are all important levels. This also indicates something of the ‘balancing act’ that WEFO has to achieve in satisfying these different levels of interest, along with Welsh Government and Welsh civil society and business in Structural Funds programmes. As identified in the literature review, another key dimension to this ‘balancing act’ is the ongoing debate about the kind of economy that is wanted and needed in Europe, in the UK, and in Wales, and the tensions between different positions on this subject.

Research question 1: Integration and Mainstreaming

There is strong evidence in the findings of a positive relationship between perceptions of positive CCT achievement and overall project success. This runs counter to the reported perception of CCTs as a ‘burden’ on projects and, along with other evidence cited below, suggests that CCTs can greatly benefit projects. The evidence is that where the relationship between CCTs and overall project goals is understood, this is strongly linked to overall success in projects. This may give pause for thought regarding vertical projects as the indications are that, for various reasons, these projects are set up for success regarding both their general aims and CCT aims – in which case the Structural Funds portfolio may be weighted to take this into account. Again, this point links to the findings in the literature review of the ongoing debate on the role of Structural Funds and what they are capable of achieving. The responses from both WEFO staff and PMC members also identifies a tension between those who believe that Structural Funds can be a vehicle to help steer the Welsh economy and those who regard the Structural Funds primarily as a vehicle of

innovation. It should also be noted that within those on the 'innovation' side of the argument there is a further division between those supporting social innovation – pilot activity that leads the way on changing the nature of the economy to more social and environmental ends, and more technical kinds of innovation such as innovative technologies and processes. These two are not necessarily incompatible, but there is a difference in emphasis. This debate is highly relevant for how the CCTs are conceived and how the business case for the CCTs is made.

The perception is that the integration of the CCTs in projects is closely linked to early engagement and discussion of the inclusion of appropriate CCTs in the business plan for a project. This links with the recommendations on the monitoring and evaluation of CCTs: if the aims are seen as being imposed by WEFO and are inappropriate or impossible to meet then failure is highly likely. Equally, if the aims are created collaboratively and the benefits of CCTs are more clearly understood, success in CCTs is more likely. Continuity in the process is seen as a key factor, with many failing projects citing changing personnel between start up planning and delivery as a problem. In terms of barriers to integration and mainstreaming it is clear that for many the CCTs are not seen as a top priority and this is linked to a perception that the clients (including employers in ERDF programmes and participants in ESF) do not want to engage with CCTs. The recording and reporting methods required by WEFO are seen by some projects as a barrier to integration as they require data to be extracted and de-contextualised. Failure is also linked to the perceived imposition of CCTs on projects by WEFO without discussion or sufficient support.

There are some interesting conclusions with regard to the understanding and integration of the two separate themes of EO and ES. The perception of social values in the project interviews is highest for equality (understood as 'Equal Opportunities') and some groups (the PMC in particular) believe that EO is being better achieved than ES. On the other hand, a majority of project interviewees, and WEFO staff interviewed, thought that ES was easier to achieve as the business case is easier to make in terms of financial savings. The understanding of these two themes at present should also be seen as a leverage point in that there may be more potential for integration of the themes, particularly in view of the need to bring in the third theme of challenging poverty. Some of the good practice has been able to bring

together the themes in ways that suggest the possibilities for an integrated approach is good.

There is considerable buy-in to the worth of the CCTs and the aims of the CCT team by a large percentage of people in the system, although some do not understand their role or potential to assist in project delivery. The CCT team has done well in raising the profile of the CCTs and the extent to which the Team has already embedded them in the Welsh Structural Funds culture. To achieve further progress in integration there is a need for a fundamental change involving better systems and a review of the Team role and resources.

Research question 2: Added Value

The evidence is that there are multiple competing concepts of ‘added value’ amongst all respondents, including WEFO staff, PDOs and PMC members as well as for Project Sponsors. This does suggest that messages about the added value of CCTs are in need of some attention. However, respondents’ reactions to the question still provided a pattern of understanding that is of interest.

Projects that report CCT success are also more likely to see benefits for their organisations and for beneficiaries as a form of added value. Projects also report that engagement with the CCTs has enhanced their organisation and that they value the legacy of CCT activity, (although many feel that these elements are not captured in the current assessment regime). Those that report CCT failure generally do not see the added value of the CCTs. There may be a reverse relationship here: for those that do not understand how the CCTs can provide added value, this may be a factor in CCT failure. In this case the ways in which the potential for added value of CCTs can be communicated becomes very important.

One strong message that comes through from the findings is the link between understanding and motivation with regard to CCTs. Workshop participants and WEFO staff commented that ‘sound bites’ about CCTs, such as the term ‘added value’, can generate a fog of incomprehension. From the links in the evidence between understanding and CCT success, there are strong reasons to suppose that understanding of such key terms as ‘added value’ can be a strong motivating factor, particularly if it can be translated into ways that these benefits can be delivered in a project context.

The workshop groups were keen to see discussion of some of these key ‘opaque’ terms in order to develop an understanding that is suited to the context of delivery in Wales and to the different constituencies and sectors involved. ‘Added Value’ was the only term that we tested in this manner for the purpose of this research (though one other example cited in the Cardiff workshop was ‘the CCTs are ‘pillars’ – with participants asking ‘what does this mean?’). The findings show strongly the extent to which confusion over this term is the norm, with different interpretations co-existing and being advocated by different individuals, including within the WEFO team and PMC members. In the recommendations we present a range of concepts of added value based on the research results. We concentrate on the ways in which a helpful typology could be developed to help explain how CCTs can assist and strengthen projects.

Research question 3: Guidance and Support

A key function of this research is to evaluate the support provided by the CCT Team in the delivery of the CCTs in the context of the wider WEFO system, including measurement and reporting and the PDO system.

The CCT team is highly regarded for the work they do by most people in the system. They are highly regarded by the projects which have had significant interaction with the team. However, it is impossible for the team to deliver this level of interaction with all projects. The CCT team is working under resource constraints but the primary constraint on their success seems to be the need for some system changes and a possible shift in the role of the team within the system, including the roles of the PDOs. This will be addressed further in the recommendations section.

The guidance produced (the respondents were not commenting on the most recent guidance) has been widely criticised for being too complex, not relating to the different client groups effectively and generally not user friendly.

General issues in the wider relationship between the projects and WEFO are part of the context within which the CCT Team does their work and, in some cases, this adversely affects the ability of the Team to develop productive relationships with some projects.

There is a perception that the need to achieve Programme targets tends to push the CCT Team to offer more support to those who are likely to succeed. Many people in the Structural Funds system recognise the complexity and diversity of the projects and the difficulties in achieving consistency of support to the CCTs across Wales – but they still regard this consistency as desirable. Although the positive responses regarding the CCT Team are extremely high it is of particular note that many respondents also recognise the constraints within which the Team operates.

Constraints on the CCT Team in the system

With regard to resources: there are some comments that throw doubt on the consistency of the level of support across Wales and which are linked to the lack of resources for the team. Some of those who have experienced good support from the CCT Team have questioned their ability to deliver this kind of support across Wales to all projects. In particular, the workshops raised some comments about the difficulty of reconciling the diversity and complexity of projects with any one overall system of support and monitoring.

With regard to the Structural Funds system: there is some recognition, particularly from the WEFO staff interviews, that the need to fulfil overall Programme targets is understandably a driver for the CCT support system, a system that includes both PDOs as well as the CCT team. This pressure can lead the support systems to direct further assistance to those projects which are more likely to succeed in fulfilling Structural Funds Programme targets. These interviewees recognise the importance of vertical projects and these are seen as essential for meeting the programme targets. It is important to note here that the CCT team also helps to deliver on meeting minimum EO and ES legislation requirements, which is common to all projects and officially separate from the CCTs, but equally links to the same ‘basket’ of concerns. It is recognised that the CCT team has assisted with compliance in this regard. In this respect it is important to note that during the PDO interviews it was clear that there was no real understanding of the concept of the ‘vertical projects’.

With regard to the culture of WEFO as an organisation: there is a sense in the findings that some projects see the CCT team as ‘the exception in WEFO’, in that

they are supportive, helpful and 'on-side'. The perception was expressed in project interviews and in the workshops that WEFO can seem like a sealed 'black box' that does not communicate the nature of its own work, and therefore projects do not understand the changing demands that issue from it. Furthermore, there is concern amongst some projects that WEFO does not communicate adequately regarding changes that can be very important for projects. At worst, some respondents view WEFO as a highly negative agency that requests complex information for no good reason, does not use it, sets up projects for failure, and does not have adequate feedback channels to listen to project perspectives. The PMC members who we interviewed seemed to suggest that the PMC role is relatively restricted to monitoring and that it is not currently regarded as a feedback route for projects or Welsh civil society more generally, even though the make-up of the PMC is designed to include different stakeholders.

In terms of the delivery side of the support for CCTs, a complex picture emerges with a variety of different roles being overlapping and sometimes in conflict. The PDOs are also seen as having a support role for CCTs but the quality and success of the support is variable. There is a perception that there can be inconsistency between PDOs and CCT Team support and even between members of the same team. Where the overall message on CCTs is not clear, any changes in staff (one project had six different PDOs during the project life-cycle) can easily lead to confusion and failure. This adds to the overall perception that the whole area is still poorly understood and very few people have a clear picture. The inconsistencies exist both between members of WEFO staff and between messages given by WEFO at different times in the duration of the projects.

If one function of guidance and support is to assist projects and PDOs in creating appropriate and helpful CCT aims, this is probably the least successful area. Whilst some projects report useful and supportive negotiation with the CCT team, others report that CCT aims have been imposed without due regard for the nature of the project. It is, of course, possible that projects which did not take the CCTs seriously do not access support, only realising that the CCTs are a problem for them later in the process. However, this should be read in conjunction with the evidence that points to the restricted ability of the CCT team to deliver the same level of intensive support to all projects due to limited resources. There is also the issue that

individuals with good negotiating skills in projects can ensure that their CCT aims are not too onerous, whereas some others agree to adopt CCT aims without having an idea of how to deliver them. Assisting in developing a delivery plan for CCT aims might be considered a key support function. Although we do not have direct evidence on this topic, it seems that this is often left by default to the PDOs (CCT team is engaged at CCT failure stage), who do not always know how to do this. Although there are some excellent exceptions, it appears that some PDOs do not view CCTs as centrally important for projects, especially when there are no sanctions for failure to meet CCT aims.

Although there are some positive points made about the CCT guidance provided, the written guidance and web support is perceived as poor and unfit for purpose by the majority of respondents. Some specific points are made regarding the need for guidance to be tuned to the different kinds of projects, and/or the different groups of beneficiaries served by Structural Funds. There is a need for the WEFO website and linked systems to communicate more effectively with projects. Communication is particularly important with regard to changes that affect their practice and/or assessment.

Finally, with regard to the relationship culture that exists in Structural Funds and CCT delivery, most respondents did not feel a part of a 'community of practice' as they lacked a functional peer support framework. Both the WEFO staff and project interviews showed support for a resilient, contextual, peer support system. Some of the best practice included setting up networks and groups and the production of communication materials. 'Sharing knowledge' scored very highly as an aspect of added value that is highly relevant to a Community of Practice and peer learning approach. The indications from the workshops were that all participants greatly valued the opportunity to share experiences, as well as the perceived opportunity of using this research to feed back to WEFO. This was felt to be an all too rare experience for many of those present.

The overall picture is that, whilst progress has been made, the various components of the CCT support system are not always working together and that a set of complementary changes is required to pull the elements into a functioning system for the whole of Wales. In addition, the potential for peer support structures and

feedback systems to WEFO should be further explored as a missing component in this system.

Research question 4: Measurement and Assessment

While we acknowledge that the focus of this evaluation is the work of the CCT team, we recognise that this team is not responsible for the collection and assessment of any data as this role resides within WEFO's Research, Monitoring and Evaluation team. However, the high impact of these activities on CCT outcomes requires consideration.

The main perception to be highlighted here is that the measurement and assessment of CCTs is seen as inappropriate by a majority of respondents and particularly inappropriate for some client groups. A significant number of respondents feel that monitoring and evaluation does not capture a lot of the real value of CCTs. In fact, some respondents felt that the definition of 'added value' was something that was not measured. This is seen as a serious issue by the PMC, the WEFO staff groups including PDOs and was a key discussion in the workshops. It also relates to a key concern of the WG Audit with regard to measuring the success of the Structural Funds spend, in that there is an inability to measure the wider social outcomes and the legacy of Structural Funds spend. What is not recognised in the wider discussion of the Structural Funds is the potential for CCT reporting to encompass many of these wider legacy issues. CCT measurement could be improved to provide some support for outcomes that go beyond crude measures of numbers of jobs created (currently often without reference to what kinds of jobs these are and even whether they are long-term). This links to the wider issue of data collection and the CCT measurement as a form of valid social and environmental research in the Welsh economy. In this respect, CCTs should not be seen as 'bolt-on' by policy makers and politicians, but as a key aspect of policy delivery that can be strengthened.

In the more practical area of delivery, monitoring and evaluation is cited by projects reporting CCT failure as a key contributory issue and this section overlaps with reporting on barriers to CCTs below. In the worst case scenario, some projects feel inappropriate aims are imposed by WEFO and no support is given with regard to data collection or success strategies. Respondents felt that some of the aims make no sense given, for example, the demographic of the project beneficiaries. The

findings on monitoring and evaluation should also be read together with the information on the creation of CCT aims. Where the aims are created together with the projects there is more understanding of ways to achieve them and more commitment from the projects. If the aims are seen as imposed from the outside, or are accepted by projects without any idea of an accompanying delivery plan, it is likely that the M&E system will be blamed as being 'inappropriate'. It is these cases where some projects feel that they are 'set up to fail', although their own lack of attention to the CCTs may be a contributory factor.

The role of negotiation of CCT aims is seen as possibly unfair (better negotiators get less burdensome CCT aims) and there is a perception that the starting point of the project sponsors and beneficiaries should be part of the calculation of aims. There is also a sense that projects' CCT achievement should be connected to the journey it undertakes, inspired by the CCTs; that it is the degree of improvement that needs to be measured rather than holding up all projects to one standard. These points are all made in the context of the possible reform of the M&E system towards a more integrated and strategic framework for CCTs.

It is clear that reporting and data collection can help to drive CCT achievement, but this becomes very problematic if difficulties in reporting only surface mid-way through a project. The results from the project timeline activity in the workshops make clear that these process issues are of great importance in seeing things from the project perspective and creating systems that make sense in terms of the project narrative. If it is made clear that progress towards CCT achievement should be a part of regular reporting, this helps to keep the CCTs embedded in the project work. Data collection can be an issue on other fronts as respondents cited collection of 'sensitive' data to meet EU requirements as a real problem. Some of this data crosses over with data needed to demonstrate the achievement of CCT aims. There was a perception by some projects that process issues needed attention. For example, it was claimed that data was demanded half-way through a project without previous notification. Some interviewees felt that this was changing the goalposts without providing support to deal with the new situation. This links to points made above about a perceived 'black box' culture within WEFO.

Research question 5: Barriers to CCTs

There are two main sources of data for answering this question: the reported 'barriers to integration' of CCTs in projects and the more general question about 'barriers to achieving CCTs'. We discuss the latter, more general question first, and then make links to the integration issue.

A wide range of general barriers were identified by respondents but there are some that are more prominent. Firstly, a key finding is the overall 'lack of incentive'. The linked issues of the low priority given to CCTs, the nature of the reporting requirements and the perceived tension between CCTs and project goals provide a negative summary of some of the contributory factors to this 'lack of incentive'. It is unclear from the evidence if the 'low priority' given to CCTs is a message that comes from WEFO to the projects or if this is their independent assessment. However, taken together with other evidence regarding mixed messages from some PDOs and the lack of sanctions for non-achievement of CCTs, it is reasonable to conclude that the 'low priority' is in large part a message that projects are receiving from WEFO, whether this is intentional or not.

Other barriers are linked to the M&E regime, with projects citing a 'tick-box mentality' in reporting, WEFO changing the targets, lack of training for sponsors and lack of expert support. Data collection also features strongly, including calls for data to be gathered retrospectively and other problems with data collection, for example deliverers and beneficiaries being reluctant to provide data. Projects also mention the issue of overlapping projects and data collection, including 'double counting' issues.

The perceived disconnection between planning and delivery of CCTs links to the earlier findings on the perceived importance of early negotiation and understanding of a projects' CCT potential, ensuring the maximum fit between project and CCT aims. When this does not happen early on it is seen as a barrier and this links to the findings regarding the point at which barriers are seen to emerge in projects. For those who have not had a successful start, barriers tend to emerge mid-project when delivery on CCTs becomes pressing. Often the perception of these projects is that they do not have the understanding or methods to achieve their CCTs. At this point it is easy for the cost/benefit calculation to be made that it is not worth trying with

CCTs if there are no sanctions. Only one fifth of the projects interviewed are identifying barriers at Business Plan stage and this has important implications for the way this initial stage is managed

Regarding barriers to the integration of CCTs, the main issue is the understanding of CCT concepts and ideas, which scores highly on 'lack of interest from beneficiaries'. The two things are connected in that if projects do not understand CCTs then they cannot communicate the importance of CCTs to beneficiaries. Indeed, the evidence from the data regarding relationships is that many projects do not try to do so. Findings show that most projects do not involve their deliverers/partners in setting the CCT aims of the project, even though these are the people who often have direct connection to the project's beneficiaries. The relationships findings indicate that most projects believe that their deliverers/partners see CCTs mostly in terms of compliance to existing legislation, with a smaller number also believing that CCTs are written into learning programmes or embodied in infrastructure (e.g. accessible and energy-efficient buildings).

There are some differences between perceptions of barriers in ESF and ERDF, with the latter group identifying more barriers to success. This might indicate the need to profile support somewhat differently for these different programmes.

In terms of strategies for overcoming barriers, many of these are addressed in the recommendations coming from the respondents. Some respondents drew on their experiences of overcoming the perceived barriers in making their proposals for the future and the ways they would like to see support further developed.

Research question 6: Best Practice and Innovation

The findings show about a quarter of the projects see the CCTs as offering sparks for innovation, indicating that most do not see a connection. This links to understanding of the potential of CCTs to improve and strengthen projects and the ways in which delivery on CCT aims does sometimes require innovative approaches. However, this also demonstrates the limitations on any delivery plan for CCTs, as by definition innovation cannot be pre-judged but usually arises in response to challenges over time.

This connects with a further point that the main agreement on best practice was around information and knowledge sharing between projects, partners and beneficiaries. There was a clear desire for ways to be found to disseminate and build on good practice. The perception from the projects is that, although some are part of a community of practice which supports them, and which a few of them initiated themselves, many more would like to be so. This has implications for the culture change in relationships with WEFO desired by many participants and for the establishment and support of some kind of peer learning mechanisms.

4.3 Recommendations

The recommendations flow from the conclusions and also draw from the participants' recommendations for ways forward. This set of complementary actions is targeted at different areas of the CCT system. In this way change can be more than the sum of the parts. Systemic change that is more than the sum of the parts can happen in this way whilst allowing delivery to continue with minimal interruption. The recommendations are also intended to improve on the current baseline. A new aspirational 'baseline' or quality summary with target dates could be developed as part of a mission statement by WEFO, depending on which recommendations are adopted and taken forward.

In addition, we recommend that the process for carrying out these recommendations should itself be participatory. The potential for building a stronger Community of Practice has been identified in the research and has already generated enthusiasm to participate in change. A support group drawn from this community could be mobilised to assist with many of these recommendations. In addition, setting up some kind of regionalised peer support frameworks can provide feedback on the new systems, guidance and ideas that are proposed below.

Recommendations Summary:

These recommendations would need to be addressed at WEFO management level and in conjunction with buy-in from other key actors associated with the Structural Funds, including the PMC and WG, to agree on an overall stance regarding the delivery of CCTs and Welsh policy. The three areas for

recommendations are: Support, Communications and Management and Monitoring and Evaluation.

- **Develop a more systematic approach to development, support and delivery of CCTs within the context of the wider Structural Funds system.**

This recommendation reflects the need for consistency across key parts of the CCT system. A more systematic approach should be more efficient in terms of delivering a joined-up approach across teams. It should also take into account the timeline of project processes and key points for support in the project life-cycle. Support to strengthen the community of practice in CCTs is also proposed.

- **Clarify project support roles within WEFO and commit to developing a culture of communication and cooperation between WEFO and projects. Communicate a corporate vision for CCTs to help ‘make Wales a better place’, and contribute to delivery of Welsh policy.**

This set of recommendations deals with management and communication issues including; clear corporate message about CCTs; clear roles across the WEFO team for CCT support; consistent use of language and key terms.

- **Revise monitoring and evaluation to capture CCTs more effectively.** This set of recommendations proposes ways in which the M&E system can contribute better to CCT success. Changes in measurement and indicators of success are proposed that can capture the wider legacy of CCTs.

a) Developing project support recommendations (SR)

These recommendations would be mostly addressed by the CCT Team and the PDOs, with support from an advisory group of key individuals drawn from previous projects. This process would require management support and backing, particularly in ensuring that different functions of the Structural Funds system should all work together in helping enable the necessary changes.

- **SR.1 The Support process should be reviewed in the light of these findings, using the timeline approach and noting in particular the desire of the projects for early support and the benefit this brings in terms of achievement.**

The evidence supports early support and planning for CCTs to help CCT and overall project success. A review of possible changes to the current and proposed future support for projects should immediately follow this report, drawing on the materials and findings supplied here. An All-Wales quality approach for support could be considered, covering the minimum expectation of support for all projects. This should also be within realistic resource constraints and consider the other changes recommended to the guidance, the website and the review of team roles in delivery, support and assessment of CCTs. It should also take account of the changed project profile for the next tranche of projects. In addition, this review should consider the options of dedicated funding for internal support for CCTs and the roles of WEFO in helping to structure and oversee any such internal support.

- **SR. 2 Restructure the guidance and support using a project lifecycle/timeline approach and with reference to key sectors in the Structural Funds programme.**

Restructuring of the new and revised guidance should be undertaken, taking into account the different messages that are relevant to the key sectors involved in the Structural Funds programmes. A delivery plan for CCTs should be developed in conjunction with the PDOs taking into account the different kinds of Added Value of CCTs that the project can realistically deliver. CCT aims should be set with reference to relevant data e.g. the demographics of the project target groups. The guidance should also take projects step-by-step through the different elements required for CCTs at the different stages of the

project lifecycle, identifying milestones for project achievement. This should be linked to decisions about an All-Wales Development Pathway approach for CCTs (see SR 5). This responds to the current lack of consistent support and guidance evidenced in the findings and conclusions. All new guidance should be tested with key stakeholders.

- **SR. 3 Restructure the website to be user-friendly and to provide the capacity to notify key changes.**

The evidence is that users find the website elements of guidance and communication very difficult to use. The website area for CCTs is in need of re-structuring. Some kind of instant communication update facility to notify projects is recommended. An archive of older versions of documents is needed in order to clarify where the changes have to take place in key documents. A group of website users would be very useful source of comments and ideas. This recommendation provides a response to the issues of clear, current and consistent information.

- **SR. 4 Clarify key terms (e.g. ‘added value’). Develop a WEFO glossary of such terms, unpacking what they mean in practice, to enable communication and to inform revised M&E approaches.**

Some key terms used by CCTs are creating more confusion than communication, which relates to issues with training and guidance. These key terms need to be unpacked in order to draw out the real meanings for projects. For example, ‘Added Value’ where a definition of different kinds of added value should help projects to see what kinds they can realistically hope to achieve. The process whereby such clarification and guidance on key terms should be developed is, we would suggest, a participatory one, which includes insights and experiences from the rich stakeholder knowledge of the Structural Funds system. The typology of added value drawn from the research results in Appendix C is an indicative example.

- **SR.5 Consider an all Wales CCT Development Pathway approach whereby projects are assigned to a 3 or 4 level starting point and asked to progress to the next stage in the life of the project.**

This recommendation seeks to address the findings on the need to take into account a project’s starting point in relation to the CCT ‘journey’. This

recommendation has the aim of linking the diversity of project starting points and different potential for CCT achievement with the goal of an All-Wales system. A holistic development pathway with key measurable achievements, in order to reach the next rung of development, combines some elements of existing good practice in Wales CCT delivery and support with a framework approach to the other elements. This recommendation would also require the three CCTs for the forthcoming programme (Challenging Poverty, Equality and Sustainability) to be looked at together, as suggested in GR. 2, in order to describe the rungs or steps on the Development Pathway towards 'Making Wales a Better Place'.

SR.6. Strengthen the fledgling community of practice in the Structural Funds system, support its development through peer exchange and learning mechanisms. Set up and utilise feedback systems to keep WEFO apprised of project perspectives and learning.

This recommendation highlights the opportunity to develop and build on elements of a community of practice that already exist. This has the immediate benefit of helping to change the culture between WEFO and projects, as it would be a direct recognition and valuing of projects' own development in this respect. Advice can be sought on the best way to develop peer support that will really work. From the evidence of the Regional Workshops, people are keen to share experiences and there is added benefit if these meetings can also function as part-training and part-feedback sessions for WEFO and projects. We recommend that the learning should be seen as going both ways.

b) Developing CCT management and communication systems in both WEFO and the projects recommendations (MR)

These recommendations all require a strong management input, but need to be developed in conjunction with the other recommendations in order to achieve the full benefit. These management recommendations have the potential to leverage changes across the CCT management system and they will contribute to addressing issues across the conclusions to the research questions, illustrating the systemic challenges presented in improving the management of the CCTs.

- **MR.1 Review roles of the CCT team compared with PDOs and project support to develop a new structure consistent with resources and an All-Wales approach to support for CCTs.**

Consistent with the issues regarding resources for the CCT team and the respondents' identification of the management issues involved, this recommendation is to use the system change approach as an opportunity to clarify roles regarding CCT delivery. This will need to be carried out in relation to the development of changed guidance (as in SR. 2) and linked clarification of key terms (as in SR. 4). Training for PDOs will need to be developed and delivered that can assist them in assigning projects to a development pathway 'rung' that is appropriate for their level of development and ability to achieve on the CCTs. Online guidance and support materials on the revised website will also have a part to play in supporting better understanding of the PDO role in relation to CCTs.

- **MR.2 Take initiative for developing a clear management supported message from and within WEFO about the role and purpose of CCTs. A clear corporate mission that everyone in the Structural Funds system can sign up to is needed, making clear the place of the CCTs within it.**

This also provides an opportunity to consider how the three CCTs for the next tranche of projects can be conceptualised, as linked and mutually supportive, rather than as three separate and possibly competing demands. The ways in which the three CCTs can combine to cover different aspects of how to 'Make Wales a Better Place' should be considered to avoid an overly complex message. This will also act as a clear motivator for the Community of Practice for Structural Funds programme delivery and for the CCTs in Wales.

This recommendation points to the need to take a lead on the key messages regarding CCTs at management level, both internally and externally and ensure that they are consistent. This also links to the need for a more transparent form of communication with projects about the vision and view for CCTs within the wider Structural Funds system and its delivery by WEFO. Clearly this links to the need to mediate the political and policy environment within which Structural Funds programmes sit and with regard to which matched funding is found. This may be challenging in a shifting political and

policy environment, but some compromise needs to be found between the need for flexibility and the need for overall guidance and clear messages.

- **MR.3 Provide regular updates from WEFO about the ways in which CCT activity helps to deliver on Welsh policy targeted to civil society and the Welsh Government.**

This recommendation supports MR2 in suggesting that regular narratives regarding CCT achievements in delivering on Welsh policy and 'Making Wales a Better Place' should be produced and circulated. Communication in this way will also assist projects in ensuring that their CCT efforts are better understood in wider society and can thereby assist with understanding and motivation of beneficiaries to support and engage with CCTs – both key perceived elements in CCT failure where they are lacking.

- **MR. 4 Support better relationships between projects, deliverers and beneficiaries with regard to CCTs through a shared understanding of the benefits.**

The benefits of CCTs should be explained at all levels of the project to stakeholders. This would require more training and support of PDOs to assist projects to include these aspects in delivery.

- **MR. 5 Support changes in M&E and data collection and storage in order to help meet BOTH the Structural Funds conditions, including programme targets AND delivering on a consistent Welsh practice of CCTs.**

This recommendation recognises the need to both deliver on the Structural Funds programme targets and the need to develop a meaningful All-Wales approach to CCTs. For example, the proposed development pathway approach may need to have a dimension of special achievement in one CCT or another in order to help fulfil aggregate programme targets for CCTs and for compliance with EO and ES legislation and EU policy. This is where the role of vertical projects needs to be discussed and decided upon in relation to the wider landscape of CCT delivery and support. The ways in which the vertical projects help to deliver on Structural Funds programme targets can be considered alongside the new tranche of bigger and fewer projects.

c) **Monitoring and evaluation recommendations (MER)**

These recommendations need to be discussed and developed with the Research, Monitoring and Evaluation (RME) Team in conjunction with the other areas above, which again emphasises the importance of taking a systems approach to the issues. These recommendations focus on the issues presented in the monitoring and assessment research question, but they also respond in part to the conclusions around integration and mainstreaming as well as having implications for training and guidance.

- **MER. 1 Review the M&E framework as part of a systems approach to CCT delivery, focussing on the key aims for data collection and monitoring.**

The purpose and role of all data collection for CCTs needs to be subject to a thorough review, taking into account projects' perceptions, reported in this evaluation, regarding data collection and the practical issues involved. The role of an advisory group would be crucial here to ensure that these findings regarding M&E are addressed, including process issues of when data is needed and consideration of any issues of data collection training.

- **MER.2 Use all mandatory evaluations to further the systems approach to CCT delivery and improvement in addition to other objectives.**

This recommendation derives from the literature review which noted the oftentimes very ad hoc way that CCTs are evaluated. The budget and time for mandatory evaluations of Structural Funds delivery can be used to assist in capturing data regarding the CCTs and the development pathway approach if this is implemented. If some other combination of recommendations is decided upon, evaluations can be mandated to use a framework that is appropriate and useful regarding the CCTs and how they fit with the wider Structural Funds system in terms of M&E and delivery. If the corporate message and vision is set for CCTs, then evaluations can be mandated to test if this is being delivered and/or progress is being made towards delivering on this.

- **MER.3 Include mandatory research on the CCT environment for each project Business Plan (e.g. identifying the relevant demographics in**

relation to which CCT aims) to enable the setting of appropriate CCT aims.

This recommendation seeks to address the findings on inappropriate CCTs being set with regard, for example, to the demographics of project beneficiaries. This also seeks to address the gap in the business planning process with regard to any research requirement to act as a basis for appropriate CCT development and allocation. Projects should be expected to do some basic research relevant to CCT aims setting and if this is not done they cannot expect to have appropriate aims set. This would also assist PDOs in determining what a realistic delivery plan is for CCTs, given some more information about the client groups and opportunities for CCT development.

- **MER. 4 Consider the M&E contribution to a possible Development Pathway approach to projects' CCTs and the generic measurements that could identify progress to the next level in conjunction with a kite-mark or award scheme.**

This recommendation seeks to address the findings calling for a more holistic form of measurement for CCTs that attempts to capture broader social and environmental impacts and legacy of Structural Funds programmes that include CCT elements. This draws on some of the good practice in working with both CCTs in a constructive manner. This is acknowledged to be a difficult area, but there are forms of evaluation that could be used, such as a portfolio approach that needs to contain a specified number of elements. This would need to be developed in close collaboration with the CCT team and taking into account the guidance that has already been given to some projects in the next round. The possibility of developing this more holistic approach is probably also dependent upon the recommendation GR. 2 being taken up – that is an overview that can combine the 3 CCTs under the heading of 'Making Wales a Better Place' or some other summative by-line that brings them all under one banner and expresses a vision for CCTs that all stakeholders can understand and support.

Appendix A – Regional Workshops

Tables and Figures Appendix A

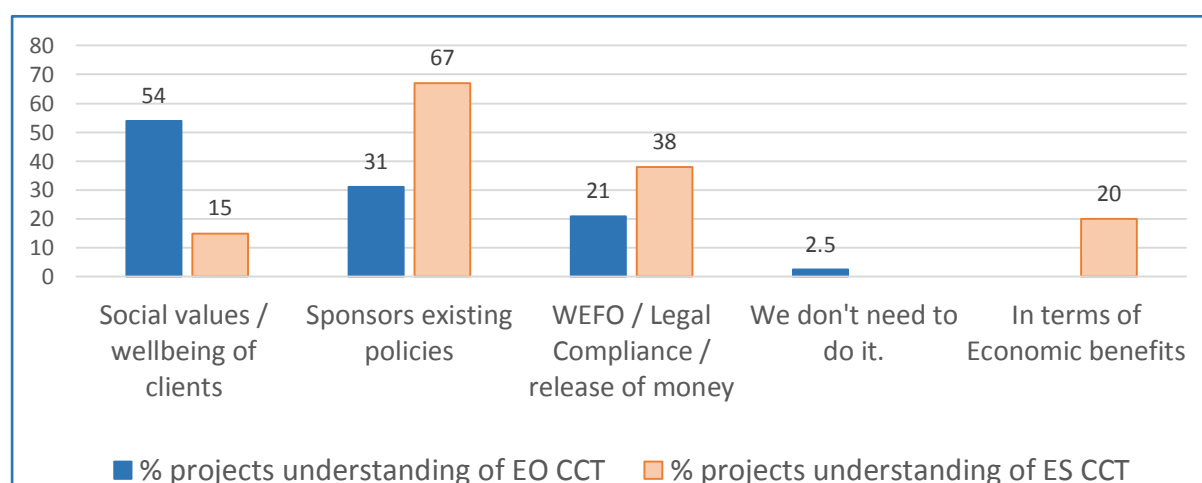
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Chart 2	Perception of the appropriateness of the projects CCT aims	38
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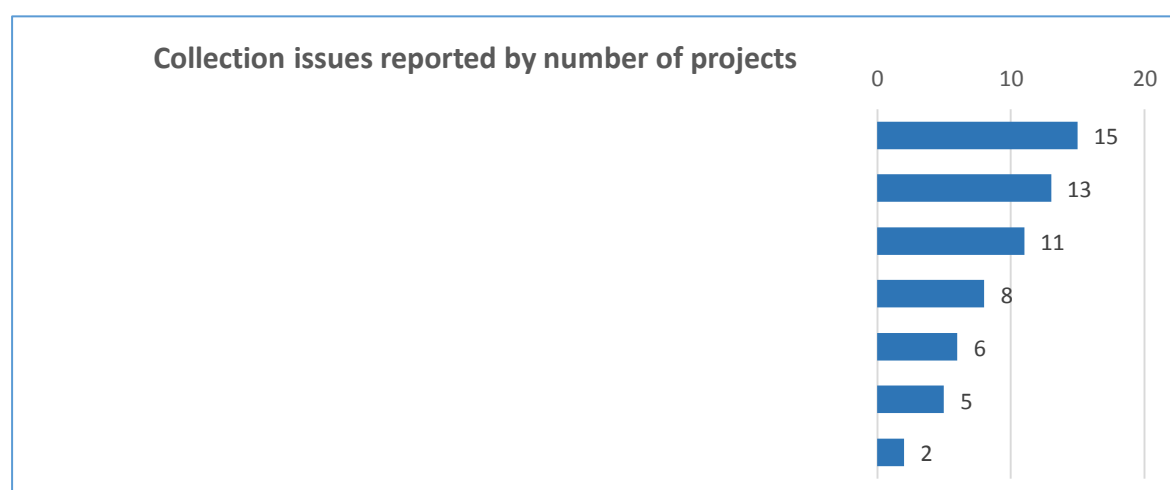
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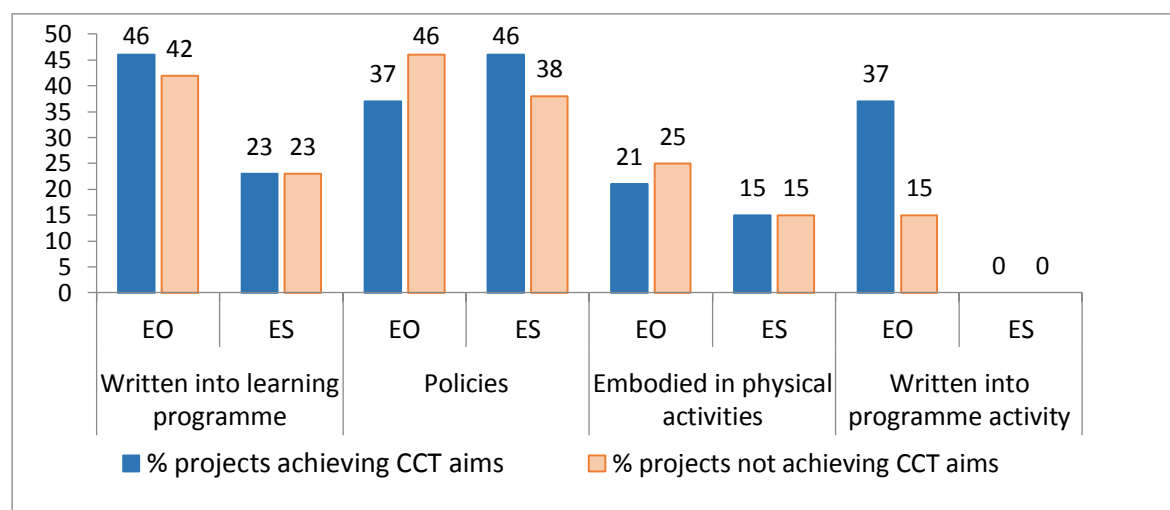
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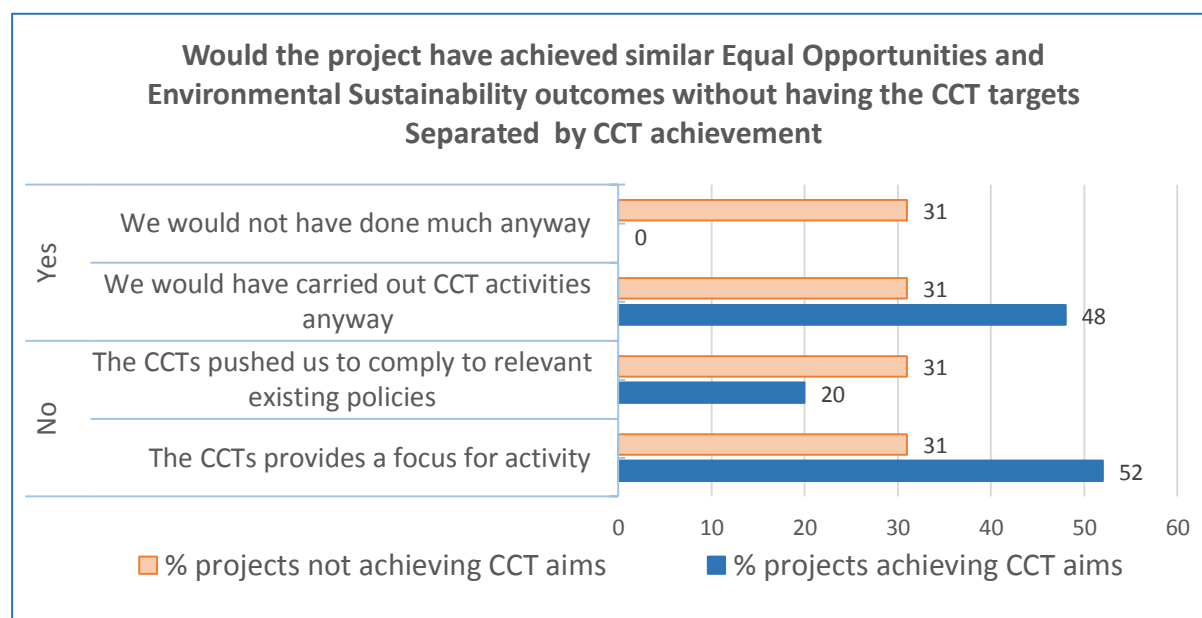
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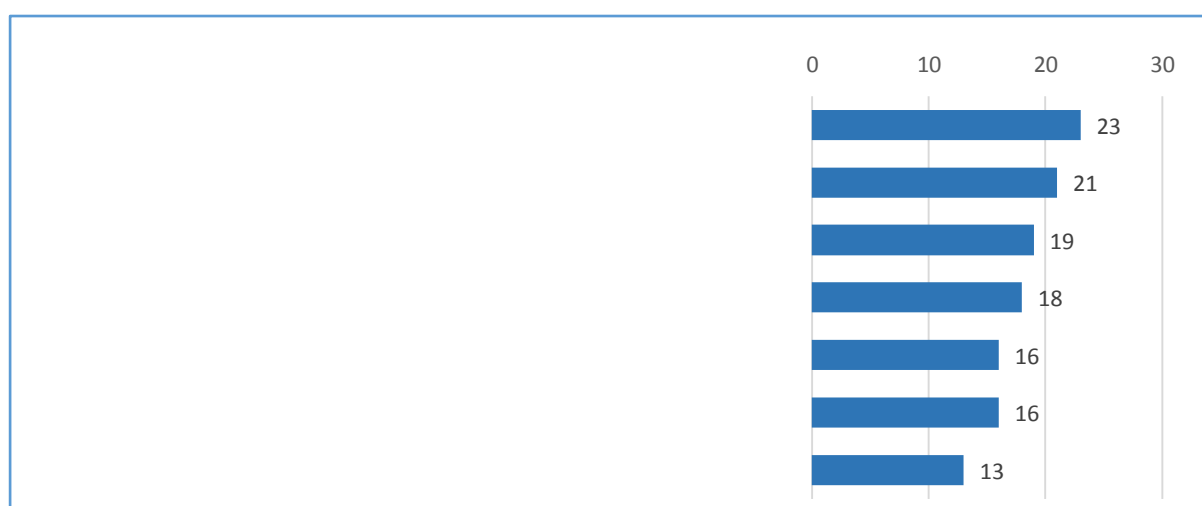
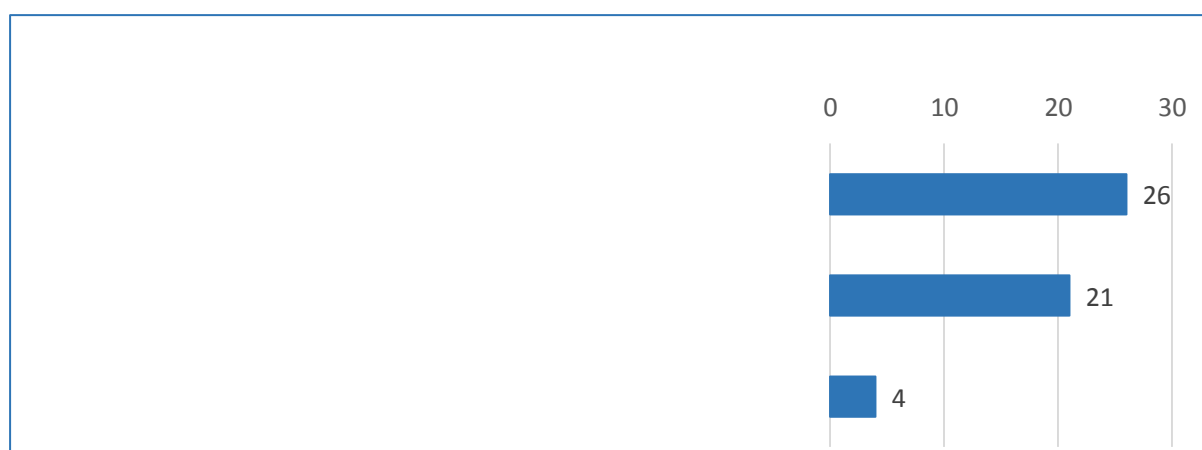
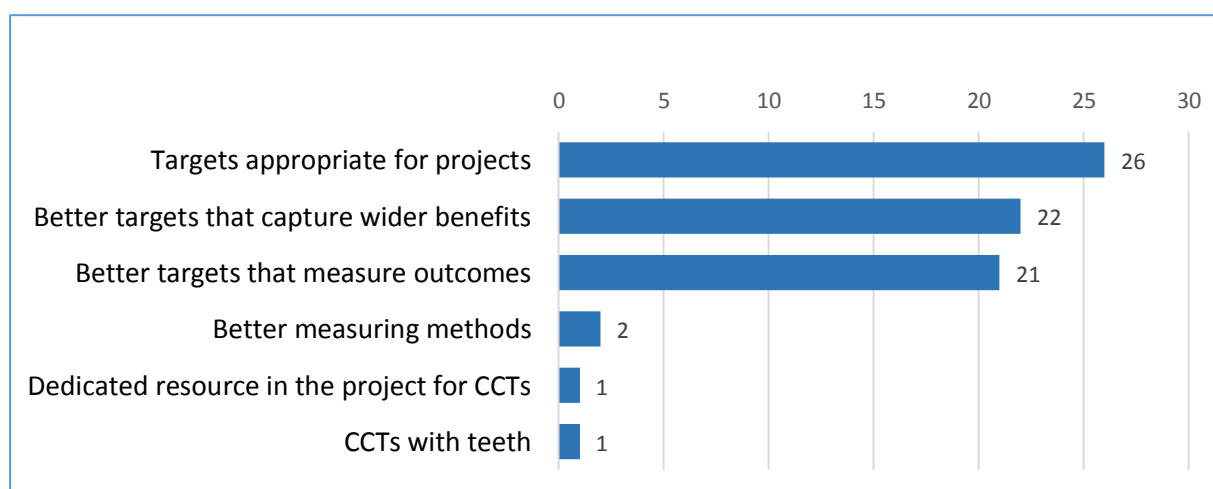
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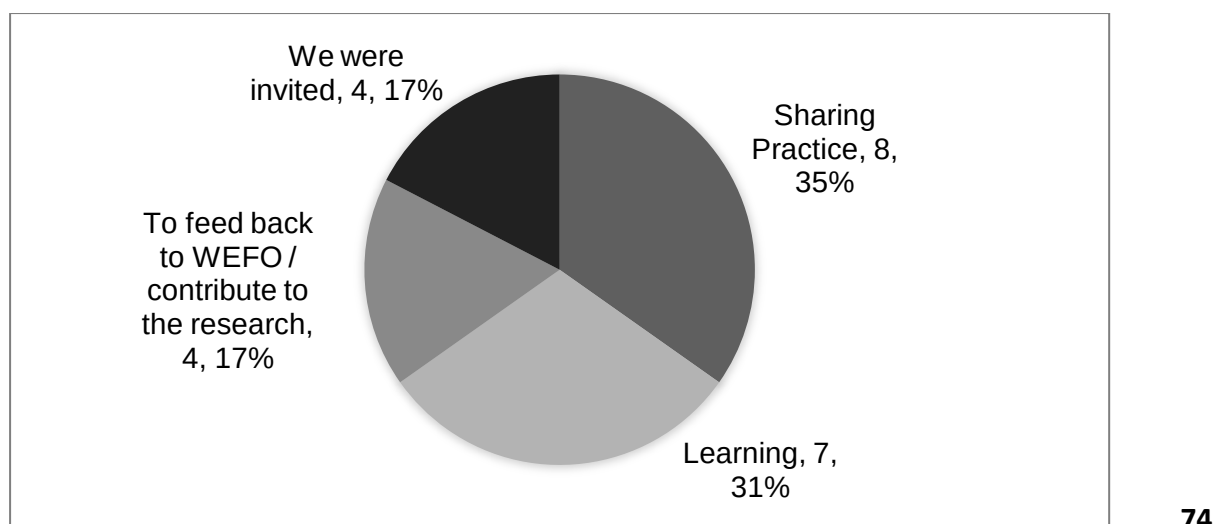


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Introduction

The original proposal from Cognition for the evaluation of the CCTs included the use of regional workshops for the gathering of data and as an indication of the potential for project to project peer support with regard to integrating the CCTs in future rounds of the Structural Funds. At the inception stage the plan was to hold four regional workshops (Cardiff, Swansea, Mid-Wales and North Wales) and these would be open to representatives from the projects and to WEFO staff such as PDOs. At a progress meeting on 15 May 2014 it was agreed to confine the participants in the workshops to representatives from the projects and not to invite WEFO staff. The rationale for this decision was to create an environment for discussion at the workshops for a frank and open exchange of views from the projects without the danger of the representatives feeling inhibited by the presence of WEFO officers.

All the projects listed for interview were invited to the regional workshops and each project was able to send more than one representative. Only two attendees were confirmed for the Mid-Wales workshop and these individuals were based in North Wales although the project was officially based in Mid-Wales. They were happy to transfer to workshops in Anglesey and the Mid-Wales workshop was cancelled.

The workshops took place between 4th and 13th June 2014, a total of 29 people attended the workshops representing 20 projects.

The Regional Workshop Programme

The programme for the workshops was discussed and agreed with WEFO in advance and remained consistent across all three workshops. The programme was as follows.

- Welcome and introductions (10 minutes)
- Overview of the CCT research project (10 minutes)
- Summary of emerging questions (10 minutes)
- Activities (75 minutes)
- How can the CCTs be better supported in the future? (30 minutes)
- What is the ONE key lesson you would like to pass on to others? (10 minutes)
- Feedback Form (5 minutes)

Following a round of introductions from Cognition and the participants, an overview of the research was presented which covered the general aims of the research and the data collection methods being employed. In particular the role of the workshop within the data collection method was outlined.

To avoid concerns related to revealing any outcomes of the research while data collection and analysis was on-going 'emerging questions' from the research were presented to the participants rather than emerging findings. This provided an indication of the issues that were showing up in the data as being of particular interest in relation to the CCTs. In all three workshops this session stimulated immediate discussion and questions, which was briefly facilitated before indicating that participants would have an opportunity for discussion in the subsequent sessions.

The activity session used a timeline as a framework for reviewing the CCTs at various stages though the lifecycle of a project. Participants were given a blank A4 project timeline and asked to record all CCT related activities individually, without consulting colleagues. Participants were then placed in small groups according to Structural Funds and sponsor type. They were asked to share their experiences and record them on a large A1 timeline with positive CCT progress and achievements above the timeline and barriers to CCT integration and achievement below the timeline.

Each small group was asked to feedback in a plenary session stimulating a wide ranging discussion. The facilitator channelled the discussion towards addressing the question of 'How can the CCTs be better supported in the future?' The discussion was brought to a conclusion by asking each participant to respond to the question 'What is the ONE key lesson you would like to pass on to others?'

Finally the participants were asked to complete an evaluation form for the workshop.

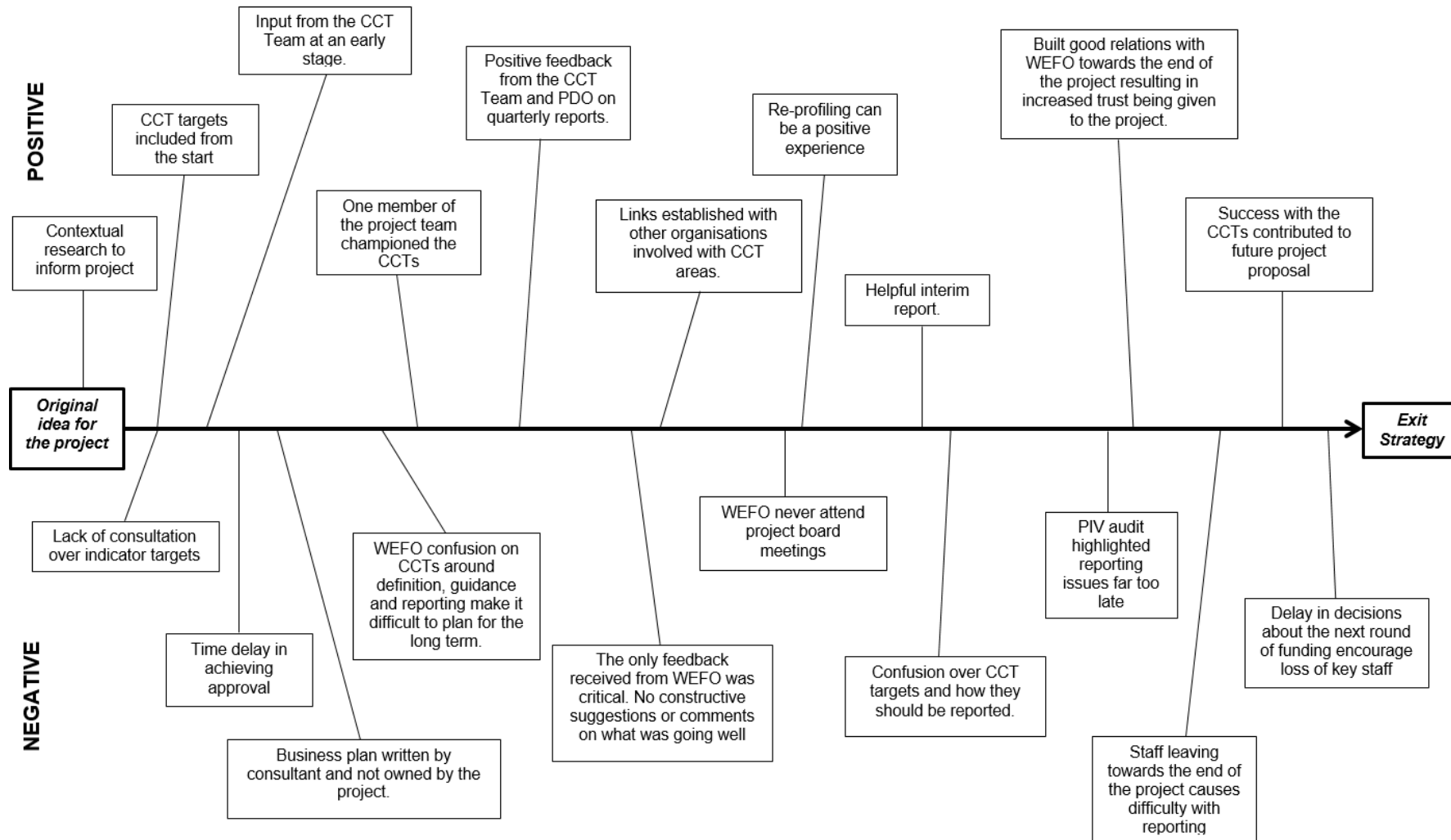
Gathering data from the workshops

Three forms of data were gathered from each of the workshops.

- A written record of the discussions (at least two members of Cognition at any one time were recording the comments made in the discussions.)
- The completed A1 timelines.
- The evaluation forms.

These data outcomes were analysed using a similar spreadsheet framework to the one used for the project interviews. A summary of the timelines can be seen below in Fig A1 Project Timeline

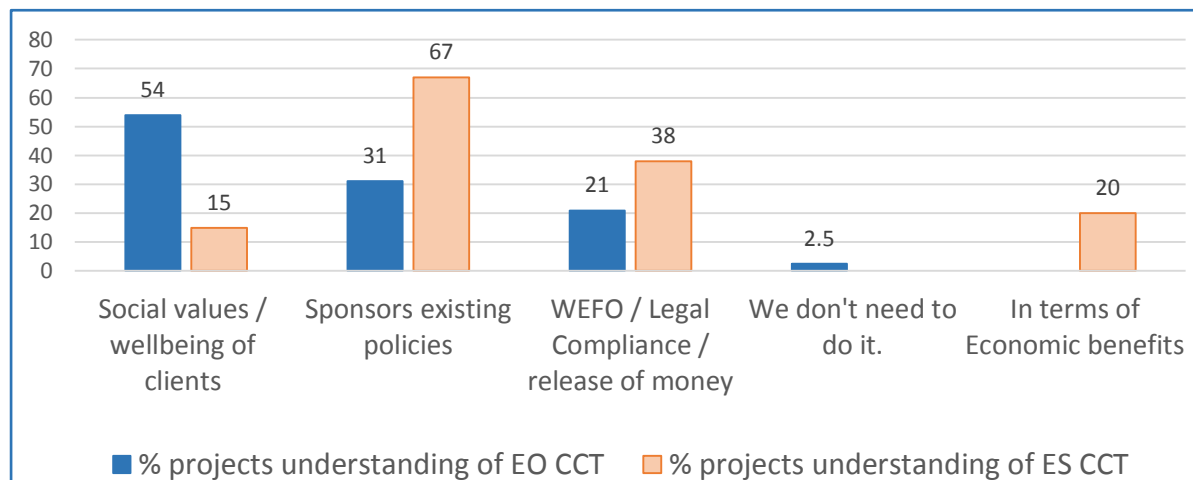
Project Timeline



Appendix B – Triangulation of interviewee perspectives

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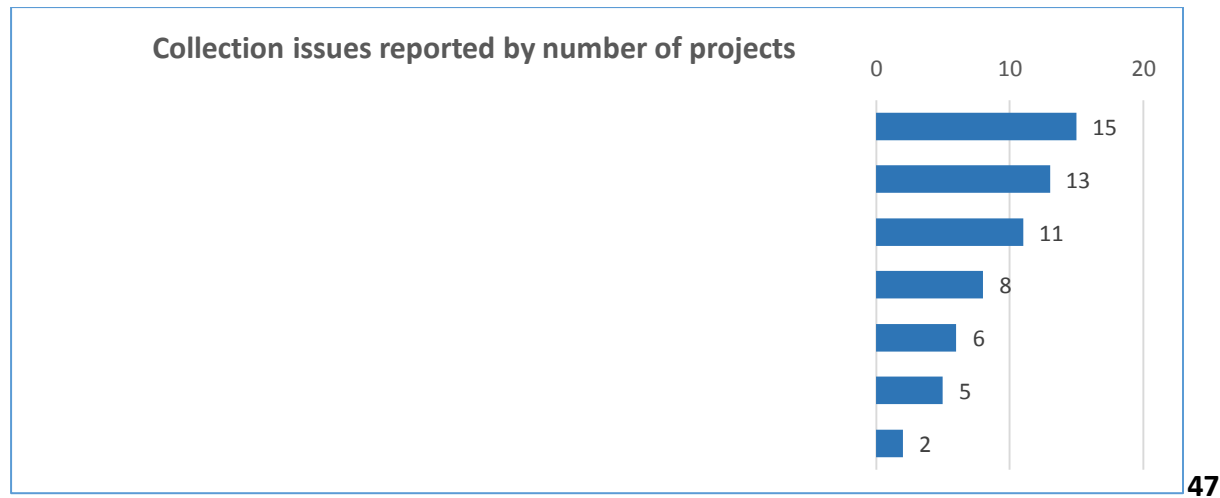


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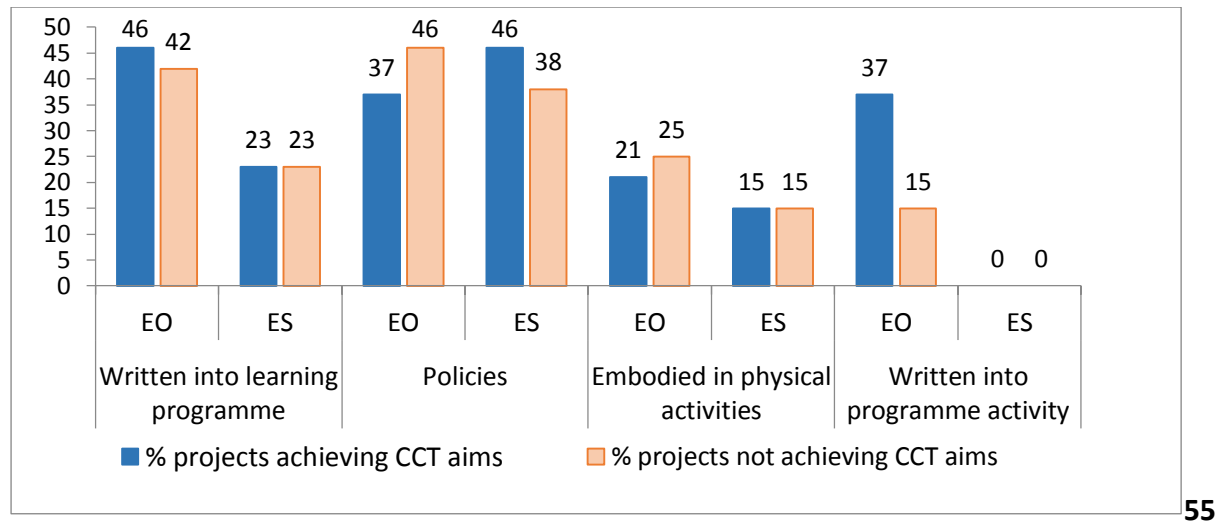
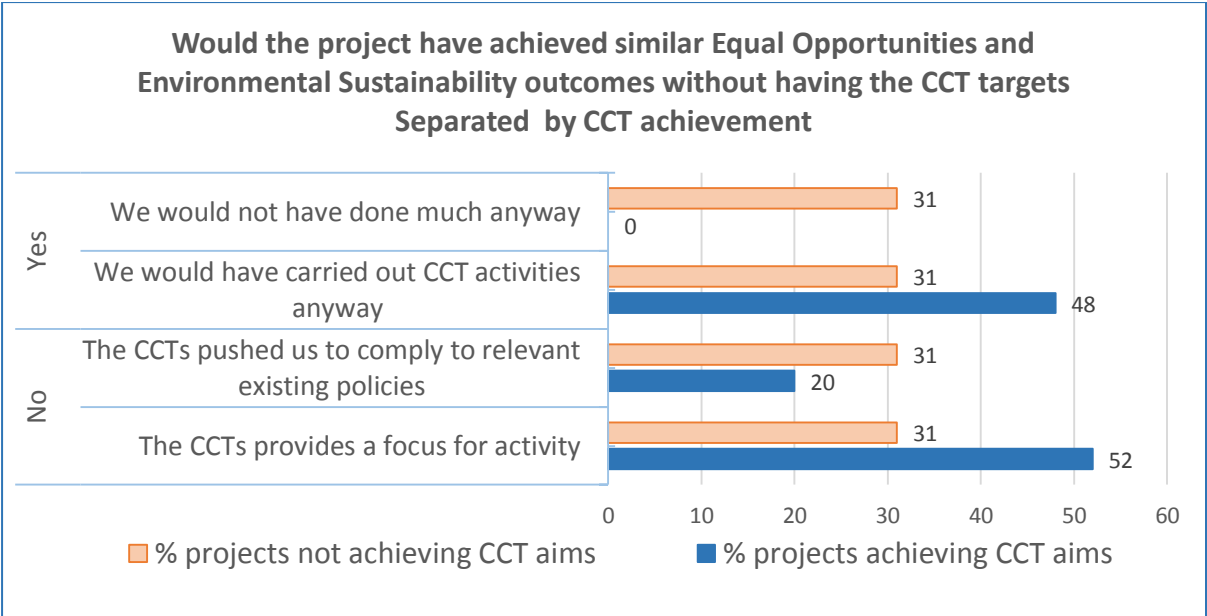


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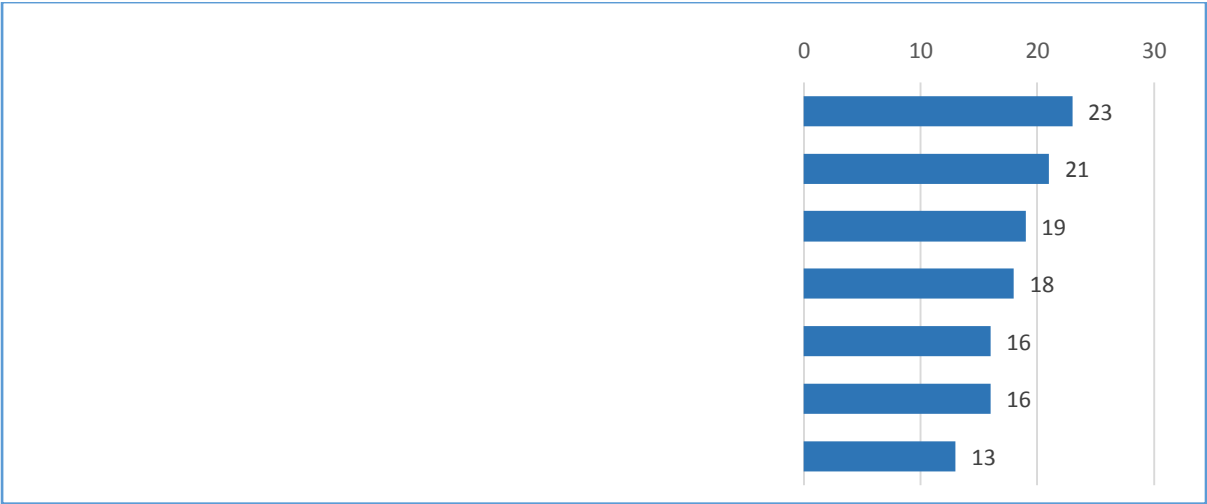


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Chart 16 Good practice not captured 63

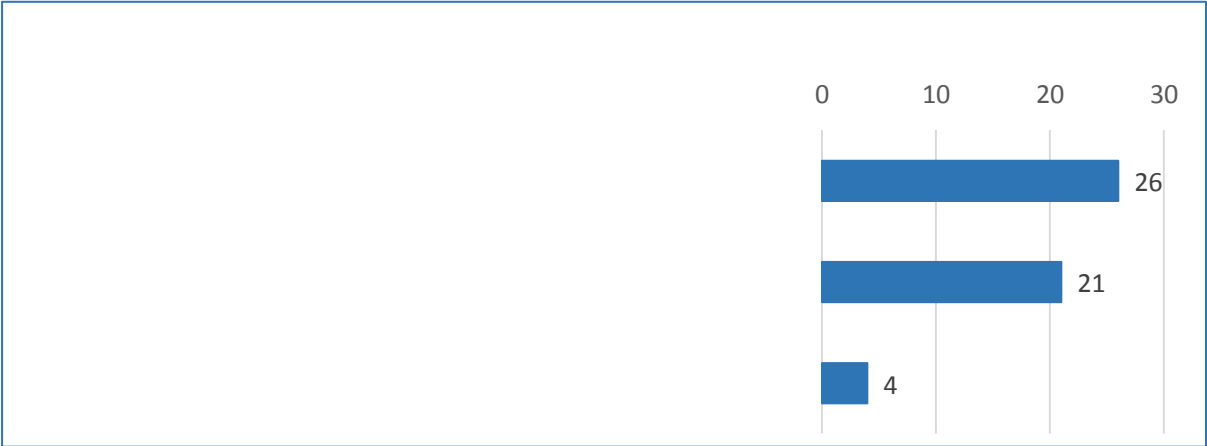
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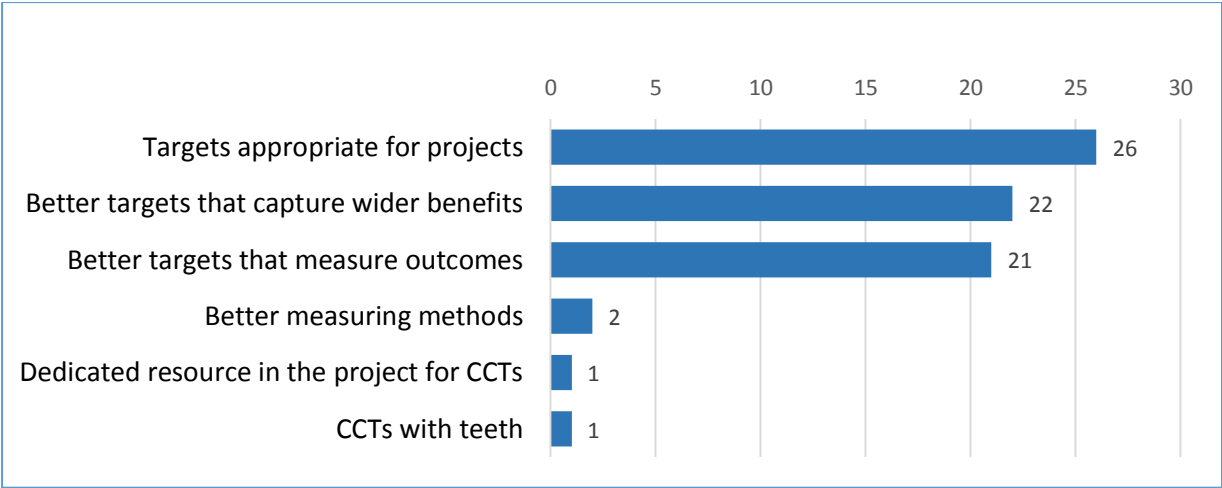
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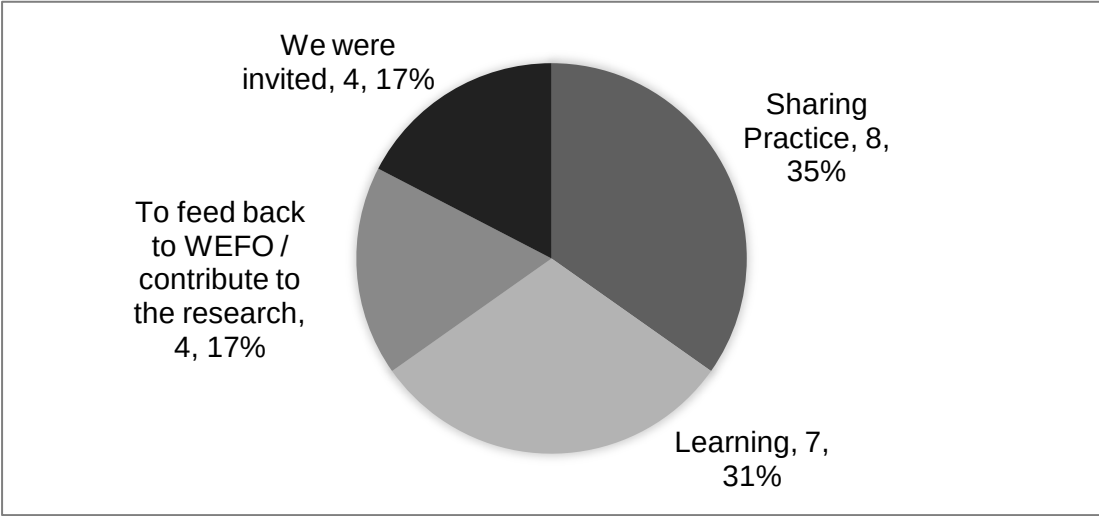
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Chart 21 Motivation for attending workshop..... 74



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Table 3 Baseline..... 76

The following tables triangulate interviewee perspectives and recommendations for the future of the CCTs. This is separated into three areas; development, management and monitoring and evaluation.

Developing Project Support

Table B1 Develop Support

Responses from the Sponsor Interviews			Indicative quotes		
Type of response	NP R	%	PDO	Non-PDO	PMC
Early support and training	23	64	- The projects should have the CCTs in mind from beginning to end, - Need for training on what WEFO means by 'added value'.	- Re integration: we never got the project as a whole to understand how the CCT indicators should be integral to the project as a whole. a strategy to raise awareness; they need to be shown how the CCT can add value to their business goals and objectives. - If projects are not supported from the start in their delivery of the CCT, coming in strong at the end may not help the project as a whole. - Support workshops should be done before the programme starts, after the	The key to this is education, we need to do more, we need to influence bodies and minds, we have come a long way but we have a long way to go and I am not convinced that the PMC sufficiently understands these things to successfully challenge deliverers and influence the programme.

				program starts and throughout the life of the project. When we did these workshops they were gratefully received. • We need materials that are contextual to the different areas of the business of the projects • We should directly fund a support mechanism type project where we can set appropriate priorities to help deliver the CCT. • In this new round, we must also tell them how to achieve the target and not just give them a target	•there could be a piece of work that the PMC could do that says - actually we want to understand the CCTs, how they work, and what are the key areas we should be looking for. Basically, education for the PMC would be useful.
Developing ways to make good practice available to be built on	21	58	•WISE with the Kitemark and the health check system which is very simple but effective.	•	• The CCT team has made a difference going out and promoting the work to project sponsors.
Continuity of message from WEFO	19	53	• Guidance works far better if it is face to face, not written down, because it is complex. There should be a	• I'd be very surprised if we would get much improvement by simply concentrating on process and guidance.	• At the moment there is not an understanding of what we are trying to achieve through the CCTs, and that's the

			minimum of generic written guidance.		biggest problem.
Effective peer support mechanisms	18	50	• There needs to be an appropriate method to bring in those who are implementing to the early stages of projects and to the CCTs. • Try and get projects to help each other. • Sharing information is best practice	• A peer support system would be good; several projects (regeneration) are already doing this. They would meet and combine evaluation models. This model would also add value as a CCT support mechanism.	
Inspiring engaging about the benefits of the CCTs	16	44			
Sector specific guidance	16	44			
More resources for the CCT Team	13	36	• Perhaps more people like Chriss?	• When we have a large number of projects coming online the pinch points within this process could be Chris's team because they cannot have the capacity to give the service required to give that enthusiasm to all the projects which will	

				be coming on stream. We therefore have to dispel this pinch point and the only way to do this is through greater enthusiasts from the other people responsible for doing this work (PDO and their managers) • There has to be a way of changing what teams see as their job until then we are going to find it hard to move forward	
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Develop CCT Management and Communication Systems in both WEFO and Projects

Table B2 Management

Responses from the Sponsor Interviews			Indicative quotes		
Type of response	NP R	%	PDO	Non-PDO	PMC
Culture change in relationship and communication between WEFO and projects	26	79	• Need to encourage them to think about EO and ES, not force them to do it. If we force them they will get it wrong and 'cock it up'. Forcing is not mainstreaming. It is about changing the mind-set.	• Internal cultural change in WEFO: Internal barriers, some WEFO people just don't think it's necessary. •unless these senior managers grab hold of the stuff and understand it and start to drive these things, it's going to be very difficult.	

				There are programme targets but I don't think they have been communicated well. There are WEFO communication issues here.	
Continuity of message from WEFO	21	64	The guidance is overly complex; there is a massive amount of it. Overwhelming for projects. Needs to be more bite sized. Needs an idiots guide.	 we're a long way from being in control of this message both through these third-party players (projects) and also internally. change the dialogue we have people, it's how you tell them, what we do is that we come at this in a compliance way and we are not engaged in selling process - I think the real challenge is how we present the crosscutting themes to our customers (projects).	the prominence of the CCTs declines in terms of communications between WEFO and the projects later in the programmes when the focus is about the level of spend and the number of jobs.
Dedicated resource in project for	4	12	Barriers relate to resources and priorities.		

CCTs			What I'm being told is that it takes a lot of resource to get them to a point where they partake in the CCTs.		
			Training on CCT for PDOs and Senior Managers at WEFO		
			Need for continuity between BP developer and project deliverer: The vast majority of projects are developed by those who know Euro speak and then the projects are handed on to others to implement the project they have no idea of what has been agreed and it goes back to mainstreaming, they cannot mainstream what they have not been in on the start of. They may not be up to speed with the CCTs and this is where it all starts to unravel. This is a lesson for the Programme Management Division and the PDOs	- Internal change in WEFO: They must be embedded and mainstreamed with us (CCT team) taking a more strategic and not an operational role. - We need to have a subtle shift in the position where the ownership of the issues is placed with the PDOs and the crosscutting theme team is there to quality assess and to assist in that process.	
			Since the EOIs are now all online and everyone is supposed to have access to them through the IT	Management change needed: There is an argument that Evaluation and CCTs should be	

			system we just assume that CCT Team is looking at them.	embedded in PMD activity and training. 4 or 5 grade 7 led teams – the balance of 60 staff versus 3-4 staff for M&E and CCT. PMD would say we need that because of the complexities of the projects.	
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Monitoring and Evaluation

Table B3 Monitoring and Evaluation

Responses from the Sponsor Interviews			Indicative quotes		
Type of response	NP R	%	PDO	Non-PDO	PMC
Targets appropriate for projects	26	74	- I think there needs to be an awareness and acceptance on both sides as to what the project can truly deliver on. Just be more realistic rather than forcing the issue. - Targets need setting at the start of each project and they need to take account of the local context - There is greater need to tie in the targets to project milestones and not just at the end. Tied into the project with a greater appreciation of the CCT.	Targets need to be appropriate to the individual projects. They can't be so sweeping	- Strategy across the programmes – it would be useful to recognise that there will be some projects that differ in their ability to hit the aims – the discussion has been about performing on the programmes overall. - Practically they might seem appropriate for programmes on paper – when it comes to delivery I think they can sometimes be unhelpful. Projects are demand led and CCT indicators can be a barrier.
Better targets that capture	22	63		To have a monitoring system you need a clear account of what you	

wider benefits				are doing. There are some innovative technical and research projects striving to develop further concepts of sustainability. This kind of stuff does not show up in the CCTs. The CCTs are not geared up to deal with rapidly developing agendas – they are quite a restrictive set of indicators.	
Better targets that measure outcomes	21	60	Needs to be more thought toward projects that sign up to a priority where there is a target.	Projects and WEFO misunderstand what the CCT are and put the wrong targets in there from the start and they become impossible targets to meet.	
Better measuring methods	2	6	We are not looking at what they are delivering, but whether they are reporting it right.	Better measurement and training for projects: 'If they don't know how to measure the benefits of the equality CCT, they won't achieve them.'	
Dedicated resource in the project for CCTs	1	3		Barriers relate to resources and priorities.	
CCTs with teeth	1	3		For things to change we need to change the visibility of the	The prominence of the CCTs needs to rise

				crosscutting themes.	•the prominence of the CCTs declines in terms of communications between WEFO and the projects later in the programmes when the focus is about the level of spend and the number of jobs.
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Commentary on the above development, management and monitoring and evaluation tables.

Section 10 of the sponsor interview questionnaire focused on the future and the potential for improving the integration of CCTs in the next round of projects funded by WEFO. The responses were categorised into three areas: 'Develop support'; 'Management'; and 'Monitoring and Evaluation'. In each case the responses from sponsor interviewees were typologised in a similar fashion to the responses from the other sections of the sponsor interview questionnaire. The sponsor responses are listed in the left hand column of the table above along with the statistics illustrating the frequency of the responses. Evidence in the form of quotations taken from the transcripts of the other interview samples, which relate to the sponsor responses, are presented in the three columns on the right hand side of the table. This summary also draws on the record of the discussions held at the regional workshops to bring forward further collaborative evidence on the future recommendations.

Develop Support

Responses relating to 'Early support and training' were the most common in this category with almost two thirds of the projects citing this as an important factor for the success of CCTs in the future. It also featured in all three of the other interview samples. Intervention at the early stage of projects is identified as a critical success factor. Intervention in the form of training is seen as more effective than other forms of support. Comments supporting the need for both early intervention and face to face training were voiced in the regional workshops. 'We need early intervention for CCTs.' 'Face to face training before the projects start.' 'We need more one-to-one interaction with the CCT Team from much earlier on in the project.' (Regional Workshop, Cardiff, 4 June 2014).

There is recognition among sponsors and PDOs that good practice exists in relation to integrating CCTs successfully and that these good examples can be built on. This type of response came from 58% of sponsors interviewed and links to the responses referring to 'effective peer support mechanisms' which would allow the sharing of good practice and expertise from existing and previous projects. This was also a suggestion put forward at the regional workshops. 'WEFO should bring people together who are putting bids together now, with those who have had experience of doing them before – like a peer/mentor support network, sharing experience and knowledge.' (Regional Workshop, Cardiff, 4 June 2014).

The need to address the lack of a consistent message from WEFO on the CCTs was an issue from 53% of the sponsors and for attendees at the regional workshops. There needs to be consistency from all sections of WEFO and a consistency of the message on CCTs over time. 'They change the goalposts, but there is no official notification that the goalposts have been changed.' (Regional Workshop, Swansea, 13 June 2014) 'Consistency and clarity are the key issues.' (Regional Workshop, Cardiff, 4 June, 2014) This issue of consistency returns in the next section on 'Management'.

Other future recommendations on developing support called for inspirational presentations and materials on the CCTs; sector specific guidance on the CCTs; and more resources for the CCT Team. This last point is tempered by the recognition among sponsors and WEFO staff that there is a limit to the resources of the CCT Team and there are other possibilities of deploying the Team more strategically.

Develop CCT Management and Communication Systems in both WEFO and Projects

The relationship between WEFO and the projects was perceived as a major issue with 79% of sponsors interviewed identifying it as needing to change, with some describing the relationship as adversarial. There is a desire for a more collaborative relationship, particularly early on in the projects so that there is confidence on both sides that projects are integrating CCT aims in an acceptable manner. Comments from WEFO staff reflect the need for internal change in order to facilitate this change in relationships with the projects. Regional workshops recorded a degree of frustration on the part of some projects in their dealing with WEFO. 'I think the PDOs should be working with you at the very beginning, at the BP stage; working with us on how to integrate the CCTs and not come down two years later looking for what we haven't done.' (Regional Workshop, Swansea, 13 June 2014) 'WEFO believe that you are a bad person. They set you up to fail and constantly just look for mistakes that you may have made.' (Regional Workshop, Anglesey, 12 June 2014) 'WEFO needs to be less adversarial – We want to feel part of the same team making things better for Wales.' (Regional Workshop, Cardiff, 4 June, 2014)

This Management section recorded a stronger response from sponsors (64%) with regard to the continuity of message on the CCTs from WEFO than the Develop Support section. As mentioned above this is an issue that was raised by WEFO staff and the

PMC. There is a particular need to look at the way CCT issues are communicated over the lifetime of projects.

Providing dedicated or ring-fenced resources for CCTs was mentioned by a minority of sponsors (12%) and by PDOs as an issue for some projects. Other points raised by WEFO staff and PMC members went beyond the suggested recommendations raised by the sponsors such as elements of organisational change in WEFO and CCT training for PDOs and senior staff.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Suggestions relating to the nature of the indicator targets dominated this section with 'Targets appropriate for projects' (74%); 'Better targets that capture wider benefits' (63%); and 'Better targets that measure outcomes' (60%) dominating these responses. There are comments from the other interview samples which support the notion of recognising the diversity of the projects and applying relevant targets. Again this was a theme for discussion at the regional workshops. 'Single person to SME to large corporation – how can it make sense to have one set of CCT targets. Can we have a range of CCT targets?' (Regional Workshop, Swansea, 13, June 2014)

The low responses in relation to measurement methods did not reflect the sentiments expressed in the discussion of this topic and may indicate that respondents were unable to suggest alternatives to the existing methods.

Appendix C – Added Value Typology for CCTs in Wales

An Indicative Added Value Typology for CCTs in Wales

This typology assumes that any project might be capable of several different kinds of added value from CCT work, and indeed, that these could be complementary. Looking forward towards implementing the recommendations, there could be a form detailing different kinds of added value from which projects could choose the most appropriate with the assistance of the PDO. These different kinds of added value would each have a different kind of data collection and/or measurement and could be part of the Development Pathway achievements of the project. It would be possible to develop a range (or typology) of project profiles and identify which kinds of added value were most likely to be capable of achievement by each of these different kinds of project.

Added Value as:

- **Knowledge Increase and Sharing:** this could include course elements relevant to developing understanding of key CCT themes; any arrangements for joint learning with other projects or across beneficiary groups; any communication via printed materials or promotional materials. This would include knowledge development in the sponsors, deliverers and/or beneficiaries.
- **Improvement of Existing Activity:** this could mean not changing activities as such but changing the WAY that they are carried out to incorporate processes that are more inclusive and consider the environment and (with regard to the future) contribute to challenging poverty. Examples of these could be provided.
- **Widening Perceptions of EO and ES and Poverty work:** This could include any activity that has an element or outcome that helps to widen conceptions in any of these areas. These can be very narrow and fail to see the links between the three elements. Support materials could explain how the three CCTs actually support each other – especially in a systems perspective.
- **Enhancing the Organisation:** This could include improving the practices and reputation of an organisation as an employer, reducing staff turnover; and differentiating the organisation in the market place.
- **Enhancing Local Economy:** This is of particular interest in terms of meeting all three new CCTs in various ways. A local economic perspective is arguably a key

dimension that Structural Funds Programmes can deliver and that assists with social, environmental and livelihood objectives – in sum a ‘Sustainable Wales’.

- **Legacy of CCT work:** This is one of the most difficult concepts to measure and define. However it is key to the overall mission of the Structural Funds work in Wales according to a large number of respondents who care about making Wales a ‘better place’. It might be appropriate for project Business Plans to include a vision statement of the difference that they hope their project might make 10 years ahead and how this fits with the mission statement of WEFO with regard to CCTs and Structural Funds.

Appendix D – Positive and Negative Case studies

Appendix D contains a number of both positive and negative case studies. They have been developed to aid projects to learn from both successful and unsuccessful projects.

1. Positive Case studies

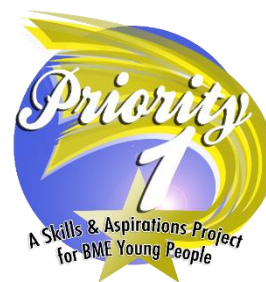
Projects that have been successful in respect to their CCTs learned many lessons along the way. A number of projects have shared what they have learned through creating case studies. These case studies contain lessons covering everything from CCT planning to delivery. The case studies are laid out on the following pages and have been kindly provided by the following projects:

- Raising Skills and Aspirations of Young BME People II
- SEREN
- Communities 2.0
- Communities and Nature (CAN)
- Cyrenians Cymru
- WISE Network
- Stem Cymru

Raising Skills and Aspirations of Young BME

People II - Sharing Good Practice

Lead sponsor - Swansea YMCA



General description of the project

The aim of the Raising Skills and Aspirations of Young BME People II Project was to mentor, signpost and support 1,000 young people from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) and European Economic Migrant (EEM) family backgrounds to raise their aspirations through after school activities and other activities to ensure a prepared and skilled progression into the labour market. Swansea YMCA was lead sponsor and joint sponsors were Valleys Regional Equality Council, Minority Ethnic Women's Network, North Wales Regional Equality Network and YMCA Wales. This project operated between September 2011 and January 2014.

The main activities for the project included:

- Direct support and mentoring / Coaching
- Confidence building
- Work / Volunteering / Shadowing placements
- Pre-employment training (CV writing, interview techniques, online applications)
- Language support
- Signposting and coaching to gain enhanced careers advice and in-depth careers information
- Project staff support positive action with employers to inform and challenge traditional assumptions and stereotypes of an individual's limitations
- After-School Clubs (300 participants - activities closely collaborated with MELAP project)
- Employer visits (contact with a range of employers to gain insight and explore employment options)
- Specialist interventions focussing on hardest to reach NEET and Refugees
- ESOL Classes
- Work towards creating jobs or self-employment

CCT Aspirations

The nature of this work meant that all of the projects work could be seen as responding to the equality cross cutting theme. This resulted in there only being one equality CCT target, of 40% female participation which the project exceeded by achieving 60%.

CCT Delivery

The project is extremely pleased with its level of achievement with the table below reflecting the delivery outcome as reflected in the post project evaluation

	Final	Target
Participants numbers	1054	1000
Exit Outcomes		
Entering Employment	41	50
Entering Further Learning	169	200
Other Positive Outcomes		
Participants with Other Positive outcomes	822	700
Attended Job Interviews	36	
Entering Further learning	256	
Volunteering Work / Work Experience	132	
Part Completion of NFQ Course	9	
Completed non-accredited course	389	
Project Specific		
Signposting	731 / 2227	500 /
Employer visits	331 / 765	50 /
Mentoring	1045 / 6585	1000 /
After School Clubs	606 / 4659	300 /
Confidence building	889 / 6709	1000 /
CV writing / Applications	207 / 303	600 /
Demographics		
NEET	50	50
Female	630	500
Disability	11	N/A
BME	766	800

In regards to the project's environmental sustainability cross cutting theme activities, this was seen as a greater challenge for the project but the projects feels that this ES CCT work was well integrated into the work of the project. This work included:

- Undertaking environmental activities with young people creating an eco-code.

- Raising awareness with the participants and staff around their travel choices, encouraging active travel through facilitating things like bike storage and car sharing.
- Involving the young people in project procurement showing the wider sustainability issues.
- Visits to Electric Mounting Hydro power station in North Wales including looking at their eco management and their apprentice system to spark an interest amongst the young people.
- Exploration of non-traditional environmental carriers for BME people including Animal husbandry and Equine studies for Muslim girls.
- Using local venues to the young people and where necessary video conferencing rather than travel.
- Visits to honey farms in Wales to look at pollination around Europe.

Added Value of the CCTs

The ES CCT had clearly added value for the sponsors, helping them to focus on how the project's activity could be delivered in a sustainable way with real impacts on how the work was carried out. All sponsors have carried out activities to work towards achieving Green Dragon Level 1. This CCT made procurement locally focused, including local labour. The participants learned about sustainability, environmental and economic impacts, learning that would never have happened without this CCT.

In regards to the EO CCT, because the project is vertical by nature, the work of the project added value to the landscape of this type of provision. While this project is not unique in targeting BME participants, many similar projects that target young people do not reach their targets of 5% BME participation. This project was real added value for all these people because they could take part in a project that was designed and delivered in a manner that removed barriers to their inclusion, with the result that the project achieved a BME participation rate of 80%.

Support

The sponsor considered the WEFO CCT team to be extremely helpful.

The project also benefitted from having a Project Development Officer who would come to the review meetings, who kept the CCTs on the agenda, made sure that they got their environmental implementation plan in place and always checked their processes for

equal opportunities. The sponsor considered the process to be a constant dialogue and they felt that they could have support whenever they needed it.

Key Lessons

The key to the success of this project was effective community engagement with the 'hard to reach' communities they were to work with. The projects and their evaluation organisation identified 10 key ingredients that were evidenced throughout this project promoting successful community engagement with BME young people relating to education, employment, training and skills. These key ingredients form a model of good practice from which other projects can learn.

1. Practitioners are supported to have time and space to form transformational relationships with BME young people.
2. Involving Equality organisations as joint sponsors was instrumental in the delivery of this project to BME young people.
3. Involving Practitioners who personally believe in the aims and objectives of the project.
4. The ability, skill and freedom for practitioners to engage with BME families and elders in their home or community venue.
5. Involving practitioners with personal experiences of discrimination and an immigration background.
6. Involving practitioners from a similar culture possessing similar community languages.
7. Accessible and flexible project times and venues open as necessary on evenings and weekends.
8. The ability to deploy group-work methods, bespoke courses around non-traditional careers and education awareness whilst still conforming to cultural and religious sensitivities.
9. Ability to deploy mentoring, confidence building and empowering activities in the community.
10. The ability of practitioners to join up with other ESF projects and employers. Increase exposure to Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) or the Creative Industries sectors.

SEREN – Sharing Good Practice

Cardiff University's
Geoenvironmental Research Centre



General description of the project

SEREN is part of Cardiff University. It is co-ordinated by Geoenvironmental Research Centre (GRC), but SEREN is co-sponsored along with the British Geological Society (BGS). Other project partners currently include Aberystwyth and Bangor Universities, and two businesses WDS Green Energy and Cambrensis. WEFO asked SEREN to develop effective engagement strategies to ensure that research and knowledge is passed onto other companies.

The project started in 2010 and will finish in 2015. The main objective is to stimulate growth and development of the Welsh economy via research. SEREN as a project is strongly focused on developing the economy of Wales, and very much sees the research element of the project as supporting the growth of the economy, rather than 'research for the sake of research':

"Our niche is geo-environment. We have just been awarded the Queen's prize for our research and the impact it has had on society. Also the Director of the centre received a Fellowship of the Royal Society for his contribution to the Global Scientific Development. So our project is a flagship project. We are also the first geoenvironmental research centre in the world providing leadership on research on contaminated land. So we have some collaborative works with the UN nations so we have a global network. So we are very happy and proud to work with WEFO."

SEREN believes that part of their success is due to having very well defined objectives and targets from the start of the project and that is in part due to the amount of work at the beginning that went into creating the original business plan:

"The business planning stage is crucial in the development of the project, and WEFO are really good at this stage because they see it as much more of a two-way process rather than the usual submit and wait. They shape and guide a lot more than other funding streams. Definitely, and the Cross Cutting Themes in our project are always at the top of our priorities."

CCT Aspirations

The implementation of the CCTs is also very high on SEREN's agenda and they believe that the CCTs have helped the project become the success that it is:

“We are overachieving on all of our targets. I think it helps that we were interested in making the CCT a top priority in the project, and from that enthusiasm it helps generate other ideas as to how to make it work better and expand the CCT elements. All of our methodologies are enabling the way we look at the differing dimensions of the project and its targets. We take this approach to all that we do, for instance I am a sociologist by background, and it is pretty unusual to get someone with my background to work on a geoenvironmental project such as this, but we all bring different approaches, experiences and perspectives that help make the project stronger and cover as many dimensions as we can. You know this is why SEREN is a multidisciplinary project.”

SEREN realised from the beginning that their project would have an enormous impact on the environmental sustainability agenda in Wales, and were keenly aware of what potential impacts the project could also have on social sustainability. With this in mind SEREN developed a strong working relationship with WEFO's CCT team, and forged links with Cardiff University's policy development department to help further assist the project develop a greater understanding of the CCT policy landscape. Due to the importance they placed on the CCTs, SEREN designated a member of the team to be responsible for the co-ordination of the CCTs and also created a group that meets regularly to monitor the progress of, and update the wider project on the work of the CCTs.

“This was set up by us, and we were left to develop the mechanism on how to deliver on the CCTs that made the most sense to us. We work very closely with the CCT team and they are very, very helpful indeed.”

CCT Delivery

In order to achieve their targets on CCTs, SEREN realised that the environmental targets would have been relatively easy for them to achieve due to the nature of the SEREN project itself being related to environmental sustainability. However, SEREN were keen to push forward and not rely on being able to easily achieve the standard targets set. They realised that SMEs and the third sector in Wales are limited in their resources, especially due to the current budget constraints on the Welsh public sector. SEREN sort

ways to help people achieve their ES and EO targets, so created the ECOcode software which is built around the Green Dragon standard, which would be much easier for people to use.

“The software is used by the organisations and businesses we work with. WEFO was very helpful in creating this tool. It was important that we made it relevant to people to use and not something that they had and just put on a shelf. In terms of EO we provided training – the University has an induction package for all new employees and SEREN has its own bespoke induction pack, Equality Impact Assessments were carried out. We actively went to the SMEs, after Green Dragon went through its changes and it became more expensive. So we created an Excel package, a small statement of intent on EO and ES, screening questions, have you designated an environment champion etc.? SEREN go out and explain this to the organisations and it’s more of a step-by-step approach. The national regulations compliance check, which is a key part of the indicator, is a key source of a lot of knowledge. WEFO pointed this out to us quite early on that this was a good place”

SEREN is committed to ensuring that the tools they produce for SMEs and the other organisations they work with are fit for purpose. To ensure this they regularly engage with WEFO and other stakeholders to comment on and further refine the tools and mechanisms produced by the project.

“When we started the development we were engaging WEFO and other stakeholders because we wanted to make sure that we developed something that would meet expectations and was acceptable and would help achieve our targets. They came in from the beginning, at the concept stage, to see what we were proposing and we developed the software and asked what they thought, what worked, what didn’t work etc. and we have constantly had that level of collaborative dialogue and we have obviously had the external evaluations which is part of the project review ongoing...”

“We also found that the validation stage was extremely important and useful, so we engage with WEFO and other stakeholders to comment and refine the tools. It is an excellent way to ensure what you are doing is going to be used ultimately by the people you are making it for; otherwise what is the point if people are not going to use it? The process presents problems for us, and can sometimes be a bit tricky, but the benefits of it always outweigh any of the obstacles.”

“And we have our own internal Q&A processes to ensure that our project aims and objectives are met and are of a suitable quality to present to outside. Everything must be of the highest standard.”

Added Value of the CCTs

The CCTs have been an enormous source of innovation for SEREN, allowing them to enter into new avenues of collaboration, giving them the ability to target organisations and groups that they would not otherwise have been able to access as they would not have been part of SEREN’s usual core areas of work.

“The benefits are two way for us and to those we work with helping us have a greater impact on society and the environment. Networking has been a great added value, and building collaborations, support and for us learning the importance of the third sector in Wales. Now we are setting up the structures for SEREN 2020 we will integrate collaborations with the third sector in a different way – we see them as absolutely critical.”

When asked if there was a particular project that stands out for them that would not have happened if the CCTs did not exist, SEREN was able to respond confidently:

“MicroHydro definitely. The outcomes from that collaboration are that many jobs will be created here in Wales on the back of that single project. It has very nice benefits to local communities – if you have small localised generation of energy, which then keeps energy process low for that community, so community halls or other facilities can be open and utility costs are cheaper. It has a direct impact on the community and wider society.”

Support

SEREN felt that the support they have received throughout the project lifecycle had been beneficial, but wished to emphasise that the onus is on the projects themselves to engage with WEFO and to not just assume that they would be aware of any difficulties that projects may encounter along the way:

“The Cross Cutting Theme team and WEFO more generally have always been tremendously supportive of us, and we really couldn’t ask for a better working relationship. We feel that the CCT team are as enthusiastic about the project as we are, and that helps and provides us with the confidence to push things forward and be

innovative in our approach to the CCTs – especially when it comes to collaborations between ourselves and the third sector in Wales.”

Key Lessons

SEREN overall has been a flagship project in terms of the CCTs, but still had a few tips and advice for other projects embarking on next round of funding:

“We found that as the project progressed and developed new and unexpected paths the validation stages became extremely important and useful, so we engage with WEFO and other stakeholders to comment and refine the tools we create or adapt. It is an excellent way to ensure what you are doing is going to be used ultimately by the people you are making it for; otherwise what is the point if people are not going to use what you produce? The process presents problems for us, and can sometimes be a bit tricky, but the benefits of it always outweigh any of the obstacles.”

Another lesson that SEREN learned was regarding the monitoring and evaluation forms.

“The one thing I would say is the forms can be very arduous and off-putting to clients. We therefore, created our own version of the monitoring forms, as we required people to fill in the ‘Enterprise Assisted’ form which is 3 sides of A4 and an Equality and Diversity form and an ES form amongst others – it is a lot of paperwork, so our approach to that is if we are at an event where there is going to be a need to fill out these forms, we have produced condensed versions with all the key info we need.”

“We will also fill in the forms as much as we can before we go to a company for a form sign-off so it makes the process as easy as possible for the beneficiaries and we highlight the sections relevant to the company – it creates a bit of leg work for us, but it goes down well with the people filling in the forms. This is also a reason why we do not just send our materials in the post to the companies, we always like to do it face-to-face. It is important to build a relationship with people and then it makes everything afterwards so much easier.”

Communities 2.0 – Sharing Good Practice

Welsh Government



General description of the project

Communities 2.0 is the Welsh Government's main Digital Inclusion programme and is jointly funded through the European Regional Development Fund. The project was created as a successor to Communities@One, to address inequalities that existed in digital exclusion. There was a strong body of evidence that the market was failing to engage sectors of the population; including older people, those in the most deprived communities, people from the lower social classes or vulnerable and marginalised groups. The project, through a national strategic framework of support, aimed to provide activity to plug gaps in provision based on local circumstances.

The project aims, through community groups, voluntary sector organisations and enterprises, including social enterprises, to engage people with technologies by breaking down barriers, and supporting them to exploit technologies for economic outcomes. The programme has ten objectives:

1. To assist 360 community and voluntary groups to exploit ICT
2. To assist 120 enterprises, including social enterprises, to exploit ICT
3. To financially support 120 enterprises, including social enterprises, in exploiting ICT
4. To create 50 new ICT enterprises
5. To support 150 individuals to progress within or towards the jobs market.
6. To support 120 enterprises with equality strategies
7. To support 48 enterprises with environmental management systems
8. To benefit 20,000 individuals over the lifetime of the Project
9. To create 50 jobs
10. To establish 5 centres of excellence regarding digital inclusion, namely: i) the 'hardest to reach' group; ii) social enterprise ICT development; iii) digital storytelling; iv) central project website; v) public service delivery.

CCT Aspirations

CCTs were included in the project from the outset, through a number of discussions with WEFO colleagues. At business plan stage, it was felt that the policies and practices of

the project were designed specifically to address the most acute areas of inequality created by digital exclusion and would also address broader issues of inequality. Those in social classes D and E were much more likely to be digitally excluded than those in higher social classes, as were those who lived in deprived areas, and those who were older. The project was specifically designed to work with groups in those categories to address those exclusions and would also target those digitally excluded minority groups in the areas where the project operated.

More broadly, the project aimed to address the Equal Opportunities objectives for the Structural Funds programme. Specifically, the project:

- could be seen as a form of positive action measure to help increase the number of people with multiple disadvantages accessing employment and self-employment;
- would help increase higher levels of training and employment for people with disabilities; those from minority ethnic populations, and women;
- would help facilitate women into working with ICT; and
- help increase organisations developing equality and diversity strategies.

A commitment to the Welsh language remained, with bilingual marketing material and sessions being held in the language of choice. The Communities 2.0 website is available in accessible formats e.g. variable font sizes; good use of text colour and background contrasts; simple to navigate, and bi-lingual (Welsh/English).

Environmental sustainability was also integrated into the project and its delivery at business plan stage. The project encourages members of community groups, voluntary sector organisations and social enterprises to use ICT and other technologies. Electronic communication, including Skype and video conferencing, reduces the need for travel within the project, so reduces emissions. Adopting ICT technologies also reduces the need for paper based activity within enterprises. However, the increased use of technologies does impact on greenhouse gasses.

To offset this, the project aimed to promote applications of ICT that improve energy efficiency and reduced carbon emissions. Where new equipment is funded, the most energy efficient that is able to undertake the role is purchased. The project continues to support the reusing, recycling and recovering of equipment, where appropriate, in accordance with the EU's Waste Disposal of Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE)

Directive. All groups and enterprises are made aware of WEEE, and the importance of reusing, recycling and recovering. Where possible, the project advises to switch off computers and peripherals.

The project aimed to signpost community groups, voluntary sector organisations and social enterprises to relevant support, should they wish to have an Environmental Management System. Organisations and enterprises with sufficient levels of structure and development would be supported to adopt or improve environmental management systems.

The project target was to support 50% of enterprises assisted by this project to adopt or improve their equality strategies, including monitoring systems and support 48 enterprises with environmental management systems. The initial CCT targets seemed appropriate during business plan stage, but upon delivery it quickly became clear that it would be more difficult to reach the targets than first thought. Once the iPad application had been developed, the project became more confident in reaching the CCT targets and voluntarily increased the original environment target of 48 to match that of equality at 120.

CCT Delivery

In practice, it was more difficult to get enterprises to engage with CCTs when they had more pressing issues such as developing their income. The project attempted a number of different ways to engage enterprises with CCTs, including holding workshop type sessions, bringing in organisations such as Sell to Wales and Future Directions to explain to the importance of CCTs to future business and Enterprise Development Days. These events were met with some success but did not progress clients quickly enough.

At the halfway stage, the project developed an iPad application, which assists delivery staff to discuss environmental and equality / diversity issues with community and voluntary groups and enterprises. Where policies are already in place, the app is used to identify improvements that need to be made. Where no policy is in place, or where the enterprise is new, a simplified process is used for the development of a basic environmental strategy; in the case of equality/diversity, the iPad app is applicable even in the most basic of cases.

In addition, the project chose to align awards for financial assistance to the completion of environmental and equality/diversity strategy improvements and/or evidence of carrying out action plan to improve these. Since this approach was taken, the project has been able to catch up on its targets.

Added Value of the CCTs

The specifically designed CCT application provides added value to Welsh Government. It is freely available from the App Store and is also being developed into a web-based application. This will allow other WEFO funded projects to utilise the application to assist organisations in developing or improving their Environmental and Equality policies and therefore meet CCT targets. Discussions are ongoing between project deliverers and WEFO as how to promote this in the next round of European funds.

Support

The sponsor reported that the CCT Team has been very helpful and has always been quick to respond to their queries. The CCT team was also able to meet with project deliverers on a number of occasions to discuss any ongoing issues.

Key Lessons

The key lesson for the project was that whilst enterprises understand the need for the CCTs, their main focus is on developing and generating income. Organisations can sometimes see the need to meet the CCT requirements as a time consuming barrier to receiving assistance. Through the development of the iPad app, the project was able to help organisations address CCT requirements in a quick and easy manner.

Communities and Nature (CAN) – Sharing Good Practice

Countryside Council for Wales



General description of the project

CAN was created as an umbrella project, to:

'generate increased economic growth and sustainable jobs by capitalising on Wales's environmental qualities, particularly its landscape and wildlife. CAN will also develop and use innovative ways of enabling a wider range of Wales's residents to benefit from these new opportunities.'

The aims and consequent objectives were:

- Aim A** To maximise the environmentally-sustainable economic value of natural capital through increasing the volume, length and value of visits to the countryside.
- Aim B** To ensure that the benefits of activities are shared with disadvantaged groups through employment, training and volunteering opportunities.
- Aim C** To enhance sustainable development in Wales by providing high quality local leisure opportunities and improving the attractiveness of each spatial plan area.

Ideas for projects were solicited from external organisations, both local authorities and third sector, then compiled and analysed to determine the level of Environment for Growth outputs, results and impacts that could be achieved.

CCT Aspirations

CAN addressed the cross-cutting themes in two ways; first, through its main Aims and Objectives where it incorporates environmental sustainability in general and certain aspects of equal opportunities, most notably the positive action measures which specifically supported underrepresented groups' progress in the work environment. This included 'on the job' training, mentoring, job shadowing, secondment etc. And secondly,

it addressed them through the CCTs compliance requirement to which each individual initiative had to sign up to.

CAN did not specify how partners should address the cross-cutting themes nor did it give them targets, but it invites them to state, in their formal application, how their activity could contribute to the Environmental Sustainability and Equal Opportunities objectives and they are scored on this as part of the assessment criteria. Projects were expected to complete CCT action plans that included not only what they could achieve, but importantly identify what they could not achieve and explain why.

CCT Delivery

In the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) between WEFO and CCW they were given specific deliverables on CCTs, set out by WEFO for Priority 4, Theme 3 (E4G). In their guidance to partners CAN laid out how to integrate the cross cutting themes by taking the WEFO guidance and simplifying it to relate specifically to CAN. Individual initiatives then created their own CCT plan, which was assessed at the initiative selection stage.

It is important to note that no one initiative met all the CCT actions, but collectively CAN and the projects have responded well to the deliverables requested by WEFO.

Added Value of the CCTs

CAN believe that their Aim B added value to the overall environmental and economic objectives – it meant that organisations that did not usually consider equal opportunities (beyond their statutory obligations), were obliged to engage with disadvantaged groups. In some cases this was particularly successfully achieved, so for example Snowdonia Society won an award for their work with the probation service. It also meant that smaller organisations for which the volunteer input had always been a critical element in their delivery, could now access EU funding. With two of these small organisations, Felin Uchaf on Pen Llŷn and Pembrokeshire Mencap at Stackpole, their efforts working with volunteers were also recognised and awarded by the WCVA.

If organisations did not have existing systems or existing policies in place – a Welsh language scheme for example – they were expected to comply with the requirements of CCW's scheme, in this way the sponsor did extend systems to new organisations. CAN believe they have turned the prevailing economic model upside down and used a cross cutting theme – environmental sustainability – as a platform on which to base economic benefits, specifically an increase in visitor numbers, creation of jobs and enterprises

(CAN is not producing jobs related to green technologies but are creating jobs related to green places).

As a project they recognised that community engagement is expensive so CAN set up the Community Engagement Award specifically to address this element of the CCT. CAN acknowledges that the effective engagement of local communities within decision-making processes is one of the most far reaching of the equal opportunities, allowing people to have a voice in how their local environment should be developed / exploited.

Support

The majority of CCT activities were delivered by CAN initiatives – so they supported the delivery of CCTs across the Convergence area. Some of the initiatives that did not have a track record of working with volunteers and beneficiaries collaborated with third parties to involve these groups, e.g. several organisations worked together with the Probation Service to deliver our Aim B.

Key Lessons

One key lesson identified was that although CAN had 'Aim B', and all initiatives were scored for how they would deliver it, they did not set targets for it, and therefore it is difficult to measure its ultimate success. It is also mainly delivering against two actions, offering job training, mentoring, job shadowing etc. to underrepresented groups and offering opportunities to break down attitudinal barriers.

With reference to environmental sustainability CAN was not convinced that the CCTs encouraged much added value as the organisations running the initiatives were to a large extent already promoting environmental sustainability. However, the requirement for all new builds to achieve BREEAM Excellent standards did push some initiatives, although on the whole CAN found the environmental sustainability CCT did not demand additional actions, mainly preventative ones and ones which are already enshrined in common usage e.g. environmental impact assessments are required for planning applications.

CAN also found that the action to 'Develop and promote effective local supply chains' was difficult to fulfil as they were all obliged to follow public procurement rules where it is not possible to specify 'local' suppliers. It also proved difficult for CAN's third sector partners, to develop a tailored Environmental Management Systems as they can be very expensive which would have been prohibitive to the overall project costs.

AIM B – To ensure that the benefits of activities are shared with disadvantaged groups through employment, on the job coaching and volunteering opportunities (Weighting of 10%) <i>Note: On the job coaching must not lead to a qualification (since CAN does not have ESF cross-over funds to cover certificated programmes).</i>				
	Individual Weighting	Does not meet criteria Score 0-1	Meets criteria Score 2-3	More than meets criteria Score 4-5
The quality of the provision	35%	The provision is introductory to awareness level only with no basis for assessing the likely proportion of participants that would go on to undertake further participation/skills development	The provision provides basic knowledge and safety guidance so that participants can participate in simple practical environmental work with close supervision. Or, the provision provides detailed knowledge necessary to undertake, following clear instructions, practical environmental work with only part-time supervision	The provision will enable participants to make skill-based decisions and undertake practical environment work without supervision. Or, the provision will enable participants to make skill-based decisions and produce instructions and plans to supervise and train others on environmental initiatives
The quality of provision in terms of meeting client needs (including least restrictive access)	35%	There is little or no assessment of client needs or the provision is not balanced to those needs.	There is evidence of an approach based on assessment of client needs and the provision includes significant opportunities to match those needs.	There is substantial evidence of provision of opportunities clearly targeted at client needs.
The duration of the provision	30%	The average duration of the opportunities is 0-7hrs	The average duration is 1 to 4 weeks	The average duration is greater than 4 weeks

Cyrenians Cymru - Sharing Good Practice



General description of the project

The Cyrenians Supported Employment and Training (CSET) project was created in the Swansea Bay spatial area by Cyrenians Cymru, an organisation providing support to homeless people and others disengaged from mainstream services. The foundation of the CSET project was the fact that the European Structural Funds were allocated to West Wales and the Valleys by the EU on the basis that this area was one of the poorest in Western Europe; therefore it was important that this funding did not pass by the very poorest and most excluded in the area. The overall aim of the project was to provide a coherent route from exclusion to employment, by providing a package of services helping people to overcome barriers, undertake training, and find and sustain employment.

CCT Aspirations

The CCTs were integral to the planning, partly because of the nature of the work involved in the project. The core target participants were the most excluded in society. People in this position are, by their circumstance, suffering extreme inequality – and the overall aim was (and still is) to reduce this inequality by supporting them into a position of training and employment and re-integration to mainstream society. The project considered the difficulties of accessing training and work for different groups who find themselves in this position, these included: those who had a physical and/or mental health disability, those from different ethnic origins, and certain groups of women. One aim of the CSET project was to assist women into non-traditional areas of training and employment.

Environmental sustainability was also considered from the beginning, with the development of an eco-code and project planning for a re-use and recycling service that could involve the community and develop work experience and training opportunities for the participants.

While the core CCT targets were, and remain, appropriate, they changed over the life cycle of the project in certain ways. For example, the project developed an initiative to assist sex-workers in the Swansea area, which necessitated different measures. Likewise an equine project was developed looking to help with the issue of urban horse ownership but more particularly, to use horses as a means of engagement for young people and adults. An initiative to distribute food and materials to individuals and charities was started as a result of a contract with Amazon for making use of items that they would otherwise discard.

CCT Delivery

The CCTs were integrated into all component parts of the project: Cyrenians Community Centre, Dragon Arts and Learning, Reuse and Recycling and Cyrenians Supported Employment Agency. The integration took place, and was successful, because the CCTs were included as part of the monitoring of hard outcomes, such as the completion of a training course, and other positive outcomes including soft measures such as registration with a doctor.

A comprehensive database was developed to monitor delivery and record individual outcomes. The CCTs were part of this and they were reviewed at monthly Contract Monitoring and Development meetings. Delivery was also periodically reviewed and assessed through external evaluations. There were specific barriers to full delivery of CCTs relating primarily to rigid eligibility rules for example not being able to work with asylum seekers, and the rigidity on postcode eligibility created unnecessary division. As an organisation Cyrenians had to draw on alternative sources of funding to maintain a credible holistic approach to Equal Opportunities.

Added Value of the CCTs

CSET worked with over 7,500 participants and helped nearly 1,500 into employment. This had a lasting impact on reducing their economic and social inequality.

Participant forums were set up in each part of the project to involve the participants and gain feedback on delivery. Such participation can be a very important part of re-engagement for those on the margins. The work with socially excluded women, refugees, asylum-seekers, young people and those with disabilities improved social integration and economic gain for participants from these groups. The highly effective database and monitoring system was a primary factor in improving the

operational delivery of the project. This has now been applied to all our projects (ESF and non-ESF) to good effect.

Additional activities emerged as a result of the project including the food distribution scheme in partnership with Amazon, which also diverted thousands of tonnes of food products from landfill. Equally the Reuse and recycling project has diverted thousands of items from being sent to landfill. The primary contribution of the project in relation to Welsh Government policy is part of the Tackling Poverty Action Plan. Tackling poverty is integral to promoting equality.

Cyrenians have learned a significant amount about the inequalities faced by those on the margins. Developments such as supporting sex workers have created new challenges and new learning. This learning has been disseminated through training, conferences, meetings, partnership working and hosting visits. CSET has exchanged good practice with partner organisations and with statutory authorities during the lifetime of the project. This two way sharing continues to be central to the delivery of CCTs, because it enables the organisation to respond to the continually evolving issues that the CCTs are designed to address.

An independent evaluation of CSET carried out by Wavehill Ltd. in 2012 produced a detailed cost-benefit analysis. This determined that for every £1 spent on the CSET project, a minimum net economic gain of £1.44 was achieved.

Support

The CSET project drew on the support of over 50 partner organisations from the third, public and private sectors in delivering its CCT activities. A package of smooth working relationships is critical to helping individuals progress and to making an impact on the groups they come from. The evaluators of the project said that a coherent model of provision that integrates overcoming barriers, training and getting and sustaining employment had a strong place in future planning.

Key Lessons

The main lessons learnt from the CSET project include:

1. Rigid eligibility criteria militate against equality of opportunity.

2. Effective monitoring and evaluation, coupled with a comprehensive database, are highly important to the delivery of CCTs.
3. A review system must enable adaptation and development to meet changing circumstances.
4. Service-user participation and involvement in the development of the project is vital to effective delivery.
5. The dissemination of information, of lessons learned and of changing trends is vital to a comprehensive Wales-wide approach to the delivery of the CCTs.

WISE Network – Sharing Good Practice

Bangor, Aberystwyth and Swansea Universities



General description of the project

WISE Network aims to engage businesses with high quality research and development (R&D). In Wales most businesses are small and medium enterprises (SMEs) who can rarely afford access to relevant expertise. WISE Network, originally established in 2006 with Objective One Funding (with further funding from 2011 through ERDF Convergence), fills this gap by providing university quality R&D facilities and expertise to businesses in West Wales and the Valleys.

WISE Network is a partnership between Bangor, Aberystwyth and Swansea Universities providing access to an extensive range of expertise and technical facilities across the three Universities enabling businesses who wish to take full advantage in the Green Economy by developing sustainable products, processes and services. Most importantly it provides businesses with the opportunity to develop working partnerships (short or long term as required) with experts passionate about their area of expertise, enthusiastic for growing the Welsh economy and able to speak the language of business.

CCT Aspirations

Bangor University has worked for many years on the challenge of embedding sustainable practices into businesses. It made perfect sense to incorporate this expertise into WISE Network from the outset. WISE Network includes a sustainable business development theme and the theme lead is responsible for developing a methodology for addressing the challenges of the CCT targets in a user friendly way for businesses. It was recognised early on that few businesses approach universities for guidance on environmental management and equality and diversity issues, rather they want specific and timely responses to their genuine, pressing business needs. Likewise, academics engage in the project to solve problems in their field of expertise. The CCTs are mostly considered as a distraction.

The solution was to establish a group of experts whose main interest is embedding sustainability within business. An in-depth Sustainability HealthCheck was modified

into a short, user friendly, online tool which every business that engages with WISE Network is required to complete. All project staff across all themes introduce this right at the beginning as a bonus offer-“an additional opportunity to have an overview of the business and help to make improvements that might give you a competitive edge should you need to compete for external contracts”.

Businesses are asked to complete the Sustainability HealthCheck at the first meeting, therefore introducing the CCTs and improvements early in the initial assistance meetings. The Sustainability HealthCheck is a 15 minute questionnaire that can be conducted online, over the phone or in person. Once a business has completed the Sustainability HealthCheck they receive an initial feedback report with recommendations, an offer of support and signposting. A member of the CCT team then follows up on these to support and encourage the business to make at least one Environmental and one Equality and Diversity (including the Welsh language) improvement.

Sustainable business development is at the heart of WISE Network. The approach is designed to enable others to focus on their topics whilst the Sustainable Business Development and CCT theme deals with the ‘cross cutting’ element.

The aim was to make the CCT as streamlined and integrated and “non-irritating” as possible and to give businesses something for participating. To this end we developed the Sustainable Business CharterMark. This evolved during the project in response to feedback from team members and the participating business. In this way we ensured that CCTs were at the heart of the project that provided added value to the business and in no way can be seen as an irrelevant add-on at the end of the project.

The project deliberately chose an ambitious target of a 100% of businesses to complete at least one Environmental and one Equality and Diversity (including the Welsh language) improvement. These were reviewed during the re-profile about half way through the project and WEFO suggested a revised target of:

- 50% of business need to undertake at least one Equality and Diversity (including Welsh language) improvement

- 20% of businesses need to undertake at least one Environmental improvement

However, the project's ambition remains the same as the Environmental improvement target for the whole project has already overshoot, and the project is well on the way to achieving the Equality and Diversity target.

CCT Delivery

All staff members at the start of the project (and any new members of staff joining later) were briefed that CCTs were an important element of the project, and the process and support structure was explained. It is essential that the businesses are made aware of the Sustainability HealthCheck and Improvements at an early stage.

Prior to the first seven hours assistance been completed, the businesses are told that they will be required to complete the Sustainability HealthCheck and undertake improvements and this commitment appears on the form which they sign. The WISE Network staff member then passes on details of the business to the CCT team with instructions to start the Sustainability HealthCheck and Improvement process.

The whole process is streamlined and the business benefits from the insight gained from the feedback report and the business can be provided with extra expertise and support at an earlier stage if required. This has led to including some elements of further CCT in collaborative projects with the businesses.

The Sustainability HealthCheck has also evolved over the course of the project based on feedback from businesses and the WISE CCT team. As a result the Sustainability HealthCheck v3.0 has recently been launched.

Added Value of the CCTs

Many businesses have reviewed present policies and management systems or, adapted new ones, following the WISE CCT process. The most popular are Environmental Policies, Equality Policies, Welsh Language (or Language) Policies and Sustainability Statements. Looking into or reviewing Environmental Management Systems has also proved a popular improvement amongst businesses.

Many businesses have signed up to the Welsh Government's Sustainable Development Charter as a result of including it in the Sustainability HealthCheck.

Therefore they have been made aware the implications of the forthcoming Well Being of Future Generations Bill.

Support

At the start of this project there was already a lot of expertise, experience and enthusiasm surrounding this topic within the WISE Network team from previous work across the Universities. The project provided an opportunity to build on this experience and as a result the WISE CCT team has provided support and training internally. The WISE staff that deliver CCTs meet regularly to discuss and exchange best practice. This pool of expertise has been used to provide advice and to support the delivery of the CCTs in other European funded projects.

The project has been approached by many other projects for help and guidance and for actually delivering their CCTs. In terms of the resources involved, because they are cross cutting it is difficult to attribute direct costs and benefits to CCTs. The Sustainable Business Development Theme is popular and has catalysed trans-disciplinary collaboration within projects with businesses.

Key Lessons

1. Recognise that CCTs can be an irritation to everyone other than those directly involved or interested.
2. Customer-easy and user-friendly ways of achieving the targets in a meaningful way are needed.
3. Recognise that there will inevitably be a time lag in reporting if achievements are only reported once the evidence has been collected that improvements have actually taken place.
4. CCTs need to be messaged as an advantage not a hindrance to everybody, project staff, business and WEFO PDOs.
5. Dedicated experts developing and delivering up to date and relevant CCT content is essential, as well as contributing to the other themes and to other WEFO projects.
6. A dated CharterMark has been useful in retaining interest post official involvement - businesses want to know how they can get next year's CharterMark logo to update their marketing materials.

Stem Cymru – Sharing Good Practice

Engineering Education Scheme Wales

General description of the project

The sponsor of the STEM Cymru project is the Engineering Education Scheme Wales which has a long standing, proven track record of successful activity to encourage pupils into science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects with a particular focus on engineering and manufacturing. There is a significant evidence base to indicate that Wales needs more young people to take more interest in STEM subjects at an early age to progress into higher level qualifications and to take up careers in these vitally important areas for the future prosperity of Wales. STEM Cymru was framed as a proposal for funding from the European Social Fund to help address this issue. The general aims of STEM Cymru stated in the original business plan were:



“STEM Cymru will encourage young people in the 12 to 19 year age range to participate in innovative technological and engineering activities to contextualise and improve skills in science, technology, Engineering and Maths. This will raise aspiration and attainment levels in science, technology, engineering and manufacturing, increasing numbers of students entering employment, FE and HE in these economically vital areas.”

“The programme seeks to address issues identified in the Strategic Framework through Priority 1 Theme 2: Raising Skills and Aspirations. This intervention is designed specifically to support a significant number of young people throughout the Convergence Area of Wales through from Key Stage 3 to the sixth form and is intended to build STEM skills through thematic strands.”

In its smart objectives STEM Cymru stated that it would:

- Increase percentages of young people likely to consider STEM as a career choice.
- Increase the number of young women participating in STEM activities, qualifications and career pathway choices.

- Raise awareness of young people about sustainability and the need for environmentally friendly innovation through hands on science based workshops working with industry and FE/HE Institutions delivering Targeted Environmental Training.

CCT Aspirations

The issue of gender equality in STEM and the importance of environmental issues were core aspects of the project.

The uptake of STEM subjects at 'A' level by females is relatively low and particularly so in maths and physics which are important subjects for those wishing to take up careers in engineering. Furthermore, the UK has the lowest number of female engineers in Europe. STEM Cymru was given a target of 45% female participation at the beginning of the project.

CCT Delivery

The CCTs are core to STEM Cymru's operation. The gender issue has been and continues to be the most challenging. Modifications to aspects of the delivery model have taken place over the lifetime of the project and the nature of female specific activities and visits have developed and become more refined. There are many factors impacting on young girls related to whether or not they pursue careers in engineering and manufacturing. STEM Cymru has tried to address some of these and there is evidence that there have been attitudinal changes in some of the participants.

The target of 45% female participation seemed very challenging for female participation in STEM activities. However, the participation rate is currently 52%. This has been achieved through a number of strategies that have developed through the lifetime of the project:

- Encouraging schools and colleges to involve more females – particularly female only teams in activities.
- Promoting the positive aspects of engineering and countering the image that engineering is a dirty, oily profession.
- Using a range of female role models to work with participants, accompany visits and make presentations.
- Introducing female only visits and activities.

The environmental and sustainability issues are more readily addressed and influenced through contextualised awareness raising. Members of the project staff have, however, noted a very real interest and concern over these issues with many of the young people taking part.

Added Value of the CCTs

Environmental and sustainability issues are such important factors in engineering and manufacturing that STEM Cymru encourages all students to consider the issues in a balanced and pragmatic way. The impact of these cross cutting aspects will impact on future generations more than on the current generation and participants are made aware of this. The 6th form students working on real challenges with engineering companies are all given a presentation on sustainability at the induction days. They are also made aware that many of the challenges they face will have issues related to the environment and sustainability either directly or indirectly embedded in them. Another strand is based on alternative energy and focusses on the technologies related to this and inevitably leads to discussions about alternative energy sources and their pros and cons.

Key Lessons

The uptake of physics by females still remains persistently low in Wales at 18% and the impact of STEM Cymru interventions will take some time to be measurable. However, feedback from students indicate that perceptions and aspirations are changing and some female participants have developed greater interest in engineering as a career than they had prior to engaging with the project.

Quotes from Girls into Engineering strand 2013-14:

- I've realised women can do engineering and I enjoyed it
- I think engineering is more fun now
- I am now going to take maths and science for A level
- I know more career choices there are for engineers
- Thinking about taking engineering for GCSE
- It has made me consider choosing engineering as a learning pathway
- It has made me think what should I go to university or an apprenticeship
- You got to do it, we just didn't sit there
- It has made me more interested in physics

Quotes from females engaging with Introduction to Engineering (i2E) 2013-14:

- it has made me realise tech is more fun than what I thought
- it helped me understand power and how generators work
- we worked for a long time and it was hands on
- I've realised tech could be a good GCSE to have
- making me want to take part more

Quotes from female participant engaging with the EESW 6th Form 2013-14:

- Seeing all the other projects produced by other schools
- Working as a team to solve the problem and then going on to tell others about our idea
- Communicating with professionals, writing the report, presenting our journey with the judges
- The chance to prove myself cognitively, and learn new skills and information
- It is giving me a great chance to work in a team with other pupils to design, create and make a project that could be used industrially in the real world of engineering.
- Environmentally, the majority of our project is wood which came from a renewable source, and biodegrades well. However, we have plastic parts which obviously would come from a non-renewable source and is not biodegradable. We have ensured as little of our project is made from this source for this reason. This peak flow meter may prove to be really efficient and essential one day in our society for many people.
- I've earned so many communication skills working in this group with other individuals. We've come together really nicely as four hardworking individuals and have shared the work load and responsibilities. The best communication was required in order to make a successful project together. I have also learnt so much about photonics, electronics and mechanics whilst working on this.
- Researching and developing our ideas allowed us to explore these different aspects and increase our knowledge greatly.

- I feel as though I have developed a great deal of skills that would be useful to any employer. I have shown I can work independently as well as in a group having great communication with my team members. Also, my knowledge in science, maths, technology and engineering has increased greatly. I have become more imaginative and creative during this project when we came up with the whole concept. I also have proved that I have initiative and am hard working and self-motivated to do such a massive task in my own time due to interest in the idea.
- We were aware our project needed to conform to the Welsh Government's Carbon Reduction commitment, and also the carbon reduction commitment energy efficiency scheme. We also needed to make sure our prototype conformed to the size and safety regulations set by Caerphilly County Borough Council.
- I have learned how to work to a deadline and organise my time. I have also improved my communication skills by conversing with professional people on topics of great importance, and by communicating my ideas effectively to a team.
- Our project was special, as it allowed us to research old and new techniques for the generation of hydro-electricity, therefore was a very open project, and had many different possibilities. Whilst doing this project, I've learnt the importance of communicating with my team members, and the importance of having a leader to secure that everybody achieves their targets. I also have far more knowledge on the science of hydro-electricity, specifically on dams. I've developed many skills that will be useful to an employer, such as communication, team work, numeracy, focus, direction and so on. These skills will be valuable for me in the long term.
- This project has given me a true taste of the life as an engineer, and given me the opportunity to experience an aspect of science I hadn't yet considered.

2. Negative Case studies

The five following project CCT failure scenarios or vignettes are drawn from the negative factors identified in the CCT Evaluation research. They are designed to show the factors that can contribute to making things go wrong and are written in the form of a narrative about hypothetical projects so any resemblance to an existing project is accidental and unintentional. These factors have been compiled into 5 narratives that each illustrate a certain combination of negative factors. It is important to note that all the factors identified here are ones that are under the control of the project or which the project would have the power to influence for the better. These vignettes thus deliberately do not include upsets and problems that come in from the outside and are out of project control, such as financial crisis, changes in EU priorities/requirements and/or changed demands from WEFO.

The five vignettes are headed:

- I. Lack of understanding
- II. Stuck Schemes
- III. Failing to plan is planning to fail
- IV. Fragmented Initiatives
- V. Chronic Communication

I. Lack of understanding

- Deficient understanding of CCTs
- Asking for help too late

The project was set up to use European Structural Funds to support the development of SMEs in terms of enabling them to access wider markets and development an understanding of the opportunities that exist for enterprises to expand.

The sponsoring group was composed of an educational institution working in partnership with a local authority. The main aims of the project were seen as achieving market expansion for a certain number of the client/beneficiary groups and associated job creation and/or projected job creation.

Growing an enterprise by expanding into new competitive markets and by increasing from one or two employees towards employing ten or more people results in a need to address or re-address policies and practices relating to equal opportunities and environmental sustainability. In spite of this the project viewed the CCTs of Equal Opportunities and Environmental Sustainability as an exercise in filling in the proposal form in a persuasive way. The sponsors were convinced that they would be able to point to one or two examples of equality-related changes and environmentally-related cost savings without considering what these would really look like. They did not look at the guidance on CCTs available on the WEFO website and at no time were they asked to do so. They thought that CCTs were not important and were an 'add-on' that could be addressed once the project was up and running and as a result they did not include any detailed provision for the CCTs in the Business Plan.

At the mid-term review they were asked for their CCT aims and to describe the associated activities. They thus put together a hasty few paragraphs that claimed that SME market development activities took some note of Equal Opportunities and Environmental Sustainability through compliance with legislation and in terms of tendering requirements.

This approach was criticised in the review for not fully integrating the CCTs into the developmental activities and for not engaging the SME clients in these areas and therefore failing to equip the enterprises to deal with all aspects of expansion. The project sponsors found themselves under additional pressure, they needed to respond to the criticism and so they contacted the CCT Team at WEFO for help.

A member of the CCT Team visited the project but by this stage the programme was already well advanced and the contracts with the participating businesses and trainers did not include reference to CCTs. This proved to be very difficult to change at this point in the programme, which added further pressure on the staff running the project. The CCT Team was able to help the project identify where elements of the CCTs could be integrated as a 'natural fit' into some of the activities of the project and this eventually managed to produce a sufficient response to the criticisms levelled at the project in the mid-term review.

In retrospect the sponsors recognised that their failure to understand the role and the importance of the CCTs had impacted on the success of the project as a whole. Integrating the CCTs fully at the start of the project would have added to the experience of the participants and the potential performance of the SMEs as they expanded, it would have removed unnecessary pressure on hard-working project staff and it would have improved the overall achievements of the project.

II. Stuck Schemes

- Lack of learning processes and attitude
- Relying on institutional policies
- Tick box mentality

This project was aimed at helping young people acquire skills for the regional labour market. Those young people with few or no qualifications were a particular target group for the project.

The sponsors for this project included a local learning partnership and a range of medium-sized local businesses who primarily acted as advisors. The training was designed to cover some generic skills for work and some groups training for certain sector-related jobs. The aims were to get the young people to complete the training programme, to get a job at the end of the training programme and to be equipped with the skills and attitudes to retain the job.

The training companies that were chosen to deliver this work were those that had a track record of delivering mass programmes. Their retention of students was largely through sanction and the student selection was carried out largely on the basis of membership of low or no-qualification groups.

The project was requested to include some attention to CCTs after the Business Plan review and accordingly the training companies included a small awareness component in the programmes and in the advice to the participating businesses. Although the training companies were checked for having policies that covered the CCT areas, the ability of the training companies to incorporate and deliver Equal Opportunities and Environmental Sustainability in their programmes was

not investigated in any depth by the sponsors and it was not included in the information for recruiting trainees onto the programme.

The success or otherwise of the awareness elements and of this advice was never reviewed as part of the ongoing project evaluation. The CCT report simply contained the numbers who had received the awareness training and the advice to companies was reported in a similar fashion with a single number being given for the companies offered advice.

There was no indication of the quality of the training received by the students or any feedback from the students on the impact of the training. Evidence on both of these points could easily have been gathered at the time of the training if the process had been planned in from the beginning. Because the sponsors had checked that the training companies had policies in place they were satisfied that they had met the needs of the CCTs, but the sponsors had no idea of the quality or effectiveness of the practice. Equally there was no indication of whether the companies that were offered advice on the CCTs were assessed to gauge the level of advice required or whether there was any improved practice resulting from the advice.

The evidence provided by the reporting implies a limited tick box approach and although at the end of the project the sponsor team was satisfied with their performance the lack of attention to the CCTs in the training and in the advice to companies was a missed opportunity to contribute to positive attitudinal changes in relation to long term, stable employment.

III. Failing to plan is planning to fail

- Not having plans to fulfil agreed CCT aims
- Not allocating responsibility for CCTs – either people or resources

This project was designed to support and develop new businesses in a deprived area. It was working with start-up companies and those that had been running for no more than 2 years. The sponsors were a local authority in partnership with a higher education business school, which was delivering much of the support.

Support was customised to the business and the intention was that the individual nature of the businesses was a key concern. The CCTs were included in the Business Plan as being a part of all the advice provided and the aims were agreed. However, no plan was put in place to:

- Describe what the advice would include in relation to CCTs
- Describe how this advice would be tailored to the individual companies
- Provide any training or support for those delivering the advice
- Allocate time or resources for the development of this advice and consult with the CCT team
- Provide any means to test or assess if this advice was provided
- Provide any means to evaluate and record the experience of the companies regarding the effectiveness of the advice – or whether they had ever acted on it.

At the mid-term review it was noted that the aim was to include advice on Equal Opportunities and Environmental Sustainability, but that there was no evidence of this happening. The sponsors then questioned the support delivery team at the business school on what they had been doing and found that this had been inadvertently dropped from the programme.

The CCT elements of the training were reinstated and a tick-box form provided for all the delivery staff to gain data that supported the CCT claims of the project, which added to their workload. There was still no training or summary information on the CCTs provided to the staff delivering the support in relation to the benefits that the CCTs could offer to new small businesses.

There was no summary or reflection on the impact or not of the CCTs on the participants. The data on the number of businesses helped did not include any specific mention of CCTs apart from the blanket statement that they had been included in the advice and the numbers of people who had received some advice on CCTs from the mid-term review point.

The lack of planning for the CCT elements of the project and the lack of monitoring of the delivery by the main sponsor resulted in an increased workload at the end of the project which could have been avoided. It also diminished the

quality of the advice to the businesses with a potential knock-on impact on their performance.

IV. Fragmented Initiatives

- Lack of continuity of key personnel
- Failure to bring stakeholders on board

This project was designed to encourage the development of small enterprises in the area of digital technology. The project sponsors brought in a paid consultant to develop the business plan on their behalf. The consultant was selected on the basis of his expertise in digital business development. European equal opportunities policies were considered in terms of selecting participants for the project, but there were only brief references to aims for the CCTs in the business plan. No specific resources for CCT delivery were identified within the budget and no consistent action plan for implementation of CCTs developed. The CCT Team were not consulted in the development of the business plan.

Once the business plan had been approved and the funds had been secured new staff were brought in to form a delivery team for the project. By this time the consultant who had written the business plan had not been involved for nine months. The business plan was passed over to the new team with very little handover in terms of the commitments to the CCTs or the implications these had for delivery. The new team were pre-occupied by the headline targets for achievement based on the numbers of start-ups and individual entrepreneurs who had expanded their employment.

The new project team set off to put together the first stages of delivery according to the plan and worked well on the initial stages. After six months the finance became tricky and a key member of the team left and was not replaced – this person had been the main channel of communication with the Project Development Officer (PDO) from WEFO. The PDO concerned also changed job at around the same time and it was some time before contact was re-established. There were insufficient written records of procedures and achievements, which meant extra work for the remaining staff re-visiting participants and re-gathering

data. This took several months, which was time lost to delivering the project. While re-gathering the data the remaining staff were most concerned about the headline targets and the CCTs were overlooked.

By the time of the mid-term review the lack of any commitment to CCTs had been identified and this had been flagged up as a problem. With the project under pressure there were further staff changes which put the team on the back foot and CCTs were postponed while new staff were brought up to speed on the project overall. The original vision for the CCTs at the inception of the project had long been lost and forgotten. New staff coming into the project had to interpret the business without limited background knowledge, in a situation where the project was running behind schedule they were forced to prioritise and the CCTs were continually slipping off the agenda until the project was reviewed.

At a very late stage some elements of CCTs were included in the business advice – this was not so bad for those who were starting up as they had just got to the point of thinking about compliance with legislation and how they would market their services. However, another staff change in the team also meant that this initiative was very unevenly applied and the project failed to deliver on its belatedly agreed CCT aims.

An informal review with the project team and some beneficiaries identified some considerable interest in aspects of the CCTs – especially in terms of marketing pitch of small business in mostly local markets where social and environmental factors can make a difference in consumer choice. The missed opportunity to get these stakeholders on board was noted as they would have been an additional repository of knowledge about the project. Capturing the rationale behind the business plan so that it was available for any new staff and having a strategy for bridging disjuncture's caused by staff changes would have saved a great deal of time and unnecessary work and added to the achievements of the project.

V. Chronic Communication

- Failure to address CCTs at start of business planning
- Records and data – communication with partners

This was a project designed to deliver training to key unemployed groups in an economically deprived area with the majority of the beneficiaries being middle-aged males. The training content was linked to prospective employers' statements of priorities in their staffing requirements, with a view to fulfilling the needs of the local labour market. The sponsors for the project were a partnership between a higher education institution and a local council.

The content of the courses that ended up being delivered was heavily influenced by a limited concept of stated business skills requirements this resulted in the CCTs not being considered until late in the process. The CCT Team were not used as a resource to review how the CCTs could have been better integrated. The business plan did not include any aims for the CCTs, the main project aims were to maximise the numbers of participants gaining the access to work qualification to show results. Great stress was put on retention and completion of the courses, and the achievement of the qualification.

Project staff did not have a clear set of instructions about CCT-related data collection or even the basic equal opportunities and environmental policies compliance duties of the project. As a result there was no integration of the CCTs in the record keeping system for the progress and development of the client companies or trainees. There were attempts made to collect data late in the process and this resulted in a partial picture of achievements. However, overall the data collection and records simply concentrated on showing the project's main achievements in terms of numbers of qualifications achieved.

The staff from the higher education institution who were delivering the training relied on the institution's existing policies on Equal Opportunities and Environmental Sustainability to cover their practice in relation to CCTs without considering the application of the CCTs in the clients' contexts. The staff also relied on the institution's data collection processes which were not in the format required for the CCTs or WEFO. This became a problem in the final stages of the project where a great deal of the evaluation stage was spent having to re-visit the data and retro-fitting data. When this was submitted to WEFO it was found not to be in the correct format and the project was required to re-format the data. All this took a considerable amount of additional staff time.

The CCTs had been initially flagged up as a problem after the mid-term review. It was argued by the project that it was a problem with the client group as CCTs would seem irrelevant and this might affect retention and completion. There was no concept that CCT awareness might be helpful to prospective employers or to work applications or interviews.

Had the businesses been engaged in some early discussion about the value of awareness of CCT issues for their prospective employees, the level employer stakeholder engagement could have been more fully built-in. The value of the CCTs in terms of general learning opportunities and social awareness and development could have been communicated from the start. In addition, communication with WEFO on the expected reporting requirements could have enabled deliverers to fully integrate the CCTs into the content of the training and into the recording of learning achievements, avoiding the additional workload at the end of the project.

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