

**EUROPEAN CONTENT IN GLOBAL NETWORKS
COORDINATION MECHANISMS FOR DIGITISATION PROGRAMMES**

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**ACTION PLAN ON COORDINATION OF DIGITISATION PROGRAMMES AND
POLICIES**

Follow up of Experts meeting, Lund, Sweden, 4 April 2001

**IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK FOR DIGITISATION
COORDINATION ACTIONS IN EUROPE**

This plan describes a first set of actions for improving the digitisation of cultural and scientific content in Europe and for achieving the objectives set out in the 'Lund Principles'. The plan targets activities to be completed or launched before the end of 2002. The results of the actions will be fed into an evolving plan for a sustainable set of activities in this area.

1. AREA 1: IMPROVING POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES THROUGH COOPERATION AND BENCHMARKING

Action 1a: National Web sites for policies and programmes

Objective: to maintain exchange of compatible information between Member States on programmes and policies and to give visibility to national activities in order to exchange similar experiences and skills.

Implementation and tasks: Working with a small group of experts, a baseline profile for policies will be developed, based on the questionnaire data already provided by Member States. These data will be mapped to the profile and redistributed to Member States for mounting on national Web sites. The experts will also produce a minimum set of quality criteria for this information in respect of currency, multilinguality and availability and accessibility to the citizen.

Each Member State will identify appropriate Web sites for this data, together with the updating and maintenance mechanisms needed. The Commission will host in the first instance a common page pointing to the national sites.

Actors: Member States, especially those with existing sites as exemplars, will nominate experts to work in defining the baseline profile. All Member States will work to establish sites and update mechanisms for maintaining their profiles. Commission will convene experts group and will map existing data to the agreed data structure of the baseline profile.

Timescales: experts workgroup set up by end June 2001; profile established, end August 2001; Web sites including a central page and Member States profiles, end September 2001.

Progress July 2001: profile format agreed, technical options under investigation. MS profiles to be distributed end August. On target.

Action 1b: Adoption of benchmarking framework¹ for policies and programmes

Objective: to endorse and implement the benchmarking framework as a key tool for coordination within as well as between Member States and to develop measures to show progress and improvement.

Implementation and tasks: a focus group of experts will be set up to refine the model in order to present it to Member States for agreement and for adoption. The experts will also develop a strategy for endorsement and implementation of the model, such as "Declarations of intent". In order to underpin this activity, a network of correspondents in Member States will be set up as a forum for discussion, implementation and further development of qualitative benchmarking.

¹ See: 'Draft framework for benchmarking digitisation policies', prepared by the Commission services for the meeting at Lund, 4 April, 2001

Actors: Member States will nominate experts for the benchmarking workgroup and establish national "Networks of correspondents and experts". The Commission will support the workgroup for finalising the model.

Timescales: workgroup set up end June 2001; national correspondents network September 2001

Progress July 2001: Experts nominations still pending from most Member States. Meeting 17 July Brussels agreed strategy and emphasised need for support group and networks of correspondents.

Action 1c: Development of indicators and collection of measures

Objective: to establish a framework for the benchmarking of digitisation of cultural and scientific resources in Europe and to monitor the impact on eEurope objectives for European digital content in global networks.

Implementation and tasks: Starting from the policy benchmarking framework, a set of qualitative and quantitative indicators will be identified and developed together with the methodologies and partnerships with other agencies needed for their collection. Scoping work will be carried out by the benchmarking experts group and supported by a study into reference models for digitisation, which will include the definition of a suitable set of core indicators for benchmarking digitisation in Europe.

Actors: Member States will contribute through their nominated experts to the group and the Commission will launch the study, as well as set up cooperation with other benchmarking initiatives and relevant IST projects.

Timescales: study to be launched in autumn 2001; core indicator(s) identified by February 2002, together with the collection of a first set of measures. Recommendations for a set of indicators for digitisation to be provided by April 2002.

Progress July 2001: Call for tender for study due for publication July 2001. Candidate experts names still awaited from most MS

Action 1d: Supporting coordination activities

Objective: to create an infrastructure supporting coordination between Member States

Implementation and tasks: A number of actions will be instigated to continue and to develop the cooperation established to date. These will include: creating a coordinating group of representatives from Member States, to meet initially under the aegis of the Presidency; setting up online fora or discussion groups for dialogue and exchange of experience between those in Member States responsible for or active in digitisation of cultural and scientific content; providing a supporting secretariat or facilitating agency.

Actors: Member States will set up the coordinating group and agree its mandate. Existing networks, supported under the IST Programme and, in particular, the CULTIVATE-EU network, will be used to host the discussion fora. The potential of supporting the secretariat as a support action under the IST Programme will be explored, eg by clustering existing activities

Timescales: coordinating group established by September 2001; discussion lists set up July/August 2001. Secretariat should be established by mid 2002.

Progress July 2001: Nominations for permanent contact and de facto coordinating group member in progress from MS. No progress on lists, on secretariat or supporting functions.

2. AREA 2: DISCOVERY OF DIGITISED RESOURCES

Action 2a: National inventories

Objective: to make visible and accessible European cultural and scientific content by setting up inventories of on-going digitisation projects based on national observatories.

Implementation and tasks: Based on existing activities or using examples from other Member States, national inventories of projects or of selected content will be developed. The inventories need to comply with quality standards for the content to be included (based on good practice guidelines –see action 3b) and for the access services they provide. A technical workgroup led by Member States with greatest experience in this area will define the possible platforms paying particular attention to open-source and free software and produce a set of guidelines to support other Member States in establishing usable and sustainable inventories.

Actors: Member States to establish guidelines of good practice through the work group and to promote existing or develop new national inventories of projects.

Timescales: a workgroup created June 2001; definition of main recommendations, September 2001; inventories available from mid-2001 onwards.

Progress July 2001: Meeting in Paris, 6 July 2001 convened by Ministère de la Culture. Agreed: piloting of French system with Italy; definition of agreed inventory descriptors and submission to Dublin Core Community; assessment of feasibility of adoption of French approach and national customisation of public domain tools.

Action 2b: Discovery of digitised content

Objective: to define a sustainable technical infrastructure for coordinated discovery of European digitised cultural and scientific content.

Implementation and tasks: inventories are usually a top-down exercise, but in order to make the digitised resources accessible work is also needed on defining the technical components and standards for identifying and harvesting eligible digitised content. This includes agreements on metadata, on harvesting tools, and on aggregation and retrieval services, with emphasis on public domain/open source tools and on support for multilinguality. An expert technical workgroup will examine metadata standards, taking into consideration also metadata requirements for national inventories, and make recommendations on technical strategies and on development/implementation test-beds.

Actors: Coordinated by France, Member States will set up a work group to develop metadata recommendations and to report on strategies to the coordinating group.

Timescales: work group set up in order to produce first recommendations on metadata by September 2001, together with recommendations for next steps, including possible test-bed projects.

Progress July 2001: Meeting in Paris, 6 July 2001 convened by Ministère de la Culture. DELOS Network of Excellence to integrate workgroup on metadata for discovering, harvesting and aggregating information on digitised resources.

3. AREA 3: PROMOTION OF GOOD PRACTICE

Action 3a: Good practice exemplars & guidelines

Objective: support skills and efficiency by encouraging take-up of good practice

Implementation and tasks: Member States should select and promote good practice examples from their projects in order to exchange experiences, skills and to collect consensus from

different communities. Take-up projects in cultural heritage under the IST Programme will be analysed for potential contribution to good practice. Existing good practice guidelines will be identified and promoted in the short term, with a view to producing a set of consensus guidelines on good practice at a later date. Relevant standards will also be identified and recommendations about their application developed, for example through workgroups and projects.

Actors: Member States to develop and promote their own examples of good practice; Commission with ongoing projects to provide overview of existing guidelines and to propose structure or typology for consolidating guidelines.

Timescales: Examples from Member States and overview of existing selected guidelines, September 2001; contribution from take-up projects and consolidated approach to good practice by April 2002.

Progress July 2001: Meeting in Brussels, 17 July produced recommendations on activities to compile information on standards, to share experiences and competences, and to identify pertinent guidelines.

Action 3b: Competence centres

Objective: promoting "centres of competence"

Implementation and tasks: organisations or consortia of organisations with leading skills and competences in key technical domains should establish services to support and inform cultural organisations embarking on digitisation. These services may be established or promoted at national level or at European level, including using the possibilities under the current IST 2001 workprogramme.

Actors: Member States, research organisations and industry

Timescales: From 2002 onwards.

4. AREA 4: CONTENT FRAMEWORK

4a: Cooperative action plan for access to quality European digitised content

Objective: Optimise the value and develop shared visions of European content, by developing criteria and a framework for an EU collaboration plan for digital cultural and scientific content, together with an appropriate implementation means (Charter, MoU etc).

Implementation and tasks: Once the coordinating group is established, and with the eventual support of its secretariat, a cooperative approach for a European eCulture infrastructure (eCulture Portal) for access to digitised cultural and scientific heritage should be developed, based on identifying added value and quality criteria for the digitised content to be included, on technical standards and agreements on their implementation, and on service quality. The strategic means of implementing this should also be identified, for example via a Charter, MoU etc

Actors: Member States

Timescales: Ongoing from October 2001 with working method set up through the Coordinating group of MS, with outline of framework and agreement strategy by mid 2002

Progress July 2001: first steps in development of criteria for a quality framework for resources on cultural sites (Brussels Quality Framework). Next actions proposed: experts meeting under Belgian Presidency to develop BOF and investigate strategies for its takeup (Charter, MoU etc).

4b: Sustainable access to content

Objective: ensure digitised cultural and scientific content is available over time.

Implementation and tasks: the application of standards and adoption of good practice provide some safeguards for the future availability of digitised content, but this is very limited. Research is needed into long-term preservation issues, into scoping and identifying the core problem areas, and in developing appropriate technical solutions. A research agenda for future actions needs to be developed to meet these goals. The DLM Forum and IST supported actions will input to this process.

Actors: Commission and industry

Timescales: 2001 onwards.

Progress July 2001: DLM Forum 2002 scheduled for Barcelona, May 2002 with support of Spanish Presidency. IST support action on good practice and awareness for digital preservation (due to start January 2002). Industry position papers sent to Commissioner Liikanen

Indicative timetable of actions

Deadline Action	July 2001	September 2001	November 2001	February 2002	April 2002	June 2002
Policy Web:		profile + Member States sites				
Benchmarking framework for policy	experts workgroup established - in progress	<i>national correspondents network</i>				
Indicators + measures			study launched	core indicator(s) identified; first set of measures	Draft set of indicators for digitisation	
Coordination support		<i>discussion lists + coordinating group established</i>				Secretariat
National inventories	<i>a workgroup set up (from those with current inventories)</i>	<i>Recommendations; first inventories available</i>				
Discovery infrastructure	<i>work group agreed - via DELOS</i>	<i>recommendations on metadata + next steps and test-bed projects</i>				
Good practice guidelines		Examples from MS and overview of existing selected guidelines		Analysis take-up projects; consolidated approach to guidelines		
Centres of competence					<i>Centres established</i>	
Cooperative action plan	Quality Framework - first draft Brussels meeting, 17 July		<i>Experts meeting on Quality</i>	<i>Working group set up through coordinating group</i>		framework and agreement strategy
Sustainable access				Research agenda		

MS; MS + Commission support; Commission