

## **Progress report, September 2007**

### **1. Summary**

City Broadband Exchange for SMEs (CBExS) is a pilot project in the exploitation of broadband by city and regional stakeholders with relevance to both public and local enterprises. This has been within the policy context of the eEurope Action Plan and i2010, aiming to intensify the use of ICT in the regions. The partners are:

Shannon Broadband (lead)

City of Cologne

Asociación IDEM

Emcanta

South East Regional Authority

Mid West Regional Authority

The steering group met in Cologne in Cologne on 10 May 2007 and reviewed progress

Dissemination has been active in all the partner regions. This dissemination has focused on linkages with key target groups, ensuring that the target groups were fully consulted and active in participation in the project.

Each of the partners made excellent progress developing their demonstrator projects, including ICT access to schools, use of ICT by local municipalities, e-administration, digital archives, innovative use of WI-FI and community awareness.

Transfer of experience has been through common meetings, and by the development of a shared questionnaire.

The project has successful in identifying good practice. The project has demonstrated a number of innovative demand-side actions that will contribute to regional development programmes.

### **2. General progress**

The objectives of the project have been to generate a pilot project in the exploitation of broadband by city and regional stakeholders, aiming to drive demand for broadband services. This is based on the principle that demand-side initiatives, parallel to supply, are required to promote the take-up on ICT in the regions.

This objective has been considerably achieved. All partners have initiated pilot projects that actively implement the objectives. These pilot projects are closely related to local needs and conditions within the regions. They also have a significant trans-national component. The partners have exchanged experience, learning from each other. They have identified common issues and challenges. This common purpose has been very fruitful in informing regional actions, and in helping to develop a trans-national perspective and profile of the project.

An additional added value of the project is that it is strengthening regional actions, as all the partners have developed pilot action outside the mainstream programmes in the member states. The project is adding to the “stock” of innovative actions in the

regions. It is expanding the potential scope and vision of the regional programmes, alerting the programmes to new possibilities for promoting the use of ICT.

### 3. Involvement of participants

Participants have been active in their projects, and have contributed to collaboration and exchange of experience. They have learnt from each other and a positive partnership has developed. Involvement of the partners was according to the plans, although one partner was unable to participate in the Cologne meeting.

Some minor problems were in the re-structuring of the partnership at the start of the project, as new members were brought into the partnership at the request of the Managing Authority. This required some modification of the approach, and adaptation of the project to integrate the new members. This has been done very successfully and the revised partnership has been performing excellently

### 4. Problems encountered

Any problems have been associated with the small scale of resources in contrast to the large scale of the challenge. These problems have been addressed by adapting the tasks to the resources available. There have been no difficulties with the consortium or the contents

### 5. Activity reports

#### 5.1 Management and coordination

Shannon provided the management of the project.

Each of the partners worked with user groups in their regions.

The steering group met in Cologne in Cologne on 10 May 2007 and reviewed progress in the partner regions, as well as discussing and agreeing management aspects of the project. This meeting also identified several key issues that need to be addressed across the partners, such as lack of public awareness, regional coordination, role of public sector, lifestyle changes and data storage.

Preparatory work was undertaken on the web accessible knowledge portal for the project

#### 5.2 Dissemination

Dissemination has been active in all the partner regions. This dissemination has focused on linkages with key target groups, ensuring that the target groups were fully consulted and active in participation in the project. In Cantabria, Emcanta has interfaced with local municipalities and IDEM has worked with members of the public. In Cologne, the City Council has had liaison with schools and municipalities, and organised a major conference. In Ireland, Shannon Broadband, Mid West Regional Authority and South East Regional Authority worked with local authorities in creating awareness about opportunities.

#### 5.3 Regional demonstrator projects

Each of the partners made excellent progress developing their demonstrator projects. Emcanta have developed a system of municipal tax management using the internet.

The Cologne project has focused on broadband in schools, information sharing by municipalities and “Smart City” conference. The South East Regional Authority promotes the use of broadband in Carlow through Wi-Fi on public lighting standards. IDEM has promoted e-administration, such as the use of electronic ID. Shannon Broadband has developed a pilot digital archive for Limerick City. Mid West Regional Authority has promoted broadband awareness among local communities.

#### 5.4 Transfer of experience

Initial work in transfer of experience was achieved at the Cologne meeting on 10 May. This highlighted three key aspects of common concern. (a) Infrastructure: while much progress has been made with major broadband infrastructure, more effort is needed, particularly with “last-mile” facilities and with long-term fibre-optic. (b) Information and training: Awareness needs to be raised among SMEs and citizens – education, training, workshops, advertising (c) E-services: New e-content and e-services need to be promoted, especially using broadband in aspects specifically relevant to individual regions and localities.

The meeting also identified the need for a common questionnaire This will be the collection of secondary data of the regional situation of the participating entities in relation to the strategies and political activities directed to the monitoring and benchmarking of broadband, including analysis of best practices and common indicators.

## **ESTIIC: City Broad Exchange**

### **Note of a team meeting in Cologne on 10 May 2007**

Present:

Tom Byrne, South East Regional Authority  
Michael Moroney, South East Regional Authority  
Richard Doyle, Shannon Broadband  
Jose Manuel San Emeterio Perez, EMCANTA  
Elisa Laso Castana, IDEM  
Beatriz Gonzalez, Emcanta  
Maria Jesus Danobeitia, IDEM  
Albert Deistler, City Of Cologne  
Brian Callanan, Shannon Development.

Apologies

Mid West Regional Authority

Group were welcomed by Albert Deistler on behalf of City of Cologne.

Programme overview reflected on the overall objective on the need to accelerate the use of broadband, and particularly to focus on the emerging European issues.

#### **1. Project presentations**

##### **Emcanta**

Emcanta have developed a system of municipal tax management using the internet. This is in the context of broadband extension in their region, including new agreement with a cable supplier, programme of extension through ADSL, wimax and satellite to 50 rural and isolated villages. Challenges to promote the use of broadband include information campaigns, promoting the use of new technologies and developing e-administration services.

The municipal tax management using the internet has been established with the regional and local government system to improve the services provided to local councils for the management of their municipal taxes. Local councils currently collect taxes individually and in different ways. The project aims to provide town councils with a tool to administer local taxation in a common way, but maintaining the necessary autonomy.

The proposed system will offer substantial improvements: all information will reside in the systems of the Cantanrian government, each of the local councils will be able to access the system via internet browser; the system will be accessible to citizen, both for consultation and interaction.

## **Cologne**

The Cologne project focuses on three aspects:

There are 285 schools in Cologne City. The City Council provides the buildings, while educational programmes are under the framework of the Regional Council. The aim is to optimize the use of broadband among the schools, integrating the schools into the local city internet. The goal is to provide facilities to transfer media via networks, all schools connected to broadband.

An internet loop is being created around the local municipalities in Cologne. All documents are stored in a central system and shared by the municipalities. Pilot projects have been completed in 5 municipalities, with individual municipalities taking responsibility for aspects of the information.

A conference was held on 9 May, the “Smart City” conference. The conference highlighted the challenges and changes of broadband applications as well as courses of action for cities and regions. Presentations included policies for broadband of the North Rhine Westphalia Bundesland, European broadband policies and the future concepts of the “ubiquitous-city” by Korea Telecom.

## **South East Regional Authority**

The regional information society strategy promotes fibre-optic broadband networks, 6 completed with construction under way on a further 9. The aim is to provide open-access, affordable, independent broadband infrastructure and services for business and citizens

This project aimed to promote the use of broadband in a small town (Carlow, population 25,000). The specific project is to install Wi-Fi on public lighting standards. These are appropriate locations for Wi-Fi: owned by local authorities, ideal height and location for Wi-Fi deployment, capital expenditure is reduced to a minimum, readily available power supply and maintenance arrangements already in place. Challenges encountered include the rules on energy regulation, particularly tariffs and connection charges. Other issues identified included backhaul and intermittent power supply.

Key objectives are to open access to all service providers, create VLANs for each provider, enable quality of service and promote commercial viability.

Next steps in taking the project forward include discussions with other key organisation, identify suitable locations, regulatory/planning issues and funding.

## **IDEM**

IDEM have focused on elaboration of material for guidelines for using e-administration and catalogue of e-administration services, with dissemination campaign and information seminar.

Guidelines for e-administration included obtaining the electronic ID, with other examples on on-line facilities: labour life form, driving licence and suggestions mailbox. Also, a catalogue of e-administration services in the government of

Cantabria has been created, including details of e-administration and services for e-administration.

Dissemination includes one information seminar and 20 specific actions of dissemination at local level. The information seminar will be of 3 hours duration, aiming to spread the services of e-administration to the citizens of Cantabria. Specific actions will focus on promoting awareness of the services of e-administration, as well as stimulating the use of the electronic ID.

EMCANTA and IDEM also proposed a methodology for a trans-national review of the outcomes for City Broadband Exchange: how the increasing use of broadband can improve regional competitiveness

### **Shannon Broadband**

This was a consortium to take a proactive lead on broadband in the Shannon Region, comprising the regional development agency and five local authorities. Major previous projects have been MAN (metropolitan area networks) in Limerick, with proposals prepared for other 11 other locations. This will provide the basic backbone infrastructure, linking Limerick with other centres.

The project for the City Broadband Exchange was the “digital archive” for Limerick City. This aims to be a “demand-side” broadband demonstrator, making available a rich archive of Limerick City-focused digital content for enterprises and citizens. This will highlight the future use of presented by broadband communications infrastructure.

Work so far includes establishment of steering group, appointment of project manager, initial scoping exercise, review of comparable initiatives and consultation with potential users. A pilot outline has been completed. The Limerick City Digital Archive will be a good example of how digital content that is local in nature and specific interest to the inhabitants of a particular region can act as an important stimulus to attract new users to the online medium. Themes will include tourism, social, enterprise, learning and leisure. Content source will be from newspapers, film companies, public information providers and others.

## **2. Management and reporting**

Issues raised included the new reporting period (Oct report instead of June), with final report for period to Dec, and also the question as whether there were any under-used funds from other projects in ESTIIC.

## **3. Open forum**

Debate focused on the key recommendations for actions on promoting greater use of broadband for regional competitiveness. Issues included:

There is confusion about broadband, lack of awareness, hard to get clear information about prices, lack of clear information about broadband services, blackspots, even in

urban areas, continue. A lot of money has been spent on advertising, but the message about broadband potential is not getting through to the public. There is an urgent need to convince householders and SMEs about broadband. Even where MANs have been provided, the service providers are not necessarily connecting

Regional coordination has an important role. Companies should not be left to lead on broadband. The public sector must take an active role in stimulating demand. The commercial sector will tend to concentrate on short-term results, and pay less attention to long term potential. All levels of government need to support the use of broadband.

Infrastructure is critical and is still lacking. Fibre networking is the key to the future. Wireless solutions are only interim steps, they will not give reliable long-term infrastructure

Infrastructure provision is spread over too many agencies; problems with multiplicity and services and multiplicity of infrastructure providers. We need to bring all the broadband infrastructure together.

There are lifestyle changes associated with broadband; for example, modern play stations have huge demands for band-width, and people are playing games across the world.

Data storage will be crucial; users will no longer store their data on their own computers, but instead will upload their information onto common web-sites. This will increase data capacity, and give new opportunities for sharing and communications.

TV and gaming will be the “killer application” for broadband.

People do not understand what broadband can give them. We need to promote the use of broadband, in particular develop internet services that people can easily use. Broadband can be an instrument for decentralization, more local and regional services through broadband.

Special groups need to be encouraged to use broadband, such as women. Also people do not understand the potential for e-administration. Workshops can help create awareness.

When you start on the internet you tend to get addicted, and want to do more. So we need to encourage people to experiment with the internet, and arouse their enthusiasm.

Action in schools to use the internet as an educational medium (e.g. study and school projects through the internet) can encourage interest in the internet.

In conclusion, three major themes emerged. It was noted that all of these themes are relevant, although the relative importance of each theme, and the interaction between the themes, will vary depending on regional circumstances:

a) Infrastructure: while much progress has been made with major broadband infrastructure, more effort is needed, particularly with “last-mile” facilities and with long-term fibre-optic.

b) Information and training: Awareness needs to be raised among SMEs and citizens – education, training, workshops, advertising.

c) E-services: New e-content and e-services need to be promoted, especially using broadband in aspects specifically relevant to individual regions and localities

#### **4. Acton steps**

IDEM and EMCANTA will circulate questionnaire form to partners by end June on promoting use of broadband for regional competitiveness.

Partners will send back completed questionnaire by middle September.

Next meeting in Cantabria on 9-10 October 2007

## **ESTIIC City Broadband Exchange**

### **Note of a team meeting in Santander, 10 Oct 2007**

*Present:*

*Albert Deistler, City of Cologne*

*Patricia Bueno Soria, Asociacion IDEM*

*José Manuel San Emeterio Pérez, EMCANTA*

*María Calleja González, EMCANTA*

*Michael Moroney, South East Regional Authority*

*Paul Conheady, Shannon Broadband*

*Brian Callanan, Shannon Development*

#### **1. Progress report to ESTIIC**

Noted schedule with submission of progress reports and financial claims to ESTIIC. Noted that each partner should submit report and claims directly, and send copies to Shannon for amalgamation into the joint report.

Noted also need for web portal

#### **2. Questionnaire**

IDEM/EMCANTA submitted proposed questionnaire. The questionnaire aims to collect secondary data of the regional situation of the participating entities in relation to the strategies and political activities directed to the monitoring and benchmarking of broadband. This will provide an analysis of best practice and common indicators.

The methodology will serve to carry out the evaluation of the impact based on common indicators, the result will be a tool which may be used, not only for evaluating the impact of a strategy specifically in the situation of extension of the Broadband, but it will also provide a base for benchmarking, allowing the identification of regions that have had or are having problems and similar challenges.

- Policies, strategies and initiatives at regional level and political actions that favour the extension of the broadband in the information society and that help to reduce the digital gap, equalising opportunities.
- Activities directed at benchmarking and the monitoring of the broad band extension process in the information society.

Agreed to submit material back to IDEM/EMCANTA by 9 Nov

#### **3. Reports from partners**

Presentations were received from each of the partners.

##### 3.1 Cologne

Cologne, in joint collaboration with the Dortmund based Research Institute for Telecommunication (FTK), has prepared, organised and maintained the 'Smart Cities Conference' on 09/05/2007. The main topic was state of the art and outlook of broadband infrastructure and applications in the Bundesland of Northrhine-

Westphalia. There have also been participants from the Netherlands and the CBExS partnership. Total attendance was 120.

Over 140 primary schools have been connected to broadband via DSL. All schools are able to access application for registration; 239 authentications created for secretariats and school boards, training has been provided for staff.

The Local Government Interchange Ltd. has finished the requirement specification sheet in order to establish the inrelocal broadband network, with tender in Nov. 2007. Multi Packet Label Switching will be the basis – virtual provider network for flexible bandwidths.

### 3.2 Association IDEM and EMCANTA

The Cantabrian groups have provided two initiatives for accelerated use of broadband.

Municipal tax management using the internet supports local councils to define taxes over the internet. All data will reside in the information systems of the Cantabrian government. The advantage of this new system is that citizens and companies will know at every moment the details about their payments. By early 2008, it is expected that 43 local municipalities will have adopted the new system, involving over 70,000 citizens.

The second project aimed to promote, inform and train on the uses of the electronic ID and electronic administration to the general population of the municipalities of Cantabria. Methodology involved design of the training courses and material for documentation; general presentation of the project and the aims and structure of the training courses addressing the people responsible of the Telecentros (Advanced Communication Centres); selection of 20 Telecentros interested in carrying out training courses; provision of dissemination and instruments for simulation.

### 3.3 South East Regional Authority

This project aimed to create a SME/general population broadband solution by developing pilot wifi networks in a number of urban centres in the South-East region. A further aim was to leverage the capacity of the fibre-optic broadband Metropolitan Area Networks. Key issues were to reduce the cost of connecting to these networks. A specific approach adopted here was to use public lighting standards and public buildings as wi-fi points.

SERA reported major discussion and dialogue, with numerous meetings. This included the involvement of local authorities and MAN management company. A proposal has been tabled for 3 urban centres and is being examined by SERA's technical advisers. Implementation and deployment is expected by end 2007.

### 3.4 Shannon Broadband

The project aims to promote use of ICT through mobilisation of regional archives. Government policy demands use of ICT to further policies relating to quality public services, education, social inclusion and democratic accountability. The projects aims to promote use of digital content that is local in nature and of specific interest to the inhabitants of a particular region, This acts as an important stimulus to attract new

users to the online medium. Target for the current project has been historical collections in the Limerick City Library.

Key steps are to audit content sources and options (*what's available*), assess e-readiness of each (*what's feasible*), development of project options (*how to add value*), evaluation of each option against project objectives, comparator initiative, user and stakeholder consultations, and pilot development.

#### **4. Study visit**

Following the meeting a study visit was undertaken to a local telecentre. The team members reviewed the facilities and observed the operation of one of the training courses in practice.

