

# **Annex 1**

## ***Description of Work***

*(Best Practice Networks)*

ECP-2007-DILI-517009

EDLocal

Making local and regional content accessible through the  
European Digital Library



*eContentplus*

## ***Project Summary***

EDLocal will establish a Best Practice Network which will, over three years, improve the interoperability of the digital content held by regional and local institutions and make it accessible through the Europeana service of the European Digital Library and to other services. There is a pressing need to involve Europe's network of local and regional libraries, museums and archives more extensively in making the enormous amount of digital content that they hold available through Europeana. Such involvement will bring together a rich diversity of content of all types, cultures and languages making it possible to establish integrated services with great richness and adding value for communities and individual users. EDLocal will work with the EDL Foundation to establish efficient and sustainable processes through which local and regional institutions can easily make their content available to Europeana during and after the project, adopting and promoting the use of its infrastructures, tools and standards, as specifications emerge, especially OAI-PMH repositories and Europeana Metadata Application Profiles initially, but moving forward to semantic web technologies later. EDLocal builds on existing multiplier networks of local institutions to bring together a consortium that represents 27 countries with broad ranging experience of the cultural sector, digital libraries, standards and aggregation services. EDLocal will make over 20 million items available to Europeana. The expected results include the establishment of a network of regional repositories that are highly interoperable with Europeana, an integrated Europeana-EDLocal prototype service and the development of thematic areas for Europeana services which integrate content from both the national and the local/regional level.

## ***Rationale and Objectives***

### 1.1 Description of the issue addressed and the current situation (baseline)

EDLocal is a Best Practice Network running under the eContentPlus programme. The development of the Europeana service of the European Digital Library, to increase access to digital content across four identified key domains (libraries, museums, archives and audio/visual archives), is now gaining momentum. This progress is paralleled in some countries by work co-ordinated at national and regional level to integrate access to cross-domain content.

However, there is a pressing need, not least in order to achieve Europeana's 2010 content targets, to also make available the enormous amount of digital content provided by Europe's cultural institutions at *local and regional level* alongside that held at national level and by doing so, to extend the institutional base of content providers to involve more extensively Europe's network of museums and archives as well as libraries. Such a process will bring together and link up heterogeneously sourced content which is complementary in terms of themes, location and time, making it possible to establish integrated services with greater richness and complexity. Such a development will also add value for users by linking the digital content brought on stream through EDLocal with content with local and regional relevance held by national level institutions. These are the primary and overarching goals of EDLocal.

A major challenge in achieving these goals is that the digital content addressed by EDLocal is very widely distributed and heterogeneous, held in a wide variety of media, maintained in many different data formats and described by a wide variety of metadata schemas. This issue is related to the way in which users currently interact with the network of content providers and distributed collections of digital objects. Models can range from an environment where autonomous digital libraries are federated or accessed through unified interfaces at one end of the scale, through managed approaches where metadata and/or the actual objects are aggregated in one or more portals and services are based on service agreements between cooperating providers, to ones in which objects and collections are simply made available through individual websites.

In order to address this challenge, a clear and direct route needs to be established for local institutions to enable their content to be used within Europeana. In the shorter term EDLocal will make accessible high- value digital content held by a variety of cultural institutions from least one locality or region in each member state (except Luxembourg initially) plus Norway. In addition EDLocal will set in place, test and promote the use of a consistent Europeana-compliant execution environment comprising of both technical and governance structures which will enable the myriad cultural content generators from localities across Europe to easily 'plug in' their item-level content in future. The establishment of a pan-European infrastructure of this kind will not be achieved overnight. But it is of great importance that a start is now made so that a visible *defacto* 'standardisation' of approaches can be achieved and a 'snowball effect' created in the interests of users and public and private service providers across all member states.

A different challenge concerns the need to create the conditions for building upon the thematic richness and geographic diversity of Europe's cultural traditions and social identities. The expected convergence of rich digital content within Europeana will enable, beyond federated search mechanisms and access to individual digital collections, intelligent semantic and geographic exploration and retrieval functions. In this context, the ways in which Europeana interacts with the semantic and technical infrastructure being developed for the Semantic Web are highly relevant, both in terms of identifying which Semantic Web activities need to be considered

in terms of standards and interoperability and which are relevant to implementation e.g. the Resource Description Framework RDF, the Web Ontology Language (OWL) and Simple Knowledge Organization Systems (SKOS).

The content provided through EDLocal and the user base of local/regional institutions will provide an important test bed in this respect, ensuring that approaches and standards developed to enrich semantic interoperability and improved search facilities at 'central' Europeana level are supported by the knowledge gained from flow of data from local digital collections across Europe. Likewise, EDLocal partners will be well positioned to contribute to the enrichment by means of semantic and geographic metadata (annotations), in a framework of generally agreed conceptual and spatial conventions, as these come on stream through the work of Europeana.Net Thematic Network (ECP 2006 DILI 520001) and beyond.

EDLocal will ensure in general that the approaches, standards and tools developed by Europeana (e.g. through Europeana.Net) are adopted widely, thereby supporting the interoperability of content within Europeana beyond that which is held by purely national level institutions. The participation of The EDL Foundation as a partner in the consortium will play a valuable role in ensuring that there is the strongest possible linkage between the technical standards and infrastructural work being carried out by Europeana.Net and related activities: for example, by making available tools such as its metadata 'installer' and automated metadata conversion tools for use by EDLocal partners. This linkage will also support the development of a sustainable business plan which is hospitable to the long term participation of a rapidly increasing number of local and regional content providers

In general, this will involve the establishment of a harvestable network of OAI-PMH compliant metadata repositories, aggregating content at a level which makes sense in terms of the diverse demographics and digital content holdings of Europe's municipalities, regions and localities and which complements the existing and planned Europeana network.

For the Europeana interface to be fully usable and to offer an attractive range of services, the data that cultural heritage institutions currently hold in proprietary databases needs to be made available for harvesting via the OAI-PMH protocol. This will be the main line of approach of EDLocal. To this extent, a number of the local/regional content providers participating in EDLocal have already begun to implement this model.

A number of fundamental assumptions have emerged at the strategic and political levels for Europeana and may be seen as conditions which are highly relevant to the positioning and goals of EDLocal.

- Europeana will be a federated digital library built on distributed, autonomous and heterogeneous resources: this fact creates specific conditions and challenges for technical, functional and semantic interoperability.
- Europeana will be an access point to cultural content and not just a discovery point.
- Archives and museums must be involved effectively and visibly in Europeana, as soon as possible.
- Europeana will provide access to text, pictures, video, sound and 3D objects.
- For 2008, the focus is upon on open access, digital, freely available and public domain material — in order to minimise copyright issues in the early stages of development. However, all freely available content and metadata should be covered by a suitable licence clearly specifying the respective rights and use conditions.

It is clear from initial discussions within Europeana.Net that the strategic goal of Europeana is to act as a service provider rather than simply as data/object provider. Although the principle purpose of EDLocal is to make cultural objects accessible for use (initially by exposing their metadata for harvesting) by Europeana, it is the clear proposition that Europeana will develop specific services in order to position itself as an added-value access provider. In this context it will be important to demonstrate the unique selling points of Europeana. Well structured access for users to the level and variety of item level content to be contributed from the local and regional sources provided in EDLocal will be major contribution in enabling these services to be developed and targeted to user needs.

In the longer term, post-2008, other elements to be considered include the choice of (components from) a number of reference models and frameworks such as Delos, 5S, JISC IE, JCR. Repository-based approaches similar in rudiments to that of DRIVER (for scientific and scholarly content) are likely to become a very important element of the overall infrastructure for Europeana. EDLocal's preference for metadata exposure based on OAI-PMH repositories is deliberately conceived to take forward this approach, building upon strong evidence of its recent adoption by a growing number of regions in countries such as France, Italy, Norway, Poland, Spain and the UK and the likely benefits of a clear positioning among the European 'landscape' of interoperable metadata and content repositories. This is also likely to maximise interoperability and to allow the maximum flexibility for the configuration of services at the interface by Europeana.

A number of recommendations have begun to emerge through the initial work of Europeana.Net, providing early guidance on its functional scope and the minimum interoperability criteria by 2008. Those being addressed include:

- user requirements;
- object models (granularity and structure);
- persistent identifiers;
- metadata/packaging standards
- service description framework for service registry;
- licensing policies;
- authentication data exchange;
- basic semantic interoperability;
- interoperation of Europeana and other services on the web (such as Google .).

In addition, the following areas have been identified as elements needing clarification in the longer term, probably beyond the delivery of Europeana prototype service in autumn 2008 but many of which will become relevant to implementation within the proposed duration of EDLocal (2008-11). These include:

- object modelling (granularity and complexity);
- authorization (role models and role semantics);
- usage logging;
- accounting, payment;
- legal and access protection issues (IPR / rights / DRM);
- advanced semantic interoperability (concepts / ontologies / rules / reasoning), including mapping to object modelling standards;
- name authority services;
- multilingualism of content;
- service description as a basis for service integration;
- technical and economical sustainability;
- preservation aspects.

A key goal of EDLocal will be to adopt as well as make important contributions in a number of these areas (see section 7 for further detail).

## 1.2 Description of the project objectives

The work of EDLocal will thus directly support the chief objectives of Best Practice Networks for digital libraries under eContentPlus, contributing greatly to improving the interoperability of digital libraries held by museums, archives and other institutions all EU Member States. It will also make their content accessible through the common user interface of Europeana. Working closely with key initiatives such as Europeana.Net and successor activities, it will implement Europeana-compatible infrastructures and standards within an enormous amount of new digital content aggregations held at local/regional level EDLocal will contribute powerfully to the growth of Europeana and to a practical understanding of the issues relating to standards-based interoperability between digital objects and collections by:

- implementing the production standards, specifications and tools to enable cross-domain search , retrieval and use of digital content held by cross-domain cultural institutions in all member states, (libraries, museums and archives);
- establishing and promoting straightforward methods by which cultural institutions and aggregators may join Europeana and provide their content to its services.

By working so closely with Europeana, through the involvement of the EDL Foundation as a key partner in EDLocal and also by participating in Europea.net, EDLocal will support the establishment of a cooperation structure which benefits cultural institutions of all types and levels in every Member State.

This process will add substantial added value to Europeana and its users, by:

- greatly expanding and enriching the freely available and accessible content to be found by users through Europeana interface itself, as its services come on stream;
- making available for harvesting locally-relevant Europeana-branded cultural content to other service providers working in sectors such as tourism, education, family history, humanities research, the publishing/media industries and through other search engines and services on the web. This will serve to enhance the interoperation of Europeana with other services and assist its intention to work with other major services to improve results mutually over the longer term.
- Key content types to be made available through EDLocal include: items and collections of high cultural value (‘treasures’) held at local or regional level;
- specific local collections held by libraries, museums and archives, local sound and film archives;
- public records held by archives..

The content tables in Section 4 show that the number of digital content items available from the limited sample of institutions involved in EDLocal to be more than 20 million. This is already a very large number in the context of the content available to Europeana. The potential of local/regional sources may be better appreciated when this figure is extrapolated to all cultural institutions in Europe and the context of a continued growth in digitisation at local and regional level in the years to come. EDLocal will put in place an infrastructure that will continue to increase the content available to Europeana, at the same time enhancing the skills, expertise and motivation required to support local institutions throughout Europe in contributing their content.

Analysis of the content held among the EDLocal network partners and their external content providers will also contribute to the definition and development of thematic approaches to be determined for Europeana in the medium and longer term.

### 1.3 Expected results

The expected results of the project, over its three year duration, will be to:

- make accessible to Europeana the content specified in this document from the local/regional organisations and content aggregators which are the project partners, together with other content from these sources which becomes available during the project period, thereby boosting significantly the total content accessible through Europeana;
- promote and support, through training and guidance, the establishment of a widespread operational network of OAI-PMH repositories, represented in each member state plus Norway, consistent with the requirements of Europeana to harvest content. Metadata will be aggregated in repositories at a suitable 'geopolitical' or thematic level in each locality, region or country of Europe, to support web harvesting and interoperability. Repositories will be specified that support the recommendations of Europeana.Net in terms of protocols, technology and metadata requirements;
- establish a test environment, to be operated by the EDL Foundation, into which the metadata generated by EDLocal can be harvested and which enables technical enhancements and optimisation for access via the Europeana interface to be performed. It is envisaged that this will be integrated with the main Europeana infrastructure as a publicly available prototype service towards the end of the project;
- make available to the local/regional content providers in EDLocal a 'toolkit', including the OAI 'installer' tool developed for Europeana, automated metadata conversion tools, training and implementation support which will ease the conversion of existing local and institutional databases to OAI-PMH compliant digital repositories and will generate consistent metadata;
- resolve the long standing problem of the use of differing, often locally created, metadata formats, especially in the museums and archives sectors, by implementing a practical convergence of major metadata schemas and by utilising automated processes of mapping and 'cross-walking' between them. In this context, as in others, it will be vital that EDLocal uses the architecture and standards for interoperable metadata emerging from Europeana.Net and its successor activities;
- ensure that local and regional content providers represented within EDLocal comply with the list of requirements and guidelines emerging from Europeana.Net and the EDL Foundation, including the public availability of content (copyright cleared) and willingness to have their data processed according to Europeana practice;
- extend to local and regionally sourced content sustainable solutions, consistent with the technologies developed within the overall framework of Europeana, for the systematic semantic and geographic annotation (metadata enrichment) of their digital content, both at the collection level and at the granular 'item' or 'object' level, such as user tagging, addition of user provided content, GPS co-ordinates;
- using the dissemination opportunities available to the project, promote low-cost and straightforward additional digitisation activity (including OCR for full text) at regional

and local level utilising where possible the emerging network of ‘centres of competence’ which are capable of providing service support to smaller institutions in digitisation activities and of making available tools and services;

- arrive at a position by the end of the project where it is easy for new local and regional content providers and, critically, aggregators at regional, national and international level to add their content to Europeana without difficulty on a technical level and smoothly in terms of the Europeana business model – for example, by negotiated subscription or through regional, national and international initiatives (. ‘portals’ and aggregations of various descriptions) as these arrangements are announced by Europeana. EDLocal partners in each member state will act to ensure that agreements are in place, supporting and utilising where appropriate agreements made by other national representative bodies;
- ensure the sustainability of the repositories network in each, by negotiating and agreeing with other players in the in the national framework a rational, scalable and maintainable solution to long-term aggregation of digital cultural content and its metadata.

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