



European Commission
Directorate-General For Information Society And Media

Content



eContentplus

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

Work Programme

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1. INTRODUCTION

This Work Programme covers the activities of the *eContentplus* programme, a multiannual Community programme to make digital content in Europe more accessible, usable and exploitable. It defines the priorities for the activities, in line with the decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the *eContentplus* programme (the “Programme Decision”).¹ *It is part of the Commission’s policy announced in “i2010 – A European Information Society for growth and employment”*³. *In aiming at promoting the enabling infrastructure and stimulating 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 identified by i2010, namely “rich content” and “interoperability”.* More specifically, it will contribute to the achievement of Objective 1 of i2010: A Single European Information Space offering affordable and secure high bandwidth communications, rich and diverse content and digital services. By singling out cultural content and scientific/scholarly content as one of the target areas where the programme can have maximum impact with the available resources and seeking to foster the aggregation of digital collections across borders as well as content enrichment in these domains, it will further contribute to making digital libraries easier and more interesting to use, one of i2010’s flagship ICT initiatives for the improvement of the quality of life. The Commission will provide continued support for the creation and circulation of European content and for preserving and exploiting Europe's written and audiovisual heritage. At a time when the internet and the digital technologies available on many technical platforms are an everyday part of the life of European citizens, tapping the potential of our written text, image and sound archives is of major importance in economic terms as much as in cultural terms.

2. OBJECTIVES AND OVERALL APPROACH

2.1. *eContentplus*, the overall aim

The **overall aim** of the *eContentplus* programme is to facilitate access to and use of European digital content. Digital content is anything that can be produced/created, stored, processed, managed and transmitted using digital technologies. The programme has an enabling role: it will contribute to better conditions for accessing, using, reusing and exploiting digital material, in particular for the creation of added-value products and services at European level. It will help European citizens, students, researchers, business users and other re-users of content 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. **Multicultural and multilingual aspects of digital content in Europe will be integral to all the actions.**

The programme focuses on advancing *quality of content* in specific contexts of use, through enhancing it to improve searchability, usability, re-usability. Actions in the programme will use state-of-the-art technical solutions, and will be geared towards innovation in organisation and innovation in deployment – as opposed to purely technological innovation.

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

³ COM(2005)229 <http://europa.eu.int/i2010>.

2.2. Target areas

Three specific areas have been singled out where the programme can have a maximum impact with the available resources: 1) **geographic information** 2) **educational content** and 3) **cultural content and scientific/scholarly content**.

2.3. Implementation

The programme will be implemented through yearly, major calls for proposals. Where necessary, additional calls may be issued, for example if a major call does not lead to satisfying results.

This Work Programme indicates areas to be covered during the lifetime of the programme. However, the Community budget is established on an annual basis, which also applies to making new grants. Not all activities are therefore open in 2005. The roadmap for subsequent years is set out at 9.2 below.

Three project types are used in implementing the Work Programme: Targeted Projects (TP), Content Enrichment Projects (CEP) and Thematic Networks (TN). These are further defined at chapter 8 below.

A single call for proposals for indirect actions will be published in 2005. The call will cover the following activities:

Geographic information

3.1.1 Promoting the enabling infrastructure - Targeted Projects

3.2.2 Stimulating geographic content enrichment – A Thematic Network

Educational content

4.2.1 Stimulating educational content enrichment – Content Enrichment Projects

4.2.2 Stimulating educational content enrichment – Thematic Networks

Cultural and scientific/scholarly content

5.1.1 Promoting the enabling infrastructure – Targeted Projects

5.2.1 Stimulating cultural and scientific/scholarly content enrichment – Content Enrichment Projects

5.2.2 Stimulating cultural and scientific/scholarly content enrichment – Thematic Networks

Reinforcing cooperation between digital content stakeholders

6.1.1 Public Sector Information – A Thematic Network

3. GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Geographic information - all information that can be related to a specific location on earth - is a key content resource, which, due to its pervasiveness, has a considerable impact on society at large. It is relevant for all kinds of economic activities, ranging from transport to mobile telephone services. It is an essential ingredient underpinning many public policies, such as disaster management and environmental policies. Much of the basic geographic information in Europe is produced by public sector organisations at all levels of government. However, the economic and societal potential of this public sector content resource is at present far from being realised. Initiatives at different levels of government are not compatible or lead to data that cannot be combined with other datasets, there are

gaps in the availability of data, and there is sometimes duplication of information collection. Much of the quality spatial information is available at local and regional level, but is difficult to exploit in a broader context. The description of available spatial data is often incomplete.

eContentplus will help to overcome these barriers to the use of geographic information held by the public sector. It will stimulate the aggregation of existing national datasets into cross-border datasets, which will serve to underpin new information services or products. And it will support Content Enrichment Projects to enhance geographic content with well-defined metadata at all levels of government.

3.1. Promoting the enabling infrastructure

The objective is to arrive at cross-border, interoperable and/or seamless geographic data. Projects should be at the basis of improved possibilities for re-use of the data by private companies and end-users throughout Europe.

3.1.1. Targeted Projects (TP)

Proposals should fulfil the following requirements:

Scope:

- Aggregate geographic data across borders.
- Lead to results which will significantly increase re-use of existing data. **The interest of the data for further use should be demonstrated at the stage of the proposal through an analysis of demand (corroborated by facts and statements of interest), including a clear definition of the target users.**

Conditions:

- Be sizable, thus creating critical mass and results which meet the demand. Potential participants should clearly state the volume of data that will be brought into the project.
- Should result in datasets which are easily re-useable. The intended pricing models and their effects on re-use by the target groups will be an important factor to choose one proposal rather than another.
- Include specific and measurable criteria against which cross-border availability and use can be measured, where possible already during the lifetime of the project.
- Build on existing digital datasets. The digitisation of data cannot be part of the project.
- **Address multilingual aspects.**
- Make use of open standards that facilitate re-use and showcase the use of metadata.
- Involve all relevant stakeholders. Potential re-users, data-providers (public and where relevant private), co-ordinating bodies should be involved in the project, e.g. through a project advisory board which would be consulted by the project consortium and give advice to it, or as project partners experimenting with and giving feedback on the results of the project.

Where relevant, synergies should be sought with other Community initiatives, such as the proposal for a Directive aiming at the establishment of an infrastructure for spatial information in the

Community⁴ (INSPIRE), and the Global monitoring for environment and security initiative⁵ (GMES) designed to establish a European capacity for the provision and use of operational information for Global Monitoring of Environment and Security. Where appropriate, projects should fully integrate the standards and positioning, navigation and timing solutions that the European Union's satellite navigation infrastructure, Galileo, will provide.

3.2. Stimulating geographic content enrichment

The objective is to improve the quality of geographic information at regional and local level throughout Europe, by the consistent use of well defined metadata.

3.2.1. Content Enrichment Projects (CEP)

Not open for proposals submission in 2005, such activity will be part of future call for proposals. Proposals should fulfil the following requirements:

Scope:

- Enrich digital geographic information at regional and local level with semantically well-defined metadata, and demonstrate the benefits of this approach in terms of visibility, searchability, re-usability, repurposing and aggregation, in particular across borders.
- Lead to results that will significantly increase re-use of existing data, also the cross-border use. The interest of the data for further use should be demonstrated at the stage of the proposal through an analysis of demand (corroborated by facts and statements of interest), including a clear definition of the target users.

Conditions:

- Be sizable, creating enough critical mass to promote a widespread use of content-enhancing processes for digital geographic content. Potential participants should clearly state the volume of data that will be brought into the project.
- The experiments should focus on the actual use of enhanced content in real contexts.
- **Address the multilingual aspects.**
- Include specific and measurable criteria against which quality improvements and availability, access and use can be measured, where possible already during the lifetime of the action.
- Use and build on existing international standards.
- Pay attention to feedback mechanisms for users on the usability and quality of the data.
- Build on pre-existing datasets. The digitisation of data cannot be part of the CEP.
- Be transferable and have potential for replication.

⁴ Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing an infrastructure for spatial information in the Community. Proposal of 23.7.2004, COM(2004) 516 final, 2004/0175 (COD)

⁵ Joint initiative of the European Commission and the European Space Agency.

3.2.2. A Thematic Network (TN)

Proposals should fulfil the following requirements:

Scope:

- Carry out awareness activities addressing geographic information stakeholders (producers, owners, users) on the benefits demonstrated by best practices on how to enrich digital content with semantically well defined metadata, and/or support coordination of Content Enrichment Projects, including their organisational coherence and endorsement.
- Promote dialogue and exchange of information between stakeholders.

Conditions:

- Include mechanisms/competencies to provide guidance, assessment and improvement plans of associated Content Enrichment Projects (for example in relation to the evolution/identification of new experiments).
- Use cost-effective means of distribution of information to large numbers of users.
- Establish and maintain a partnership with key players and stakeholders.
- Use multiplier organisations and electronic dissemination channels, mass media and the distribution of information material so as to reach the intended target group.
- Where relevant, activities should exploit synergies with other projects funded under eContentplus.

4. EDUCATIONAL CONTENT

Today, educational content abounds in multiple formats, on the web and in repositories, 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 support, a lack of 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. This situation prevents organisations, schools, universities, students, teachers, and citizens from finding, and using educational content that fits their needs, languages and cultures.

eContentplus supports the creation of better conditions to make available, accessible, usable and exploitable digital content for learning. The programme encourages solutions that integrate technical, pedagogical and organisational aspects and that significantly increase the multilingual and multicultural use of digital content and repositories. At the same time, this is complemented by actions building on the benefits arising from enriching a critical mass of digital content with well-defined semantic metadata. These actions should encourage the necessary structures (organisational, business, technical) for the emergence of pan-European learning services, irrespective of location and language.

4.1. Promoting the enabling infrastructure

The objective is to create the enabling infrastructure which supports the significant increase in the cross-border availability, accessibility and re-usability of European digital content for learning. This requires integrated solutions, addressing technical, pedagogical and organisational components, and the emergence of coordinating entities that can mobilise organisational cohesion, the sustainability of this infrastructure and associated economic models.

4.1.1. Targeted Projects

Not open for proposals submission in 2005, such activity will be part of future call for proposals. Proposals should fulfil the following requirements:

Scope:

- Activities may include work on interoperability, on trust and management, on adaptability of digital content, distributed digital repositories and related brokerage services.
- Lead to results that will significantly increase **multilingual and multicultural use and re-use of quality content**. The potential users, needs, benefits and economic value should be identified and demonstrated convincingly at the stage of the proposal (corroborated by facts and statements of interest).

Conditions:

- Demonstrate that a viable and quantified base of digital content for learning will be available in the consortium.
- Provide specific and realistic quantified indicators to measure the envisaged improvements of the availability, access and use – at different stages in the project lifetime and beyond.
- Content stakeholders, technological providers and pedagogical experts should be represented in a balanced way in the consortium.
- Provide for feedback mechanisms for users on the usability and quality of the content.
- Where appropriate, the use of open standards and specifications is recommended.
- Identify mechanisms for the sustainability of the action after the end of the project, with a convincing commitment/credible plan of the consortium to this end.

4.1.2. Thematic Networks

Not open for proposals submission in 2005, such activity will be part of future call for proposals.

Proposals should fulfil the following requirements:

Scope:

- Aim at coordinated approaches for the organisational cohesion and the sustainability of actions that underpin the effort of making European digital content for learning available, accessible and usable.
- Activities should target specific educational content issues and be driven by a general shared interest, with identifiable shared goals, and strong commitment by all partners.
- Work may include consensus building, adoption of common reference models, roadmaps for operational actions, advice to policymaking, and concerted actions to convey the European needs to standardisation bodies for learning technologies.

Conditions:

- The network should balance the interests of governmental organisations and funding bodies, content creators and owners, and user community representatives. It should encourage co-operation among public and private organisations.
- Demonstrate convincingly the strategic impact of the consortium. It should include a credible plan for guaranteeing sustainability of actions.
- Where relevant the network should include expertise from professionals on the pedagogical use of digital content, and user communities and liaise with international organisations.

- Be open and proactive to attract new - relevant - partners.

4.2. Stimulating educational content enrichment

The objective is to demonstrate the benefits of enriching a critical mass of digital content with well-defined semantic metadata, improving the quality of digital content for learning.

4.2.1. Content Enrichment Projects

Proposals should fulfil the following requirements:

Scope:

- Enrich a critical mass of digital content for learning with semantically well-defined metadata and associated formal descriptions that give meaning to metadata (e.g. ontologies), through the application of appropriate tools, with a view to enabling quality content-based services.
- Be based on a comprehensive set of enrichment experiments, in real contexts, to show that the adoption of the practice is both possible and has benefits. Benefits should demonstrate improved searchability, re-usability, repurposing and aggregation for cross-border, multilingual and multicultural use. They should address the chain “creation, publication, discovery, acquisition, access, and use”.
- Lead to results that will significantly increase **multilingual and multicultural use and re-use of existing digital content for learning**. The needs, benefits and economic value should be demonstrated convincingly at the stage of the proposal through an analysis of demand (corroborated by facts and statements of interest).

Conditions:

- Be based on clearly defined common interests and well justified needs. The experiments should be scalable, transferable and have potential for replication.
- The experiments should focus on the actual use of enhanced content in real learning contexts. The quality improvement should result in digital content that fits different learning needs, languages and contexts.
- Include specific and measurable criteria against which quality improvements and availability, access and use can be measured.
- A viable, quantified base of digital learning content for enhancement should be already available in the consortium.

4.2.2. Thematic Networks

Proposals should fulfil the following requirements:

Scope:

- Carry out awareness activities addressing educational content stakeholders on the benefits demonstrated by best practices on how to enrich digital content; and/or support coordination of Content Enrichment Projects, including their organisational coherence and endorsement
- Promote dialogue and exchange of information between stakeholders.

Conditions:

- Include mechanisms/competencies to provide guidance, assessment and improvement plans of associated Content Enrichment Projects (for example in relation to the evolution/identification of new experiments).
- Use cost-effective means of distribution of information to large number of users.

- Establish and maintain a partnership with key players and stakeholders.
- Use multiplier organisations and electronic dissemination channels, mass media and the distribution of information material so as to reach the intended target group.
- If relevant, activities should exploit synergies with other relevant projects funded under eContentplus.

5. CULTURAL CONTENT AND SCIENTIFIC/SCHOLARLY CONTENT

Cultural and scholarly institutions, including archives, libraries and museums, are developing or creating digital collections, either by digitising or by acquiring digital resources. Though often described on institutional web-sites, these resources lack visibility at European and global level, because there is insufficient interoperability between existing networks, across types of cultural organisation and collection, and across different types of content. This is aggravated by the range of different legacy systems and practices for describing cultural and scientific resources.

Effective access and re-use requires an infrastructure which can support a range of functions, including: discovery of collections and of individual items; disclosing conditions for and authenticating use; and integrating tools, such as thesauri and ontologies, to enable multilingual/multicultural access and use. Re-use (aggregating and creatively adding to this content) also requires enriched digital objects which can eventually be delivered through these services, supporting new economic and business models and user communities.

eContentplus aims at leveraging the multilingual availability of significant assets of digital cultural, scientific and scholarly content by supporting the development of interoperable collections and objects - on which multilingual and cross-border services can be built - and by supporting solutions to facilitate exposure, discovery and retrieval of these resources. Actions should increase the opportunities and scope for accessing these resources, tackle multilingual issues, and support the emergence of enriched cultural content. There are two complementary objectives for the work in this area: promoting an enabling infrastructure in support of access and use; and stimulating content enrichment.

5.1. Promoting the enabling infrastructure

The objective is to create the conditions under which quality European digital cultural content, including scientific information and scholarly content, can be made visible and available, for cultural institutions, organisations, services and businesses, and for citizens.

5.1.1. Targeted Projects

Proposals should address the following requirements:

Scope:

- Aggregation of digital cultural objects or collections across borders, enhancing the visibility and re-use of the material.
- Lead to the identification of common functionalities, supported by the adoption of existing standards, which can be exploited for European services for cultural and scientific/scholarly content.
- Lead to results that will significantly increase cross-border use and re-use of existing content. Proposals must, therefore, include the economic rationale for the use, clear identification of the

potential users and anticipated demand, together with convincing projections and commitments for sustainability.

- Activities may include: **multilingual access to content**, interoperability between digital objects, collections and metadata repositories, linking existing virtual or digital libraries, museums, archives, community memories; interoperability of systems authorising use, such as licensing and rights clearance schemes.

Condition:

- Be sizable, thus creating critical mass and results which meet the demand.
- Demonstrate the availability in the consortium of a viable and quantified base of existing digital collections/objects or the commitment to making this available before the end of the project.
- Provide specific and realistic quantified indicators to measure the envisaged improvements of the availability, access and use – at different stages in the project lifetime and beyond.
- Identify mechanisms for the sustainability of the action after the end of the project, with a convincing commitment/credible plan of the consortium to this end. These mechanisms should take account of IPR issues.
- Have clearly identified and justified selection criteria for the collections/objects (e.g. by type of resource, theme)

5.1.2. Thematic Networks

Not open for proposals submission in 2005, such activity will be part of future call for proposals.

Proposals should fulfil the following requirements:

Scope:

- Co-ordinated approaches to developing the availability of cultural and scientific resources, supporting cross-border building and description of collections and resources.
- Activities should target specific cultural, scientific and/or scholarly content topics and be driven by a general shared interest, with identifiable shared goals, and strong commitment by all partners.
- Work may include consensus building, adoption of common reference models, roadmaps for operational actions, advice to policymaking, and concerted actions to convey the European needs to standardisation bodies.

Conditions:

- Show the value of the network in terms of its strategic impact on the availability, accessibility and use/reuse of European cultural, scientific, and scholarly content.
- Include mechanisms for sustainability of actions.
- Bring together key experts in the area concerned.
- Be open and proactive to attract new - relevant - partners.

5.2. Stimulating cultural and scientific/scholarly content enrichment

The objective is to improve the quality of digital cultural content by increasing and spreading knowledge on the enhancement of digital content in well justified, specified contexts.

5.2.1. *Content Enrichment Projects*

Proposals should fulfil the following requirements:

Scope:

- Enrich digital cultural, scientific, scholarly content with semantically well-defined metadata, through the application of appropriate tools, with a view to enabling quality content-based services.
- Demonstrate the benefits of this approach in terms of visibility, searchability, re-usability, repurposing and aggregation, for cross-border, **multilingual and multicultural use**.
- Be based on a comprehensive set of enrichment experiments, in real contexts, to show that the adoption of the practice is both possible and has benefits. Where relevant, this may include educational/training activities.
- Lead to results that will significantly increase re-use of existing objects, including its cross-border use. Proposals must, therefore, include the economic rationale for the use, clear identification of the potential users and anticipated demand, together with convincing projections and commitments for sustainability.

Conditions:

- Be based on a clearly defined common interest, clearly identified target users and well justified needs.
- Include specific and measurable criteria against which quality improvements and availability, access and use can be assessed, including user feedback.
- Bring together a variety of expertise, from ICT solution providers, content users to domain experts, etc.
- A relevant, quantified base of digital resources should be already available for enrichment.
- Be transferable, have potential for replication and for scalability.

5.2.2. *Thematic networks*

Proposals should fulfil the following requirements:

Scope:

- Carry out awareness activities addressing stakeholders in the area of cultural, scientific, scholarly content (producers, owners, users) on the benefits demonstrated by best practices on how to enrich digital content and/or support coordination of Content Enrichment Projects, including their organisational coherence and endorsement.
- Promote dialogue and exchange of information between stakeholders.

Conditions:

- Include mechanisms/competencies to provide guidance, assessment and improvement plans of associated Content Enrichment Projects (for example in relation to the evolution/identification of new experiments).
- Use cost-effective means of distribution of information to large numbers of users.
- Establish and maintain a partnership with key players and stakeholders.
- Use multiplier organisations and electronic dissemination channels, mass media and the distribution of information material so as to reach the intended target group.

- Where relevant, activities should exploit synergies with Targeted Projects and other Thematic Networks.

6. REINFORCING COOPERATION BETWEEN DIGITAL CONTENT STAKEHOLDERS

The Commission intends to call for *two Thematic Networks*, with an interest beyond the individual thematic areas: a thematic network on public sector information and a thematic network on public domain related issues.

6.1. Public sector information

The aim is to bring together experts on public sector information resources, in order to facilitate re-use of the latter for the benefit of companies, public administrations and citizens.

6.1.1. A Thematic Network for public sector information

Proposals should fulfil the following requirements:

Scope:

- Contribute with its actions to the implementation of the public sector information policy as expressed in Directive 2003/98/EC on the re-use of public sector information⁶, and in particular its recitals.

Conditions:

- Bring together private and the public sector experts from a majority of countries participating in the programme. A complete coverage of the EEA and the candidate countries is strongly encouraged.

6.2. Public domain related issues

Not open for proposals submission in 2005, such activity will part of future call for proposals.

The objective is to explore public domain related issues and policies.

6.2.1. A Thematic Network on public domain related issues

Proposals should fulfil the following requirements:

Scope:

- Show the value of public domain issues in terms of usability and accessibility of digital content.

Conditions:

- Have enough critical mass and a wide enough geographical coverage to make a difference at European level.
- Bring together experts from different backgrounds with an interest in the public domain (such as IPR-experts, libraries and archives, the scientific community, consumer organisations).

⁶ OJ L 345, 31.12.2003, p. 90.

6.3. Public procurement

Public procurement is foreseen after 2005 for a number of studies: the follow-on benchmarking study on public sector information (in the context of the review of the directive), and a study on the economic and social impact of public domain policies. Furthermore, public procurement will be used for actions supporting the impact assessment of the programme, as well as actions supporting dissemination of the results of the programme.

The criteria to award contracts in the context of a public procurement procedure will be defined in the documentation relative to that specific procedure (text of call for tenders published in the Official Journal, terms of reference).

7. PARTICIPATION IN THE *ECONTENTPLUS* PROGRAMME

Participation in the *eContentplus* programme is open to legal entities established in the Member States.

It is further open to legal entities established in the candidate countries if a bilateral agreement with the relevant country has been concluded to this effect. It may be opened to participation of legal entities established in EFTA States which are contracting parties to the EEA Agreement, in accordance with the provisions of that Agreement⁷.

Participation of legal entities established in third countries and of international organisations is possible, without financial support from the Community, where such participation contributes effectively to the implementation of the Programme.

8. THE MEANS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE PROGRAMME

8.1. Targeted Projects

Targeted Projects intend to group relevant stakeholders addressing specific issues arising at any stage of the chain - production, exposure, discovery and acquisition - that prevent or limit access to and use of digital content. Reaching interoperability and usability of existing datasets at a cross-border level is a typical example.

The Targeted Project should result in a significant increase in the actual access to and the use of the underlying digital material. It should embed the critical mass necessary to make a significant impact in the area concerned.

8.2. Content Enrichment Projects (CEP)

Referred as “Best Practices” in the Programme Decision, Content Enrichment Projects should demonstrate the benefits of the enrichment of digital content with semantically well defined metadata and formal documentation needed to give these metadata meaning for its use and distribution in **multilingual and multicultural contexts**. Ways to deal with multilingual and multicultural aspects should be an integral part of the Content Enrichment Projects.

⁷ At present candidate countries are the following: Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, and Turkey. EFTA States which are contracting parties to the EEA Agreement, are Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. Up to date information on which countries are part of the programme is published on the Official Journal of the European Communities. An up to date list is also available on the programme web site at <http://europa.eu.int/econtentplus>.

CEPs are based on large-scale enrichment of digital content bringing together organisations around a common shared interest in a specific issue/domain (e.g. mathematical content), or in a specific geographical area (e.g. two border regions for geographic information).

CEPs should result in a significant increase in the actual use of the underlying digital material. They should represent enough critical mass to make a difference, and where relevant be further scalable.

8.3. Thematic Networks

Thematic Networks bring together relevant stakeholders, expertise and facilities to support the identification and coordinate the development of opportunities for improving the availability of digital content. Thematic Networks serve the purpose of generating consensus and critical mass at European level. Activities may include coordination and assessment, exchange of information between teams working around a common theme, improvement plans, organisation of conferences and information brokerage.

Where relevant, Thematic Networks may support awareness-raising activities, the co-ordination of Content Enrichment Projects, including their organisational coherence and endorsement.

The means for implementing the programme

Project Types	Characteristics	Typical EU Contribution
Targeted Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a problem oriented approach, tackling issues with cross-border relevance - address specific issues to enable access to or use of digital content - should result in a significant increase in the actual access to and the use of the underlying digital material 	50% of eligible costs.
Content Enrichment Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - demonstrate the benefits of content enhancement with semantically well-defined metadata - should result in a significant increase in the actual use of the underlying digital material 	80% of direct costs (i.e. no overheads) for adding metadata to existing content.
Thematic Networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - bring together stakeholders/experts from different countries to support and co-ordinate developments in a certain area, generate consensus or - support awareness-raising activities, and the co-ordination of Content Enrichment Projects, including their organisational coherence and endorsement. 	Up to 100% of a limited set of direct costs (i.e. no overheads) for co-ordinating and implementing the network: Costs for beneficiaries other than the co-ordinator are limited to travel and subsistence.
Public procurement	Study or service on the basis of detailed specifications defined by the Commission. Implemented through calls for tender.	100%

9. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND BUDGET

9.1. Call for proposals 2005

An indicative amount of 26.6 Mio euro is available for the 2005 call. This indicative amount may increase by the contributions received from EFTA / EEA countries and candidate countries which may participate in the programme.

The **indicative budget breakdown** is as follows:

Geographic Information	30%
Educational content	25%
Cultural content and scientific/scholarly content	40%
Reinforcing cooperation between digital content stakeholders	5%

The indicative calendar for the related activities is as follows:

Date	Event
September 2005	Adoption of Work Programme Publication of the call for proposals
January 2006	Evaluation
January 2006– Mid February 2006	Evaluation report and draft implementation plan approved by Authorising Officer (DG)
End February 2006	Implementation plan – Inter-service consultation on call results.
Beginning March 2006	Committee Meeting – presentation for opinion of call results European Parliament Right of Scrutiny
April 2006	Opening of negotiations
June – July 2006	Completion of negotiations, award decision, individual commitments, grant agreements signature
June 2006	Publication of the call for proposal 2006
October 2006	2006 call closure.

9.2. Roadmap 2006 - 2008

The programme runs for 4 years. Financial constraints are the main reason why only part of the activities is covered by the 2005 call for proposals.

The budgets for 2006, 2007 and 2008 will be decided annually by the budgetary authority. On the basis of the financial framework foreseen in the Programme Decision, amounts available for further calls for proposals could be: 26.6 mio € in 2006, 45 mio € in 2007 and 45 mio € in 2008.

New calls for proposals will be published in 2006, 2007 and 2008 with the aim of covering all activities during the lifetime of the programme. The choice of activities for 2006 will be made once the results of the evaluation of the 2005 call are known. They will therefore take account of the number of proposals received which would have merited funding, had additional funding been available, and the need for a balance between the areas and activities covered.

9.3. Service contracts

The following activities using public procurement are foreseen in 2005:

Project reviews (appointment letters)	120,000
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9.4. Administrative budget line

Commitment appropriations for 2005 available under the Administrative budget line 09 01 04 02:

Final evaluation of the eContent programme	150,000
Publications & other expenses	200,000
Evaluation of calls for proposals (appointment letters)	300,000
Electronic Proposals Submission System	50,000
Evaluation Service Provider	200,000

The services required for the Electronic Proposals Submission System will be awarded in the third quarter through a call for tenders. The services required from the Evaluation Service Provider will be awarded in the fourth quarter on the basis of an existing framework contract.

Commitments for the Electronic Proposals Submission System and the Evaluation Service Provider will be made in the third quarter. The commitment for the final evaluation will be made in the third quarter as well as the commitment for evaluation of calls for proposals. Publications & other expenses will be committed equally throughout the year.

10. EVALUATION CRITERIA

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. Each submission will be assessed on the basis of the evaluation criteria, which are divided in three categories: eligibility criteria, award criteria, selection criteria. Only proposals meeting the requirements of the eligibility criteria shall be evaluated further. The description of these criteria is presented below.

10.1. Eligibility criteria

On receipt, all proposals and applications 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.
- Proposal completeness. Proposals which are substantially incomplete - that is to say that 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.

Proposers will 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 grant agreement for failure to comply with their contractual obligations.

Proposers **must certify that they are not in one of the situations listed above.**

Applicants making false declarations expose themselves to financial penalties or exclusion from grants and contracts.⁸

10.2. Award criteria

This section of the Work Programme defines the award criteria that will be applied to evaluate the relative merits of proposals received following a call for proposals, as well as the specific weighting of the criteria. One set of award criteria will apply to *Targeted Projects and Content Enrichment Projects*. Another set of award criteria will apply to the *Thematic Networks*.

Proposals that do not reach a threshold of at least half the points available for each award criterion cannot be retained for co-funding.

10.2.1. Targeted projects and Content Enrichment Projects

<p>a. Contribution to the aims of the action for the specific target area <i>(Weighting 40%)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contribution to the objectives and adherence to the requirements as defined in this Work Programme. - European dimension of the issue(s) addressed, and extent to which the proposed action contributes to tackling them at European level.
<p>b. Approach and working arrangements <i>(Weighting 20%)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adequacy of the approach, methodology and work plan, quality of the dissemination plan. - Adequacy of working arrangements and management; co-ordination and co-operation mechanisms. - Adequacy of measures and indicators for monitoring progress and assessing results and impact

⁸ Art. 175 of Commission Regulation (EC, Euratom) No. 2342/2002 of 23 December 2002 (OJ L 357, 31 December 2002).

c. Quality of the resources

(Weighting 20%)

- Relevance, competencies, combination of complementary expertise of the resources available
- Adherence to scope and conditions indicated for the relevant part of the call.

d. Multilingual and multicultural aspects

(Weighting 20%)

- Ways of dealing with multilingual and multicultural aspects for cross-border use
- Where relevant, coverage of languages

10.2.2. Thematic Networks

a. Contribution to the aims of the action for the specific target area

(Weighting 40%)

- Contribution to the objectives and adherence to the requirements as defined in this Work Programme.
- European dimension of the issue(s) addressed, and extent to which the proposed action would contribute to tackling them at European level.

b. Approach and working arrangements

(Weighting 20%)

- Quality of the proposed management structure.
- Adequacy of working arrangements; co-ordination and co-operation mechanisms.
- Adequacy of the measures foreseen for monitoring progress and assessing intermediate and final results.

c. Quality of the resources

(Weighting 40%)

- Adherence to the conditions regarding consortia indicated for the target area.
- Quality of the co-ordinating team (good complementarities between participants).
- Adequacy of the organisations participating in the network to achieve the co-ordination envisaged.
- European added value of the network, including the need to reach an adequate critical mass.
- Where relevant, links with external relevant organizations.

10.3. Selection criteria

Selection criteria will ensure that the proposers possess the resources to co-finance the project and the professional competencies and qualifications required to complete the work successfully.

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

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 competencies and qualifications

- Documented relevant experience in the field of the proposed action.

11. FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information related to this programme please refer to the *eContentplus* web site at <http://europa.eu.int/econtentplus>.