

European Commission CIP - ICT Policy Support Programme: Digital Libraries Information Day, Luxembourg, 17th February 2009

Report commissioned as part of [JISC Digitisation Programme](#) and written by Kate Fernie

Background

The Information Day was organised by the EC's information society team to provide information about the third call for proposals for the ICT Policy Support Programme (ICT-PSP), which opened on the 29th January. ICT-PSP (2007-13) is part of the EC's Competitiveness and Innovation Framework programme and is the successor to the eContentPlus and eTEN programmes. The strategic objectives of the programme are:

1. To develop a single European information space and strengthen the internal market for ICT and ICT based products and services – based on interoperability, open standards, security and trust.
2. Innovation through wider adoption of, and investment in ICT.
3. An inclusive information society with more efficient effective public services and improved quality of life.

The 2009 work programme (relevant for this call) identifies 8 themes: ICT for health, aging and inclusion; Digital Libraries; ICT for governance and government; ICT for energy, efficiency and the environment; Multilingual Web; Public Sector Information; Internet evolution and security; Open Innovation, user experience and living labs. More info:

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/ict_psp/index_en.htm

Digital libraries.

A budget of 25 million euros is allocated to digital libraries in the 2009 call. The main goals of this call are contributing to Europeana (the European digital library) and maximizing the impact of European research results. The specific objectives are:

- Developing services to improve the usability of Europeana
- Aggregating content for Europeana
- Digitising content for Europeana
- Open access to scientific information
- Use of heritage content for education

Funding instruments

There are 2 funding instruments relevant to Digital Libraries: Best Practice Networks and Pilot type B projects. The main features of these instruments are:

Best Practice Networks:

- To promote the adoption of standards by combining consensus building and awareness raising with large-scale implementation / aggregation of sufficient mass of content to Europeana.
- BPNs should involve at least 7 legal entities from at least 7 Member States or associated countries (Croatia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Turkey).
- The consortia should engage all necessary stakeholders.
- Projects will last from 24 to 36 months.
- EC reimburses 80% of direct eligible costs but no indirect costs.
- 3-5 million euros per project.

Pilot type B projects:

- To develop innovative ICT-based solutions/services under realistic conditions.
- Aiming to foster innovation services – e.g. take-up of completed R&D work, extending tested prototypes; integrating partial solutions to realise an innovative approach.
- Pilot B projects should involve at least 4 legal entities from at least 4 Member States or associated countries.
- Consortia needs to engage the entire value chain of relevant stakeholders
- Projects will last from 24 to 36 months.
- EC reimburses 50% of direct costs and indirect costs charged at a flat 30% rate.
- 2-2.5 million euros per project.

The EC anticipates that in the Digital Libraries strand, it will fund:

- 2.2 BPNs focusing on aggregating content to Europeana
- 2.3 Pilot B projects focusing on digitising content for Europeana
- 2.1 BPNs focusing on front end services for Europeana
- 2.5 Pilot B projects focusing on cultural content for education

(These numbers are estimates. They indicate the division of the overall budget between the objectives and that the EC anticipates funding about 9 Digital Libraries projects in this call.)

More detail:

Aggregating content, the EC is looking for BPNs that help cultural institutions to make their content accessible and searchable through Europeana via an aggregator. Projects might harvest the content of several institutions through an aggregator. Content is the main feature – the IPR must be cleared, Europeana doesn't want content that can't be used. Consortium must include content providers, may include national or domain aggregators. There needs to be a plan for sustainability after the end of project funding and a clear dissemination plan.

Europeana front-end services, the EC is looking for BPNs that will bring improvements to search, browsing and the user interface. The ambition is for users to be able to work with the content, for example by tagging content and creating their own libraries. Solutions must be validated by users in real-life contexts and tested to ensure that they can be transferred to Europeana (both the platform and the content). Consortia must include content providers and users. Services need to be interesting to the general public, not to specialist audiences. There is an interest in improving Europe's presence in the content creative industries.

Digitising content for Europeana, the EC is looking for Pilot B projects that target digitisation of content that complements collections already accessible through Europeana. This is not mass digitisation, projects must specify themes and explain why the material should be digitised. The content must be held by cultural institutions from different EU countries and be interesting to the general public. The project must result in a critical mass of complementary content. Projects must have a sustainability plan and a clear dissemination plan. They also need to take into account how the content will be made available to Europeana (metadata indexing etc).

Content for education, this is a new theme. The idea is to fund Pilot type B projects make Europeana content accessible for education and learning in multilingual and multicultural contexts. The material may be already in Europeana, or included in Europeana during the project. Projects may involve transforming the content in some way to make content usable for learning services. There should be a critical mass sufficient to increase access and use of CH material for education through Europeana. The consortium must include content providers, pedagogical experts etc. Projects need to have a sustainability plan, clear dissemination plan.

More information on Digital Libraries available from here:

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/econtentplus/index_en.htm

Working with Europeana

All projects are expected to work with Europeana and so it is worth taking into account the current technical requirements which are:

- A digitised object should be available on a website through a permanent direct link to the object or to the object in context (e.g. on an HTML page). A thumbnail or sample should be available.
- Object level metadata should conform to the Europeana Semantic Elements (ESE) specification and preferably be exposed via OAI-PMH.

And also future plans, which include:

- Harvesting of metadata from aggregators rather than directly from institutions.
- Making tools available to partners including a tool to analyse the metadata structure, a tool for normalizing data, a tool to generate additional management data and an indexing tool.
- Release of a specification for ORE in July 2010
- Release of specifications for APIs for interactions with other applications
- The 'Europeana Connect' starting in a few weeks will work on technical components.

IPR

The IPR for both input and output of content must be cleared. Content must be retrievable at item level.

Award criteria

There are 3 criteria on which project proposals will be evaluated:

- 1) Relevance – to the work programme and its specific objectives. For digital libraries this includes the contribution to the EU Digital Library initiative.
- 2) Impact – impact, scalability and wider deployment of results. Capability of surviving after the end of the project.
- 3) Implementation – how and who will carry out the project. Quality of the work plan, effectiveness of the management approach etc.

Each criteria is marked out of 5, projects must score 3 on each criteria. In cases of equal scores ranking will be on the basis of the order of the award criteria (i.e. the best score for relevance, then impact, then implementation).

Practical advice for proposers

The EC offers services to help organisations who are planning to submit a proposal. These include:

- a pre-proposal check service, which allows you to submit a draft proposal to the information society team and to get their feed-back and advice on how to increase your chances of funding.
- A partner database, which you can use to find a partner or a consortium to participate in a project, this is online at:
http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/ict_psp/cf/partner/login/index.cfm.

Another way of **finding project partners** is through participating in European networks (at conferences, training workshops, seminars etc) and identifying people with a good track record of participating in EU projects. There are also small companies in Europe with specialist expertise in building new project proposals who can help find partners.

Documentation and guidance on the call is available from:

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/ict_psp/participating/calls/call_proposals_09/index_en.htm

Submission is online via the EC's EPSS system.

The EC is advising people to submit their proposal early! The EPSS system allows you to register and upload your draft proposal early – you can re-upload the proposal many times until it is finally ready for submission. The system provides templates of all the partner forms and for 'Part B' (the description of the project itself), you must use these forms. Keep the Part B to less than 10mb! And make sure everything is complete before the final submission.

Timetable

The deadline for submissions is 2nd June, 2009 at 17:00 Brussels time.