



# **NATIONAL REPORT**

## **ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN LANGUAGE LABEL**

**UNITED KINGDOM**



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## **UK NATIONAL REPORT**

### **ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN LANGUAGE LABEL AWARD SCHEME**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

This report, compiled with the assistance of the UK body contracted to implement the European Language Label (ELL) Award programme in the UK, describes how the scheme functions in the UK, and the results of the scheme in terms of awards. It also attempts to assess the scheme's impact on language learning projects and the development of language learning in the country and its potential for attaining greater impact. The report takes into account information and opinions received from 12 winners of the award selected as UK 'case studies' for the purposes of the NELLIP project.

#### **2. THE CONTEXT**

The UK comprises four nations: in alphabetical order, England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Over recent years the UK, especially England, has become an increasingly difficult environment for education in 'modern foreign languages' (MFL), such as French, Spanish, German and Italian. The status of English as a world language has no doubt affected the motivation of secondary school students to continue with foreign languages beyond key stage 3 (age 14), after which study of a foreign language has now been made optional. This in turn has impacted on the numbers studying foreign languages at university level and the numbers of teachers being trained to teach MFLs. Meanwhile, the UK governments are encouraging the introduction of foreign languages into primary schools from the age of 7 (key stage 1), which makes sense from a language acquisition point of view but should involve considerable retraining of primary school teachers, most of whom do not have the necessary low level proficiency in an MFL, which has not yet been provided.

On the other hand, due to decades of immigration from all over the world, the UK is a very rich environment for 'community languages', the very many languages spoken by children at home, estimated to exceed 300 different languages among primary age children in the London area. These languages are rarely taught in UK schools but are focused on in initiatives aimed at raising awareness about languages and diversity.

#### **3. THE MANAGEMENT OF THE ELL AWARD SCHEME IN THE UK**

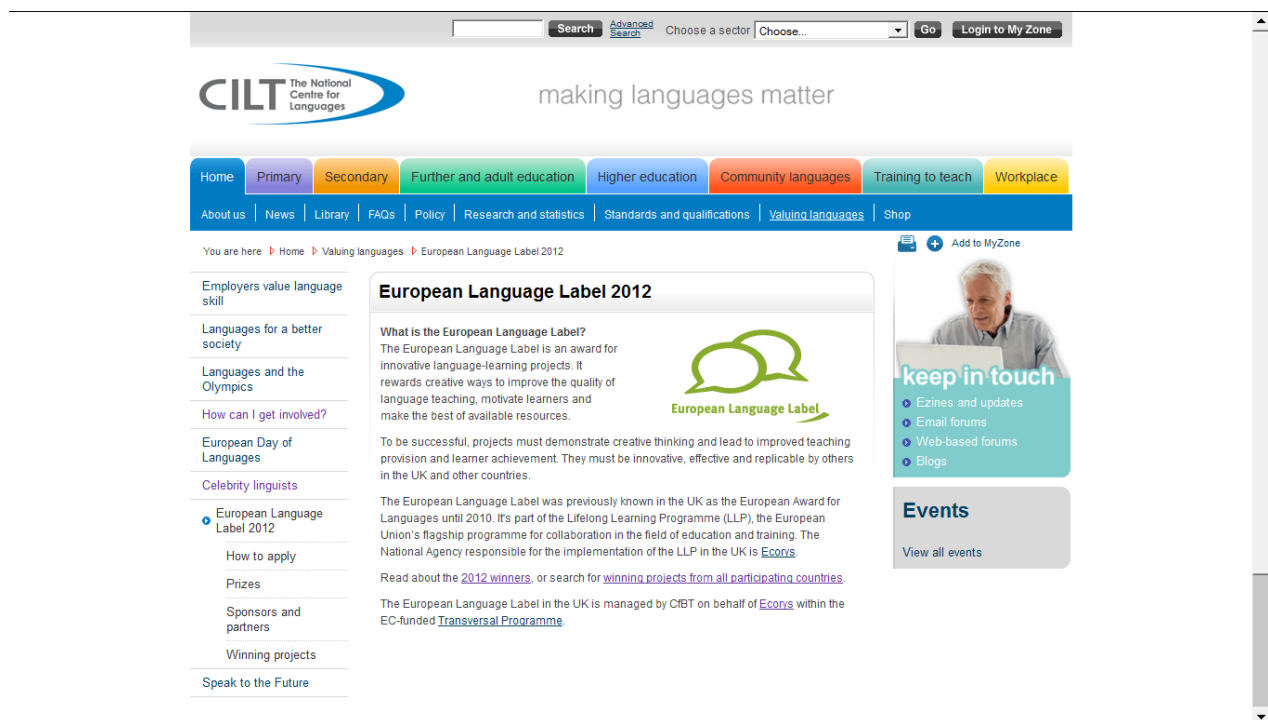
In the UK ECORYS is contracted by the Department for Education to be the national agency to run the EU's Lifelong Learning programmes, under which the ELL scheme falls, at least until the end of the current Lifelong Learning Funding Programme (2013). ECORYS in turn subcontracted the National Centre for Languages (CILT) to run the ELL scheme, a contract that has been renewed annually for several years. In the meantime, for funding reasons, CILT has become part of CfBT, a large educational trust (foundation) based in Reading with a special interest in languages. While the funding for the ELL comes via ECORYS, and there is discussion and regular reporting between CfBT and ECORYS, there is only indirect government policy influence on the management of the scheme, which in the authors' limited experience is efficient and cost-effective. CfBT is assisted by a number of sponsors who award prizes to the winning project teams (see Annex 1), and also by a team of voluntary judges from the education sector.

The scheme is open to any institution in the school, adult education or higher education sector, or indeed associations, involved in language education, and projects may focus on MFLs, community languages, national languages, such as Welsh and Irish, and British sign language. The only language which may not be the focus of an application is English.

#### 4. PROMOTION OF AND AWARENESS-RAISING ABOUT THE ELL

Information about the ELL is made available by CILT in various forms in order to reach as wide an audience in the UK as possible.

- a. [Dedicated pages on the CILT website](#) – these are probably the most effective means as they are comprehensive and relatively easy to update. Apart from the brief introduction illustrated below, they cover the application process, details about related prizes, which are mainly in the form of teaching and learning resources, the sponsors who provide these prizes and the partner institutions which assist with the scheme (mainly the regional offices of CILT in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales), and the winning projects, which are listed and detailed for every year from 2005 to 2012.



Through this listing one can easily reach one page descriptions, often illustrated, of each winning project. These pages serve three important functions:

- They show the diverse nature and range of the projects that have been awarded the ELL for those who may be thinking of making an application
- They provide details for what it was about the project that the judges considered worthy of commendation
- They are a motivating and well presented acknowledgement of the efforts of the project team, which the respective organisations can draw the attention of students, parents and other stakeholders to.



The only minor drawback is that from the CILT home page these pages are only accessible by going to a section which is called 'valuing languages', where the ELL is the seventh of eight items in a left hand menu. However they can also be reached through a simple search, and there is a direct link to these pages from the relevant page of the [EU Commission's website](#).

- b. Brochure and leaflet** – as part of the awareness-raising effort, and in order to encourage applications from those involved in language projects, CILT/CfBT publishes an impressive brochure detailing the winning projects from each year. The 2012 issue comprises 24 pages with two pages including photos being dedicated to each project. This is sent to those schools and other establishments on the CILT mailing list, and to local education authorities who are asked to pass it on to schools and further education colleges in their area. Universities, which in the UK do not come under education authorities, are less systematically covered. The leaflet on the scheme is reproduced below. This is used as an attachment to e-mails to the thousands of teacher contacts on CILT's databases in each of the UK's four nations and is distributed at fairs and conferences which CILT and its partners attend.



## European Language Label 2012

*Could your language learning project inspire others and win a top prize?*

**The search is on for the most innovative language learning projects in the UK with applications now being invited for the prestigious European Language Label.**

**The competition recognises and celebrates new ways to inspire and motivate language learners at all levels and schools, colleges, adult education, business and community projects are all invited to take part.**

**The deadline for applications has now been extended to 30<sup>th</sup> March, for more details, prizes and the application form please visit:**

[http://www.cilt.org.uk/home/valuing\\_languages/european\\_language\\_label1.aspx](http://www.cilt.org.uk/home/valuing_languages/european_language_label1.aspx)






- c. **The annual award ceremony** – this takes place on the European Day of Languages (26<sup>th</sup> September) unless it falls on a weekend day and attracts press coverage in relevant publications. More is said about this event below.

## 5. THE APPLICATION PROCEDURE

This is a key part of the scheme and is detailed on the website on a page entitled 'How to apply'. When applications are open.... The page helpfully but briefly details the three main judging criteria, as follows:

*Innovative – what makes it so special?*

*Effective – what impact has it had?*

*Replicable – is this a model that could be used by others?*

It also offers more comprehensive guidance on answering the questions in the application form. In addition to the obvious formal information about the institution and person submitting the application, all the key areas are covered in questions on the form (see appendix 1), which is submitted by e-mail.

Comments from the field: project staff contacted for information when compiling the case studies emphasised how simple the application procedure was and easy it had been to deal with CILT/CfBT. However, few knew at first hand about the ELL scheme before applying. Often it had been brought to their attention by someone who knew about it or by a partner agency such as Routes into Languages.

## 6. THE JUDGING CRITERIA

The judging criteria are in line with the principles of the scheme laid out by the EU's lifelong learning programme, and are communicated to the judges as follows:

### ***"The criteria***

*All projects must be able to clearly demonstrate that they meet the principal criteria as outlined below:*

- ***Innovative*** - the project should involve a new method, resource or approach and should improve on previous provision.
- ***Effective*** - the project should clearly show verifiable progress towards learner targets. New projects which have not been running long enough to produce the intended outcomes will be invited to reapply in the next round of applications.
- ***Replicable*** - award winning projects must have the potential to serve as a model in other contexts, languages and/or countries. Projects should also show potential for growth and development.

*This year [2012] we are particularly looking for projects that involve:*

- *Language skills as a preparation for work*
- *Language learning in the community*

*Projects should be as comprehensive as possible, reaching beyond small groups of learners. You should also look for evidence of institution-wide support for the project and indeed its overall impact.*

*All supporting evidence (CDs, DVDs, photos, resources, lesson plans etc) will be available at the Judging Panel meeting. You may find that to accurately assess some projects you will need to review the supporting evidence, in which case it is suggested that the project in question be added to your MAYBE list."*

The judging criteria are broadly in line with but less comprehensive than the criteria stated by the European Commission:

1. *"Initiatives should be **comprehensive** in their approach. Every element of the language project - from students to teachers, methods to materials - should ensure that the needs of the students are identified and met.*
2. *Initiatives should provide **added value** in their national context. This means a tangible improvement in the teaching or learning of languages, either in terms of quantity or quality. "Quantity" might refer to the project stimulating the learning of several languages, particularly those that are less widely used, whereas "quality" might refer to the introduction of an improved methodology.*
3. *Initiatives should **motivate** the students and teachers to improve their language skills.*
4. *Initiatives should be **original** and **creative**. They should introduce previously unknown approaches to language learning, but also make sure they are appropriate to the students concerned.*
5. *Initiatives should have a **European emphasis**. They should be adapted to Europe's linguistic diversity and make use of this advantage - for example, by liaising with contacts across national borders. The initiatives should actively improve understanding between cultures by promoting language skills.*
6. *Initiatives should be **transferable**. They might potentially be a source of inspiration for other language initiatives in different countries."*

In particular, no explicit reference is made to criteria 1 or 5 above, the European emphasis. However, most projects that have won awards are 'comprehensive' in the sense intended in criterion 1, and several involve international links of the kind implied by criterion 5. On the other hand, it is perhaps surprising that the European criteria do not explicitly include the second UK judging criterion, effectiveness, which is after all the key to any project's success.

## 7. THE JUDGING PROCEDURE

The procedure used for selecting which projects should be awarded ELLs is clearly one of the strengths of the UK scheme. The judges, who are not remunerated but whose travel expenses are refunded, are volunteers selected from among specialists in the field of language education and the sponsors of the scheme, which include official bodies such as the Spanish embassy, the Institut Français, the Goethe Institut and the Italian Cultural Institute, as well as publishers of textbooks and other resources for foreign language teaching. It is currently chaired by a trustee and officer of the UK's [Association for Language Learning](#).

Once applications are closed, the judges meet face to face to discuss all the applications (approximately 60 in 2012). Prior to the meeting (held in March last time) the judges will have individually classified the projects into three groups: 'yes', 'no' and 'maybe'. The discussion focuses especially on the projects where there is a difference of opinion, and the aim is to end with an agreed shortlist of projects that are considered worthy of a ELL. There is no numerical limit to the potential number of awards, and there is no requirement to give awards in all categories. Those projects which judges agree are not – or not yet – going to be selected for an award are informed in an encouraging manner.

Once a shortlist is compiled each project is visited by at least one judge and preferably by two before the end of the school year (July). The costs of travel to the various parts of the UK are covered by the ELL scheme budget. The judges' task is to compile a report for the judging panel. The final list of award-winners is then compiled under the supervision of the Chair of the judging panel, and the winners are informed. Apart from the projects that are awarded a ELL sometimes an additional project is selected for an separate award as having made an 'outstanding contribution' to languages in the UK, and others may be specially commended.



## 8. THE AWARD CEREMONY

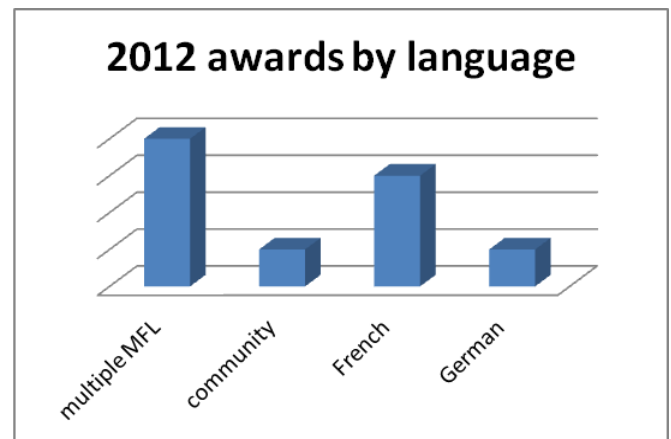
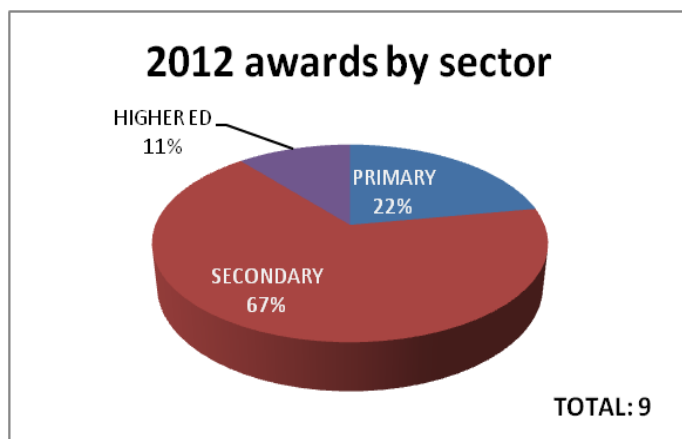


As mentioned above, the award ceremony takes place on the European Day of Languages, often at a central venue in London but sometimes at a venue that is more equidistant from the winning projects. The three hour programme features the actual awards to members of the project teams and the students who attend, examples of the work produced by the projects, which may include performances of one kind or another, exhibitions of publications produced by sponsors, and information about other events and projects (including in 2012 distribution of the NELLIP leaflet to all who attended. Photos are taken of the project teams (see example) so that these can be used by them locally in press releases

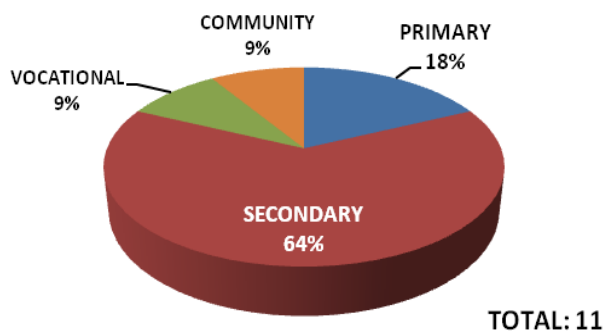
and newsletters. As well as awarding the ELL certificate and logo for display in the school or college, the organisers also award prizes. As an example, in 2012 the project teams received up to £200 worth of teaching/learning resources as a share of the sponsorship contributed by the cultural institutes and Spanish embassy. In addition, each year one publisher-sponsor awards a cash prize of £2,000 for the best project. It is clear that this is an important event for the teachers and students who are able to attend the ceremony to represent and talk about their institutions and projects.

## 9. QUANTITATIVE INFORMATION

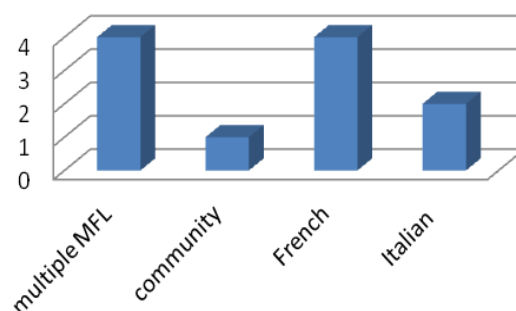
No official or management data about the numbers of applications submitted and the main focus in terms of objectives, sectors and languages of the projects concerned is publicly available in the UK. However, the tables below provide an overview of the distribution of ELL awards in the UK from 2008 to 2012. They do not include the categories of award made by the UK national agency that are not part of the ELL Scheme. For example, most years two or three additional projects that have been submitted are awarded the status 'outstanding contribution to languages' or 'highly commended'.



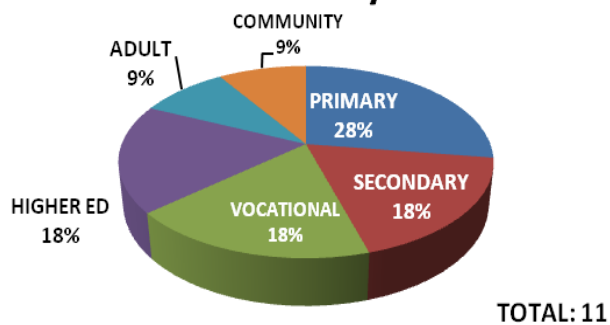
### 2011 awards by sector



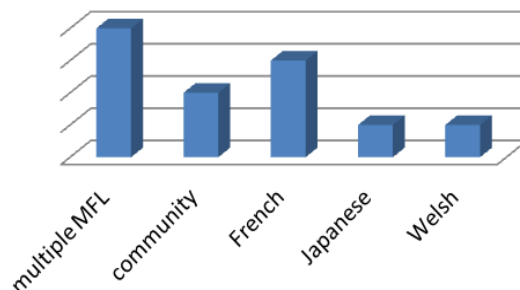
### 2011 awards by language



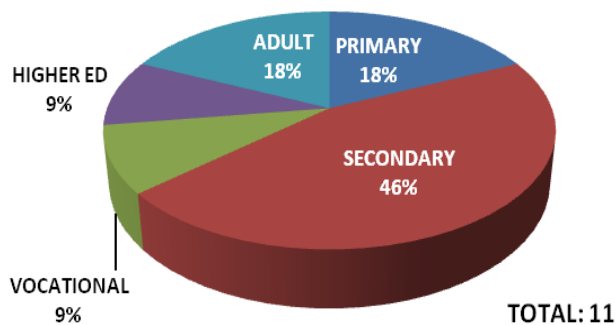
### 2010 awards by sector



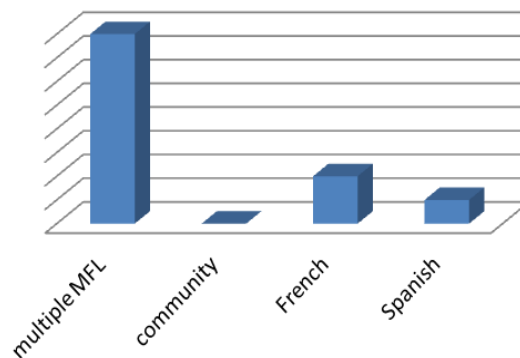
### 2010 awards by language

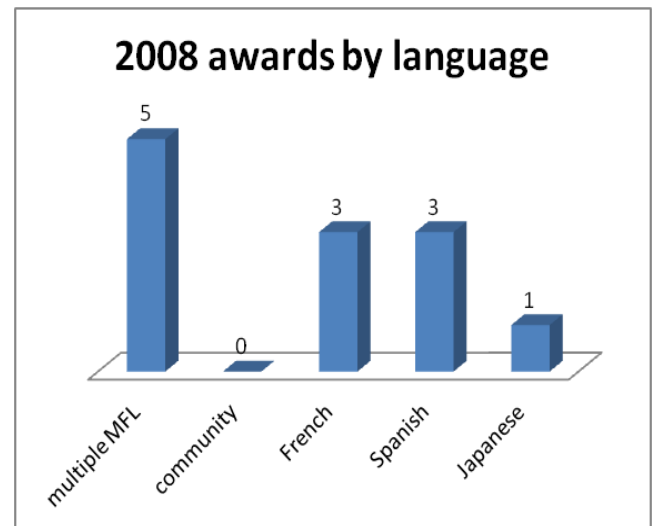
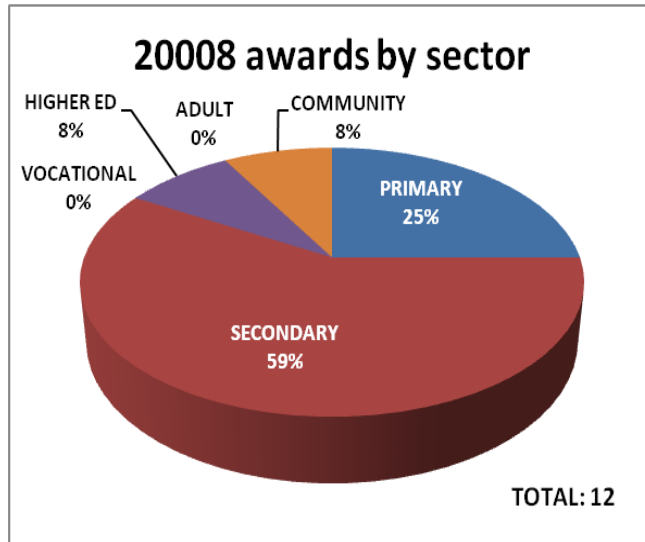


### 2009 awards by sector



### 2009 awards by language





## 10. RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations below arise from considering the range of projects encompassed by the UK selection, case studies and examples of good practice, and from reflection on the potential of the ELL to raise the profile of language learning in the UK, and people's enthusiasm for it. The recommendations are made in the knowledge that the way the scheme is currently being managed and promoted is commendable considering the limitations of funding.

- i. **Intensify efforts to bring the scheme to the attention of potential applicants:** CILT/CfBT are sending communications to a large number of schools and teachers. However it was clear from the case studies that few people knew about the ELL scheme before it was brought to their attention, often fortuitously. Moreover, the distribution of applications implies that the scheme is less well-known in institutions of higher and further education. Possibilities include:
  - a. Including the ELL in main menus on the CILT website (it is currently not very visible)
  - b. Redrafting the introductory page to make it more enticing, for example by pointing more firmly to the issue of international prestige
  - c. Asking universities, schools which have won awards and local education authorities to include a link to the ELL page on their own websites
  - d. Using social media to create links and exchange of experiences among winners of ELLs.
  - e. Suggesting to the British Council that they include reference and a link to the ELL on the web pages relating to their own scheme for awards for innovations in ELT
  - f. Asking key sponsors, especially Mary Glasgow as a publisher with links to many schools, to include leaflets and posters aimed at languages staff in the scheme in their own mailings to schools, thus adding extra profile to their valuable annual prize.
- ii. Look for ways to maintain greater visibility for the projects after the award, for example by creating an online network of project leaders.

## 11. CONCLUSIONS

In spite of the challenges posed for modern foreign language by the UK context, the ELL Scheme is alive and well, and doing a good job of raising the profile of worthwhile projects, including those concerned with community languages and lesser taught languages. The fact that the ELL awards are supported by other awards and prizes contributed by sponsors makes it that much more attractive. It is to be hoped that the ELL award scheme will play its part in encouraging more and more institutions to engage in exciting, innovative and motivating projects that will encourage both school children and adult students to continue with their study of languages.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author would like to acknowledge the assistance of Imke Djouadj at CILT/CfBT, who is currently has the main responsibility for managing the UK scheme and has been generous with her time and with information.



## APPENDIX

### *European Language Label Application form 2012*

Please note that the closing date for applications is ..... [Click here](#) for some useful tips on completing the application.

○ **Project name**

○ **Name of institution** (if your project involves more than one institution, please indicate this)

○ **What is/are the main language(s) involved in the project?**

○ **What other languages, if any, are involved?**

○ **Please give a brief outline of the project** (*maximum 25 words*)

○ **What are the aims of the project? Why did you do it?** (*maximum 100 words*)

- **When was the project started?**

- **Is this a reapplication of a previously submitted project?** *(If yes, please state year of previous application.)*

- **Describe the project activities** *(maximum 200 words)*

## INNOVATION

*Projects must demonstrate that they are **innovative**. Please describe how your project fits this criterion (maximum 100 words):*

## EFFECTIVENESS

*Projects must demonstrate that they are **effective**. Please describe how your project fits this criterion by answering the questions below:*

- **How have you measured your success?**

- **What evidence do you have of the impact of your project?** (*maximum 200 words*)

## REPLICABILITY

*Projects must demonstrate that they are **replicable**. Please describe how your project fits this criterion by answering the questions below:*

- **How could your project be used as a model for others?** (*maximum 50 words*)

- **Have you shared the outcome of your project more widely?** (*maximum 50 words*)

- **Do you have plans to extend the project? How will its impact be sustained?** (*maximum 100 words*)

### FURTHER INFORMATION

- **How is your project funded?**

- **How did you hear about the European Language Label?**

### YOUR INSTITUTION

- **Give details of the group(s) of learners involved, including their age range**  
(maximum 50 words)

- **Please give further details of your school, college or institution and its constituency** (maximum 50 words)

- **Contact details**

- **Name of project coordinator:**

- **Address of lead institution** (this is the address to which all correspondence will be sent)



- **Telephone number**

- **Fax number**

- **Email**

- **Name of Head of institution**

Please tick if you are happy to be contacted by CILT's project partners: ☐

**Signature**

**Date**

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Please return the completed form by e-mail to [label@cilt.org.uk](mailto:label@cilt.org.uk),