European Commission

Information Society and Media Directorate-General

Digital Content & Cognitive Systems

*e*Content*plus*

A multiannual Community programme to make digital content in Europe more accessible, usable and exploitable

(2005-2008)

Work Programme

2008

12 December 2007

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1. INTRODUCTION

This Work Programme covers the activities of the *e*Content*plus* programme (2005-2008), a multiannual Community programme to make digital content in Europe more accessible, usable and exploitable. It defines the priorities for these activities, in line with the decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the *e*Content*plus* programme (the "Programme Decision")[1].

The programme is part of the Commission's policy announced in *"i2010 – A European Information Society for growth and employment"*[2]. In aiming to facilitate content access, use and exploitation and to stimulate content enrichment, the eContentplus programme will address two of the four main challenges posed by digital convergence for the creation of a single European Information Space, as identified by i2010, namely *"interoperability"* and *"rich content"*. More specifically, it will help achieve Objective 1 of i2010: *A Single European Information Space offering affordable and secure high bandwidth communications, rich and diverse content and digital services*. The actions in each target area of the programme respond to more specific thematic Commission policy initiatives which are indicated in the corresponding sections of this work programme.

2. OBJECTIVES AND OVERALL APPROACH

2.1. *e*Content*plus*, the overall aim

The overall aim of the *e*Content*plus* programme is *"to make digital content in Europe more accessible, usable and exploitable"*.

The programme has an **enabling role:** it will contribute to creating better conditions for accessing, using, reusing and exploiting digital material, based on which it will be possible to build added-value products and services across Europe. It will help **content stakeholders** (providers and users) realise the full potential of digital content: content *providers*, i.e. public and private organisations and institutions that create, collect or own digital content, who will be able to increase the use and re-use of their material; content *users,* including European citizens, students, researchers but also organisations and enterprises that reuse and/or add value to digital content, who will be able to find and use digital content, irrespective of location or language.

The programme addresses areas which have a public interest and which would not develop or would develop at a slower pace if left to the market. It aims to improve the **usability** and **quality** of existing digital content **in specific contexts of use** in order to create the **conditions** for the emergence of quality trans-European content-based services.

Multicultural and **multilingual** aspects of accessing, exploiting, using, and re-using digital content in Europe will be integral to all the actions.

Actions in the programme will use **proven state-of-the-art technical solutions**, and will be geared towards **innovation in organisation and in deployment**, as opposed to purely technological innovation.

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[1]   Decision No. 456/2005/EC of 9 March 2005, OJ L 79, 24.03.2005, p.1 .

[2]   COM(2005) 229, http://ec.europa.eu/i2010

2.2.   Target areas, project types and actions open in 2008

The following **target areas** have been singled out, where the programme can have maximum impact with the available resources:

- **geographic information**

- **educational content**

- **digital libraries**

The definition and objectives for each of these target areas are specified in the corresponding sections of the work programme.

There will be three **project types** for the 2008 Work Programme:

Targeted Projects (TP) are open for the areas "educational content" and "digital libraries". They aim to solve specific known problems by pooling together the resources of interested participants in a consortium. They address specific issues related to the achievement of one or more of the objectives identified in each target area. There is no requirement for clustering TP.

The Community funding for TPs is limited to 50% of total eligible costs which include also indirect costs calculated as a flat rate of 30% of personnel costs[3].

A **Thematic network (TN)** is open for the area of "digital libraries". It aims to bring together relevant stakeholders, expertise and facilities who will support the European Digital Library in building consensus, developing and implementing the necessary operational solutions for achieving its objectives and in establishing and implementing a dissemination and awareness raising strategy for the European Digital Library targeted to all stakeholders, including the general public.

The Community funding for the TN is 100% of a limited set of direct eligible costs for coordinating and implementing the network. Eligible costs for network members other than the coordinator are limited to travel and subsistence.

Best Practice Networks (BPN) are open for the areas "geographic information", "educational content" and "digital libraries". Their objective is to promote the adoption of standards and specifications for making digital content in Europe more accessible and usable by combining the "consensus building and awareness raising" function of a network with the large-scale implementation in real-life context of one or more concrete specifications or standards by its members. Each BPN will try out, on a sufficient mass of content, one or more of the implementation approaches discussed in the network in order to draw conclusions on their validity and if necessary to adapt them. More than one BPN is expected to be funded in each target area, each one dealing with different themes. The Commission will organise, as appropriate, "clustering meetings" for the BPNs in each target area, inviting all relevant stakeholders[4] in order to achieve broad consensus and create the conditions for the widest possible uptake of the recommendations of the networks. The final output of the BPNs should therefore reflect both the results of the large scale implementations and the results and recommendations of the clustering activities.

The Community funding for BPNs is limited to 80% of direct costs. No overheads may be claimed.

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[3]   Commission Decision C(2005)3448 adopted by the College on 14.9.2005.

[4]   Including representatives of other relevant projects funded under eContentplus and other EU programmes, of relevant European and international bodies etc.

The following **actions** are open in 2008:

Geographic information

3.1 Best practice networks for geographic information

Educational content

4.1 Best practice networks for educational content

4.2 Targeted projects for educational content

Digital libraries

5.1 Best practice networks for interoperability of digital libraries

5.2 Best practice networks for the usability of the European Digital Library

5.3 Targeted projects for cultural content

5.4 Targeted projects for scientific/scholarly content

5.5 A Thematic network for co-ordinating and supporting the European Digital Library.

2.3. Common requirements for targeted projects and best practice networks

All proposals must fulfil the common requirements in this section for the appropriate type of projects. Further information on the objectives, additional conditions and expected results of each action is provided in the corresponding sections of this work programme.

(I) Both Targeted Projects and Best Practice Networks must fulfil the following requirements:

- The issues addressed and the way to tackle them should have a **European dimension**, i.e. they should contribute significantly to the Community policies relevant for each target area referred to in the corresponding sections of this work programme and should impact on a large number of users in the largest possible number of EU countries.

- As far as **content** is concerned:

  – The quality and quantity of the digital content (and related metadata) to be effectively contributed to the project by each content provider, as well as the criteria for its selection, must be clearly identified. The consortium and its members must ensure the necessary availability of the content to be contributed to the project. In particular, the input content should not depend on proprietary third-party rights or any other constraints, which would limit its use for the execution of the project.

  – The consortium and its members must agree on the necessary licensing or clearing arrangements for any Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) arising from the project to ensure wider use and dissemination of the project output.

  – The results of the project must be accessible by the target users beyond the end of the project.

(II) In addition to the common requirements mentioned under (I), **Targeted projects** must also fulfil the following common requirement:

- The **consortium** must include content providers. It should also include users. In particular, where a commercial service is expected to be built on project results, the future commercial users must either participate in the consortium or be involved in the project, for instance through a project advisory board or a pilot user group, to be consulted by the consortium in order to provide advice and feedback on the results.

- As far as the expected **impact** is concerned:

  – The <u>target users and their needs</u>, also beyond the consortium participants, must be clearly identified. Proposers must present an analysis of demand based as much as possible on quantified evidence. Where relevant, gender issues and multilingualism will be taken into account.

  – Proposers should demonstrate that the underlying content constitutes the <u>critical mass</u> necessary to make a significant impact in terms of increasing access and use in the area concerned.

  – Specific and realistic quantified <u>indicators</u> should be provided to measure the envisaged improvements in availability, access and use — at different stages in the project lifetime.

  – A clear exploitation plan should be presented to ensure the <u>sustainability</u> of the proposed solutions, i.e. their capability of developing and surviving without Community funding after the end of the project. Sustainability comprises both economic and organisational aspects. This requirement may be translated into different practical measures and provisions, depending on the target users and the intended uses of the results of the projects, i.e. whether the content resulting from the project is to be made available through commercial services or through open-access services or services based on public-private partnerships.

  – A clear <u>dissemination plan</u> should be established to ensure optimal use of the project results, also beyond the participants in the project.

(III) In addition to the common requirements mentioned under (I), **Best Practice Networks** must also fulfil the following common requirements:

- The **consortium** must include <u>content providers</u>. It should also include <u>users</u> who will provide feedback on the results of the implementations and, where appropriate, <u>standardisation bodies</u> and relevant European and international bodies.

- As far as the expected **impact** is concerned:

  – The <u>target users and their needs</u>, also beyond the consortium participants, must be clearly identified and should be at the centre of the validation process. Proposers must present an analysis of demand based as much as possible on quantified evidence. Where relevant, gender issues and multilingualism will be taken into account.

  – Proposers should demonstrate the <u>added value of the approach</u> proposed compared to any existing or earlier attempts of implementing the specifications and standards on which they focus.

  – Proposers should demonstrate that the underlying content constitutes the <u>critical mass</u> necessary to draw valid conclusions from the implementations during the lifetime of the project.

  – Specific and realistic quantified <u>indicators</u> should be provided to evaluate the effectiveness of the solutions proposed, as well as their potential acceptance by its target public.

  – A clear <u>dissemination plan</u> should be established to ensure optimal promotion and use of the project results, contributing to the uptake of standards and specifications across Europe, beyond the members of the network.

- The network should demonstrate convincingly its **networking capacity.** It should be able to disseminate and promote the <u>uptake</u> of its results by stakeholders from the majority of the 27 EU Member States. It should be <u>open and proactive</u> in attracting new members who will be involved in the discussions around the themes it intends to cover.

- The network should be prepared to contribute actively to the **clustering activities** that the Commission intends to organise (including clustering meetings[5]) and foresee ways of taking into account their results and recommendations concerning the implementation of the specifications and standards it intends to cover, making any necessary adaptations.

3. GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

For the purpose of this work programme geographic information (or spatial data) means any data that directly refer to a specific location or geographic area.

The objective of *e*Content*plus* is to contribute to the wider use of spatial data by public sector bodies, private companies, including small and medium enterprises, and citizens in line with the Community policy to facilitate the re-use of public sector information. Collaborative projects that improve the conditions for the re-use of spatial data complement and support the measures of Directive 2003/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 November 2003 on the re-use of public sector information.

In this context the programme will also contribute to the INSPIRE initiative[6] which aims at making available relevant, harmonised and quality geographic information for the purpose of formulating, implementing, monitoring and evaluating Community policy-making. The programme will specifically contribute to applying the following INSPIRE principles which are particularly relevant for increasing reuse: (a) it should be easy to discover which spatial data is available, to evaluate its fitness for purpose and to know which conditions apply for its use; (b) that it should be possible to combine seamlessly spatial data from different sources and share it between many users and applications

In 2008 best practice networks for geographic information will be funded.

3.1. Best practice networks for geographic information[7]

Objective:
Increase the reuse of geographic information by improving the interoperability of spatial data sets and services. Identify issues and implement solutions for reducing the barriers to interoperability of spatial data sets and services related to one or more of the <u>specific themes</u> enumerated in annexes I-III of the INSPIRE directive. Only one network for each theme will be selected.

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[5]   The Commission has the intention of organising up to 2 clustering meetings a year for each target area.

[6]   INSPIRE stands for INfrastructure for SPatial InfoRmation in Europe (http://www.ec-gis.org/inspire/)

[7]   This activity is covered by Line of Action B: "Facilitating improvement of quality and enhancing best practice related to digital content between content providers and users, and across sectors" of the Programme Decision.

Conditions:

In addition to the common requirements for best practice networks, proposals should meet the following conditions:

- The consortium should demonstrate its capacity to achieve a broad consensus beyond the network beneficiaries on methods and standards involving all relevant stakeholders, including coordinating bodies.

- The implemented solutions should result in datasets that are easily accessible and re-useable through the use of open, non-proprietary standards that facilitate re-use, where appropriate. The intended pricing models and their effects on re-use by the target groups will be an important factor in choosing one proposal rather than another.

- The multilingual aspects of accessing, exploiting, using, and re-using the underlying content should be an integral part of the proposed implementation activities.

Expected results

Spatial information is aggregated to cover a significant part of Europe and data are accessible in a seamless way across borders in multiple languages, facilitating its re-use. Consensus is built on the strategy for improving the interoperability of spatial data sets and services and on further concrete actions required. A sustainable network of stakeholders is established around the best practice networks, which promotes dialogue and exchanges of information and best practice between stakeholders in view of implementing common solutions across Europe.

4.   EDUCATIONAL CONTENT

For the purpose of this work programme, educational digital content is content that can be used for learning in different contexts: in formal education and training programmes, in non-formal general education and in continuing vocational training courses, as well as for self-learning.

The important role of education and lifelong learning for the achievement of the Lisbon objective for the development of the Community as an advanced knowledge-based society is widely acknowledged. The programme eContentplus aims to foster the efficient use of pedagogically sound digital educational content across borders.

Today, educational content abounds in multiple formats, on the web and in repositories, both public and proprietary. However, the availability of quality digital content for learning remains an issue. Production costs or lack of expertise are among the most cited barriers. In addition, there is an incoherent use of technological solutions, a lack of a comprehensive analysis of users' needs, demands and opportunities. Moreover, organisational and pedagogical frameworks are often inadequate to support multilingual and multicultural access to and use of digital content for learning while efficient brokerage mechanisms for educational content are still missing at the European level. The rapid expansion of new types of educational content like user-generated content or open educational resources offers new perspectives that may be exploited in order to improve the quality of technology enhanced learning.

The actions of the eContentplus work programme will complement other Community activities like the action programme in the field of lifelong learning[8] which includes among its objectives the

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[8]   Decision No 1720/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 November 2006 establishing an action programme in the field of lifelong learning, OJ L 327 of 24.11.2006, p.45

support to the development of innovative ICT-based content, services, pedagogies and practice for lifelong learning.

In 2008 best practice networks and targeted projects for educational content will be funded.

4.1. Best practice networks for educational content[9]

Objective

Build consensus on practices for using existing specifications and standards of learning technologies across Europe, through their implementation on a critical mass of existing digital educational content, both user-generated and professionally produced, in specific contexts of use.

Conditions:
In addition to the common requirements for best practice networks, proposals should meet the following conditions:

- Digital content stakeholders, technology providers and pedagogical experts should be represented in a balanced way.

- The process should involve both user-generated and professional content.

- Feedback mechanisms for end users, including teachers/trainers and students/learners as appropriate, should be provided on the usability of the content and on its quality, in terms of the effectiveness and efficiency of the learning process.

- The multilingual aspects of accessing and exploiting the content should be addressed in an efficient way appropriate for the educational use to be made of the underlying content.

- The multicultural aspects related to the use of the underlying content in different educational and learning cultures should be specifically addressed.

- The networks should demonstrate convincingly their potential of having a strategic impact on pre-standardisation activities and their capacity to submit and support their proposals at European and, where appropriate, international standardisation bodies.

Expected results:
  Specifications and standards are assessed through their implementation on a critical mass of educational content in real contexts of use. The results contribute to building consensus on the implementation of specifications and standards for learning technologies across Europe, increasing significantly the cross-border use and re-use of educational content for learning in multiple languages and in different learning environments. A cooperation structure emerges which will be facilitating use, reuse and interoperability of educational content in Europe.

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[9] This activity is covered by Line of Action B: "Facilitating improvement of quality and enhancing best practice related to digital content between content providers and users, and across sectors" of the Programme Decision.

4.2. Targeted projects for educational content[10]

Objectives

The proposal should focus on <u>one or more</u> of the following issues:

– Facilitate the use and reuse of open educational resources

– Facilitate the co-existence, the use, reuse and the exchange of existing professionally produced educational content and user-generated educational content in real contexts of use.

– Foster the educational use of digital libraries of content held by cultural institutions.

– Make it easier for users (both individuals and organisations) to find and use existing digital educational content that matches their learning and skills development needs.

Conditions:

In addition to the common requirements for Targeted Projects, proposals should meet the following conditions:

• Digital content stakeholders, both public and private, as well as technology providers and pedagogical experts should be represented in a balanced way.

• Feedback mechanisms for end users, including teachers/trainers and students/learners as appropriate, should be provided on the usability of the content and on its quality, in terms of the effectiveness and efficiency of the learning process.

• The multilingual aspects of accessing and exploiting the content should be addressed in an efficient way appropriate for the educational use to be made of the underlying content.

• The multicultural aspects related to the use of the underlying content in different educational and learning cultures should be specifically addressed.

Expected results:

There will be a significant increase in the use and re-use of the underlying educational content across borders for learning in multiple languages and in different learning environments. The use of open educational resources, professionally produced and user generated educational content will be facilitated in real contexts of use. More high quality cultural heritage content will be used for education. Users will be able to find and use more easily educational material that matches their learning and skills development needs.

5. DIGITAL LIBRARIES

For the purpose of this work programme *digital libraries* are organised collections of digital content made available to the public by cultural and scientific institutions (libraries, archives and museums) and private content holders (e.g. publishers) in the EU Member States or other countries participating in the programme. They can consist of all kinds of "physical" material that has been digitised (books, audiovisual material, photographs, documents in archives etc) and material originally produced in digital format.

This material going digital and moving into the online environment will allow Europe to be present in the cultural and creative industries of the 21st century. It will enable the development of new

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[10] This activity is covered by Line of Action A: "Facilitating at Community level access to digital content, its use and exploitation" of the Programme Decision.

value-added services for research, learning and leisure. Above all, it will allow citizens to access this rich collective European heritage at the click of a mouse.

To stimulate and support this, digital libraries was made one of the flagships of the i2010 initiative. It presents the European strategy for digitisation, online accessibility and digital preservation, with a focus on cultural heritage, as well as for improving access to scientific publications and data.

As part of this, in August 2006 the European Commission issued a Recommendation[11] on digital libraries issues to Member States, which has led to Conclusions of the Culture Council in November 2006[12]. The Council endorsed the vision of a European Digital Library as a common multilingual access point to Europe's distributed digital cultural heritage and which is expected to make available online at least six million books, documents and other cultural works by 2010.

The programme *e*Content*plus* already funds a number of projects in support of the European Digital Library. Among them the network EDLnet[13], which brings together stakeholders from 25 EU Member States is at the core of the development of the European Digital Library. The network already includes a large number of individual libraries, archives and museums, umbrella organisations and key-members of projects such as TEL[14] and Michael[15] funded by other EC programmes.

The partnership between cultural heritage institutions contributing to the creation of the European Digital Library is expected to be formalised before the end of 2007 through the creation of a legal entity which will be responsible for the operation of the European Digital Library.

The Commission further issued a Communication on scientific information, outlining its policy in this area[16].

The eContentplus programme will continue to support the establishment of the European Digital Library by funding projects that will prepare more content for inclusion in it as well as projects that will improve the use of its collections by users. It will also continue to support experiments with open access to scientific/scholarly content aiming to improve the spread of European research results.

For these purposes the programme will fund in 2008 two types of best practice networks for digital libraries, targeted projects for scientific/scholarly content as well as a Thematic network for the European Digital Library.

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[11] http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/digital_libraries/doc/recommendation/recommendation/en.pdf

[12] OJ 2006/C 297/01

[13] http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/econtentplus/projects/cult/edlnet/index_en.htm

[14] http://www.theeuropeanlibrary.org/

[15] http://www.michael-culture.org/en/home

[16] COM(2007) 56.

5.1. Best Practice Networks for interoperability of digital libraries[17]

Objective

Improve the interoperability of digital libraries held by museums, archives and libraries across a large number of EU Member States making them accessible through the common user interface of the European Digital Library. Address issues relating to the standards-based interoperability between digital objects and collections, the interoperability of systems for authorising the use of and/or the multilingual and cross-cultural search and retrieval of the digital content held by major cultural institutions.

Conditions:

In addition to the common requirements for best practice networks, proposals should meet the following conditions:

- The actual content should be accessible and retrievable at item level. Projects dealing only with catalogues of content will **not** be funded.

- The users and their needs should be in the centre of the approach proposed.

- The consortium should demonstrate its capacity to contribute significantly to the achievement of the objective and to contribute to the advancement of the European Digital Library.

Expected result:

Highly interoperable databases of content held by museums, archives and libraries across a large number of EU Member States are made accessible through the common user interface of the European Digital Library.

5.2. Best Practice Networks for the use and services of the European Digital Library[18]

Objective

Improve the use and services of the European Digital Library, addressing issues like user friendliness, trust and management and multilingual access through its common user interface to digital libraries held by museums, archives and libraries across a large number of EU Member States.

Conditions:

In addition to the common requirements for best practice networks, proposals should meet the following conditions:

- The actual content should be accessible and retrievable at item level.

- The users and their needs should be in the centre of the approach proposed.

- The consortium should demonstrate its capacity to contribute significantly to the achievement of the objective and to contribute to the advancement of the European Digital Library.

- The test and validation of the proposed solutions should be done within the European Digital Library

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[17] This activity is covered by Line of Action B: "Facilitating improvement of quality and enhancing best practice related to digital content between content providers and users, and across sectors" of the Programme Decision.

[18] This activity is covered by Line of Action B: "Facilitating improvement of quality and enhancing best practice related to digital content between content providers and users, and across sectors" of the Programme Decision.

Expected result:
User-friendly solutions should be developed and implemented, allowing easy and efficient multilingual access to and use of the contents of the European Digital Library.

5.3. Targeted projects for cultural content[19]

Objective:
Bring together selected complementary content on specific themes from different countries in the European Digital Library, through the targeted digitisation of material held by cultural institutions(libraries, museums and archive).

Conditions:
In addition to the common requirements for targeted projects, where, for the purpose of this action, "digital content" refers to the content that results from digitisation during the project, proposals should meet the following conditions:

- The collections to be digitised, which may include different types of material (e.g. books, audiovisual, sound, archival, newspapers) should be held by cultural institutions from different European countries.

- The material to be digitised should be selected through a thematic approach. The themes must be of interest to a broad public and not just to a limited set of specialists.

- The proposal should demonstrate the added value of bringing the selected content from different countries together in the European Digital Library.

- The digitisation should result in a critical mass of complementary content on a specific theme to be made accessible through the European Digital Library, or add further European value to already digitised collections that will be made accessible through the European Digital Library.

- Content should be made available for citizens through the European Digital Library immediately after digitisation.

Expected results:
A significant quantity of quality cultural material held by cultural institutions from different countries, which is related to specific themes of interest to a broad public, is digitised and made accessible through the European Digital Library.

5.4. Targeted projects for scientific/scholarly content[20]

Objective:
Improve the spread of European research results through conclusive experiments with open access to digital libraries of scientific/scholarly content, including experiments exploring new paradigms for rendering, querying and linking scientific/scholarly content. The term "scientific/scholarly content" refers to organised collections of published results of scientists' or scholars' research work in the EU Member States or other countries participating in the programme and includes both articles, papers, conference proceedings, monographs, textbooks and other similar publications and the related underlying datasets.

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[19] This activity is covered by Line of Action A: "Facilitating at Community level access to digital content, its use and exploitation" of the Programme Decision.

[20] This activity is covered by Line of Action A: "Facilitating at Community level access to digital content, its use and exploitation" of the Programme Decision.

Conditions:

In addition to the common requirements for Targeted Projects, proposals should meet the following conditions:

- Carry out conclusive experiments on new models and processes involving different types of relevant stakeholders, i.e. academic community, libraries, institutional repositories, scientific publishers and the funding bodies.

- The needs of the users (i.e. researchers) should be taken into account.

Expected results:

Digital scientific/scholarly content held by different types of stakeholders is aggregated and made interoperable and available for open access across borders and can be used as a basis for experiments exploring new paradigms of easy access to scientific information.

5.5. A Thematic Network for co-coordinating and supporting the European Digital Library[21]

Objective:

Develop and put in place operational solutions for the European Digital Library. Raise awareness among stakeholders about the European Digital Library.

Conditions:

- Bring together all the relevant stakeholders and expertise necessary to formulate solutions, achieve consensus and implement decisions for the European Digital Library on operational issues.

- Provide facilities to ensure interoperability of solutions for access to digital content using the common user interface for the European Digital Library

- Be representative of the different types of cultural institutions.

- Establish and implement a dissemination strategy for the European Digital Library targeted to all stakeholders, including the general public.

- Establish and implement an awareness raising strategy for the European Digital Library targeted specifically to all relevant cultural institutions (museums, archives and libraries) who may wish to join.

Expected results:

Key operational issues related to the implementation and functioning of the European Digital Library are solved. Stakeholders, including the general public, are informed about the European Digital Library, how they can contribute and access content.

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[21] This activity is covered by Line of Action C: "Reinforcing cooperation between digital content stakeholders and awareness " of the Programme Decision.

6. PUBLIC PROCUREMENT[22]

Public procurement is planned in 2008 for the following **studies**:

Title and description	Launch date (quarter)	Budget (Budget line)	Duration (months)
Economic and social impact of the public domain in the information society Public domain content (i.e. material that is not or no longer protected by intellectual property rights) has a considerable potential for re-use thanks to the new tools of the information society. The study would be a first systematic attempt to map or measure the social and economic impact of the public domain. The results will be widely distributed among stakeholders that have an interest in public domain policies, for example cultural institutions, academic and scientific institutions, consumer organisations or publishers. (Work in support of the "i2010: Digital Libraries" initiative.)	1st	€ 200 000 (09 03 02)	12
The impact of the PSI Directive in the Geographical, Meteorological and Legal Information sectors - 3 independent sub-domain studies The sectors targeted by these studies are the most important sub-domains [23] in re-use of public sector information. In 2008, the Commission must present a review of the application of the Directive (article 13 of the Directive). Proper evaluation of the impact of the Directive requires direct access to detailed data on re-use in local Member States markets. All three studies will involve both public and private bodies as suppliers and re-users of information. (Work in support of the implementation of the PSI directive)	1st	€ 120 000 (09 03 02)	5
Language barriers in the information society Online services and content are becoming increasingly available across national boundaries. The study should investigate how the language affects the accessing, understanding and exploiting these services and content: what are the (lost) opportunities that could be seized by offering the content and services in the language of the user? What are the remaining technical, institutional, economic and cultural barriers for cross-lingual access? What are the expectations of the users in terms of language coverage? The study should describe how the information society currently addresses multilinguality, and identify problems and provide recommendations for the future.	2nd	€ 200 000 (09 03 02)	12
European Public Sector Information Platform The purpose of this call is to establish a European PSI central platform to further stimulate action and monitor progress towards a stronger and more transparent environment for the growth of national and European markets in PSI re-use, following the 2008 review of the Directive on PSI re-use. The service will be mainly built around an interactive web-based portal ("one-stop-shop"), providing news on European PSI developments, emerging good practices, examples of new products and services and legal cases around PSI re-use. Consultation channels based on a network of correspondents spanning every member state will be established and twice yearly international workshop meetings will be organised. The contractor will monitor the impact on PSI re-use of implementations of relevant legislation and subsequent guidance, especially in key areas relevant to the intentions of the Directive on PSI re-use such as: pricing and charging policy, discriminatory licensing and exclusive dealing, complaints and redress procedures, access and discovery models, etc. The work will build on earlier activities supported through the eContentplus programme (notably the ePSIplus thematic network) and within Member States.	2nd	€ 300 000	24

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[22] This activity is covered by Line of Action C: "Reinforcing cooperation between digital content stakeholders and awareness " of the Programme Decision.

[23] According to the taxonomy established by the MEPSiR Report.

The criteria used in awarding contracts under a public procurement procedure are defined in the documentation relative to that specific procedure (notice of call for tenders published in the Official Journal, terms of reference).

7. PARTICIPATION IN THE *e*CONTENT*PLUS* PROGRAMME

The call for proposals under this Work Programme is open for participation to all legal entities (public and private) established in the Member States.

The call is also open to the participation of legal entities established in EFTA States which are contracting parties to the EEA Agreement (Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein).

It is furthermore open to legal entities established in Turkey, Croatia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia[24]. If grant agreements are concluded with consortia including legal entities from these countries, such legal entities will be eligible for funding only if the country concerned has effectively joined the Programme by means of a Memorandum of Understanding by the date of signature of the grant agreement. Up-to-date information on which countries are part of the programme is available on the programme website at http://ec.europa.eu/econtentplus.

Legal entities established in third countries and international organisations may take part in all projects at their own expense.

There are no formal minimum or maximum requirements for the number of applicants in proposals. However, the European added value of the proposal will have to be clearly demonstrated.

8. EVALUATION PROCESS

The evaluation of proposals will be based on the principles of transparency and equality of treatment. It will be carried out by the Commission with the assistance of independent experts.

8.1. Appointment of independent experts for evaluation and reviews

The Commission will appoint independent experts to assist with the evaluation of proposals and with the review of project results. The experts shall be identified on the basis of a current call for independent experts for the eContentplus and Safer Internet Plus programmes (2005-2008)[25]. Experts will be selected in consideration of the skills and knowledge appropriate to the tasks assigned to them, taking into account the thematic requirements of a call or project, and with consideration of geographical and gender balance.

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[24] Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, of the other part, OJ L 84 of 20.03.2004. Protocol to the Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, of the other part, on a Framework Agreement between the European Community and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia on the general principles for the participation of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in Community programmes, OJ L 92 of 22.7.2005, p. 23.

[25] OJ C156 of 28.6.2005, p. 11; http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/econtentplus/calls/experts_2005/index_en.htm

8.2. Evaluation criteria

Each submission will be assessed on the basis of the evaluation criteria, which are divided into three categories: eligibility criteria, award criteria, and selection criteria. Only proposals meeting the requirements of the eligibility criteria will be evaluated further.

8.2.1. Eligibility criteria

On receipt, all proposals will be subject to an eligibility check to ensure that they conform to the requirements of the call and to the submission procedure.

The following checks will be carried out:

− Receipt of proposal by the Commission on or before the deadline (date and time) established in the call.

− Completeness of proposal. Proposals which are substantially incomplete — that is to say, the forms do not include sufficient information to identify the partners, their legal status and to evaluate the scope of the proposed project — will be excluded.

Applicants will also be excluded from participation if:

(a) they are bankrupt or being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;

(b) they have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment which has the force of res judicata;

(c) they have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the contracting authority can justify;

(d) they have not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established or with those of the country of the contracting authority or those of the country where the grant agreement is to be performed;

(e) they have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity detrimental to the Communities' financial interests;

(f) following another procurement procedure or grant award procedure financed by the Community budget, they have been declared to be in serious breach of agreement for failure to comply with their contractual obligations.

All applicants must **declare on their honour** that they are not in one of the situations listed above.

Applicants making false declarations are liable to financial penalties or exclusion from grants and contracts.[26]

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[26] Article 175 of Commission Regulation (EC, Euratom) No. 2342/2002 of 23 December 2002 (OJ L 357, 31 December 2002), as last amended by Regulation No 478/2007 of 23 April 2007 (OJ L 111, 28.04.2007, p. 13).

8.2.2. *Award criteria*

This section of the Work Programme defines the award criteria, i.e. those applied to evaluate the relative merits of proposals received following a call for proposals, and the specific weighting of these criteria. One set of award criteria will apply to *Targeted Projects,* one to *Best Practice Networks* and another set of award criteria will apply to the *Thematic Networks*.

The award criteria are applied on the basis of the information supplied in the proposal.

Each criterion is marked from 1 to 10. A maximum score of 100 points can be given to a proposal. Proposals that do not receive **a mark of at least 6/10 for criterion 1 (Relevance and European dimension)** will not be examined further.

Award criteria for Targeted Projects

1. Relevance and European dimension *(Weighting = 2.0)*
- Contribution to achieving the <u>objectives</u> of the eContent*plus* programme and of the specific action as set out in the call. - Clear description of the problems addressed and the solutions proposed and extent to which they contribute to achieving the <u>expected results</u> of the specific action. - Fulfilment of <u>common requirements</u> for <u>European dimension</u>. *2. Content, impact and additional conditions* *(Weighting = 4.0)* - Fulfilment of the <u>common requirements</u> for <u>content</u>. - Fulfilment of the <u>common requirements</u> for <u>impact</u>. - Fulfilment of the additional <u>conditions</u> for the specific action. *3. Quality of the technical part of the proposal* *(Weighting = 2.0)* - Adequacy of the methodology and work plan for achieving the objectives stated in the proposal. *4. Resources and management* *(Weighting = 2.0)* - Fulfilment of the <u>common requirements</u> for the <u>consortium</u>. Quality of the consortium in terms of relevance, competences and combination of complementary expertise. - Adequacy of the management, decision-making structures, communication flow and cooperation mechanisms within the consortium. - Extent to which the project provides for the resources (personnel, equipment, financial, etc.) necessary for success.

Award criteria for Best Practice Networks

1. Relevance and European dimension *(Weighting = 2.0)*
- Contribution to achieving the <u>objectives</u> of the eContent*plus* programme and of the specific action as set out in the call. - Clear description of the problems addressed and the solutions proposed and extent to which they contribute to achieving the <u>expected results</u> of the specific action. - Fulfilment of <u>common requirements</u> for <u>European dimension</u>.

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2. Content, impact, networking and additional conditions   *(Weighting = 4.0)*

- Fulfilment of the <u>common requirements</u> for <u>content</u>.

- Fulfilment of the <u>common requirements</u> for <u>impact</u>.

- Fulfilment of the <u>common requirements</u> for <u>networking</u>**.**

- Fulfilment of the additional <u>conditions</u> for the specific action.

3. Quality of the technical part of the proposal   *(Weighting = 2.0)*

- Adequacy of the methodology and work plan for achieving the objectives stated in the proposal.

- Fulfilment of the <u>common requirements</u> for <u>clustering</u>**.**

4. Resources and management   *(Weighting = 2.0)*

- Fulfilment of the <u>common requirements</u> for the <u>consortium.</u> Quality of the consortium in terms of relevance, competences and combination of complementary expertise.

- Adequacy of the management, decision-making structures, communication flow and cooperation mechanisms within the consortium.

- Extent to which the project provides for the resources (personnel, equipment, financial, etc.) necessary for success.

Award criteria for the Thematic Network

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1. Relevance and European dimension   *(Weighting = 4.0)*

- Contribution to achieving the <u>objectives </u>of the eContent*plus* programme and the Community policies related to the European Digital Library.

- Clear description of the problems addressed and the solutions proposed and extent to which they contribute to achieving the <u>expected results</u> of the specific action.

- European dimension of the issue(s) addressed, and extent to which the proposed action would contribute to tackling them at European level.

2. Quality of the technical part of the proposal   *(Weighting = 2.0)*

- Adequacy of the methodology and work plan for achieving the objectives stated in the proposal.

3. Quality of the proposed network and management   *(Weighting = 4.0)*

- Fulfilment of the <u>conditions</u> for the specific action.

- Quality of the partnership in terms of relevance, competences, combination of complementary expertise, and resources available.

- Quality of the coordinating team (good complementarities between participants) and adequacy of the organisations participating in the network to ensure the coordination envisaged.

- Adequacy of the management, decision-making structures, communication flow and cooperation mechanisms within the network.

- Adequacy of the measures and indicators for monitoring progress and assessing results and impact.

8.2.3. *Selection criteria*

The selection criteria are intended to ensure that the proposers possess the resources to co-finance the project and the professional competences and qualifications required to complete the work successfully.

Selection criteria are applied on the basis of the information supplied in the proposal. Where cases of weak financial capacity or professional competence are identified, compensating actions such as financial guarantees or other actions may be required. Successful proposals called to negotiations will be the subject of a formal legal and financial validation as a requirement for the issuing of a grant agreement.

The selection criteria are divided into two parts:

- Financial and operational capacity to carry out the project
- − Capacity to co-finance the proposed project as demonstrated by the applicant's accounts;
- − Capacity to allocate adequate human resources to carry out the project in question.
- Professional competences and qualifications
- − Documented relevant experience in the field of the proposed action.

9. BUDGET AND CALENDAR

9.1. Call for proposals 2008

An **indicative amount** of € 42.5 million is available for the 2008 call on the budget line 09 03 02. Grants to proposals submitted in response to this call will be awarded through grant agreements.

The evaluation of proposals will give rise to a list of proposals to be funded. This list may be complemented by a reserve list of proposals of sufficient quality, to be funded in case of budget availability.

Within the indicative budget for the call, changes not exceeding 15% of the maximum contribution of the Community are not considered to be substantial provided that they do not significantly affect the nature and objective of the work programme.

The following table presents the Community contribution and indicative funding for each project type, the indicative duration as well as the number of countries on which the proposed action is expected to have an impact.

Project type	Community contribution	Duration *(in months)*	No. of Countries *(impact)*	Funding
Best Practice Networks	80% of **direct** eligible costs	typically 18-24 (up to 36)	14-27	4-6 M€
Targeted Projects	50% of **direct and indirect** eligible costs	typically 18-24 (up to 36)	7-16	2-3 M€
Thematic Network	Up to 100% of a limited set of direct eligible costs for coordinating and implementing the network. Costs for network members other than the coordinator are limited to travel and subsistence.	Up to 36	14-27	4-6 M€

9.2. Indicative calendar

The indicative calendar for the activities is as follows:

Date	Event
March 2008	Adoption and publication of Work Programme and text of call for proposals
12 June 2008	Call closure
June/July 2008	Evaluation
July 2008	Evaluation report approved by Authorising Officer
September 2008	Draft Implementation Plan approved by Authorising Officer (DG)
October 2008	Committee Meeting – presentation of call results for opinion European Parliament – Right of scrutiny
January 2009	Opening of negotiations
March 2009	Completion of negotiations, award decision, signature of grant agreements

9.3. Project reviews

The indicative operational budget for the review of projects funded under the budget line 09 03 02 (via appointment letters) in 2008 is € 267,463.

Outside experts who assist the Commission with project reviews may claim, in addition to the reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenses, a payment of € 450 in the form of a lump sum for each full working day.

10. FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information relating to this programme, please refer to the *e*Content*plus* web site at http://ec.europa.eu/econtentplus.